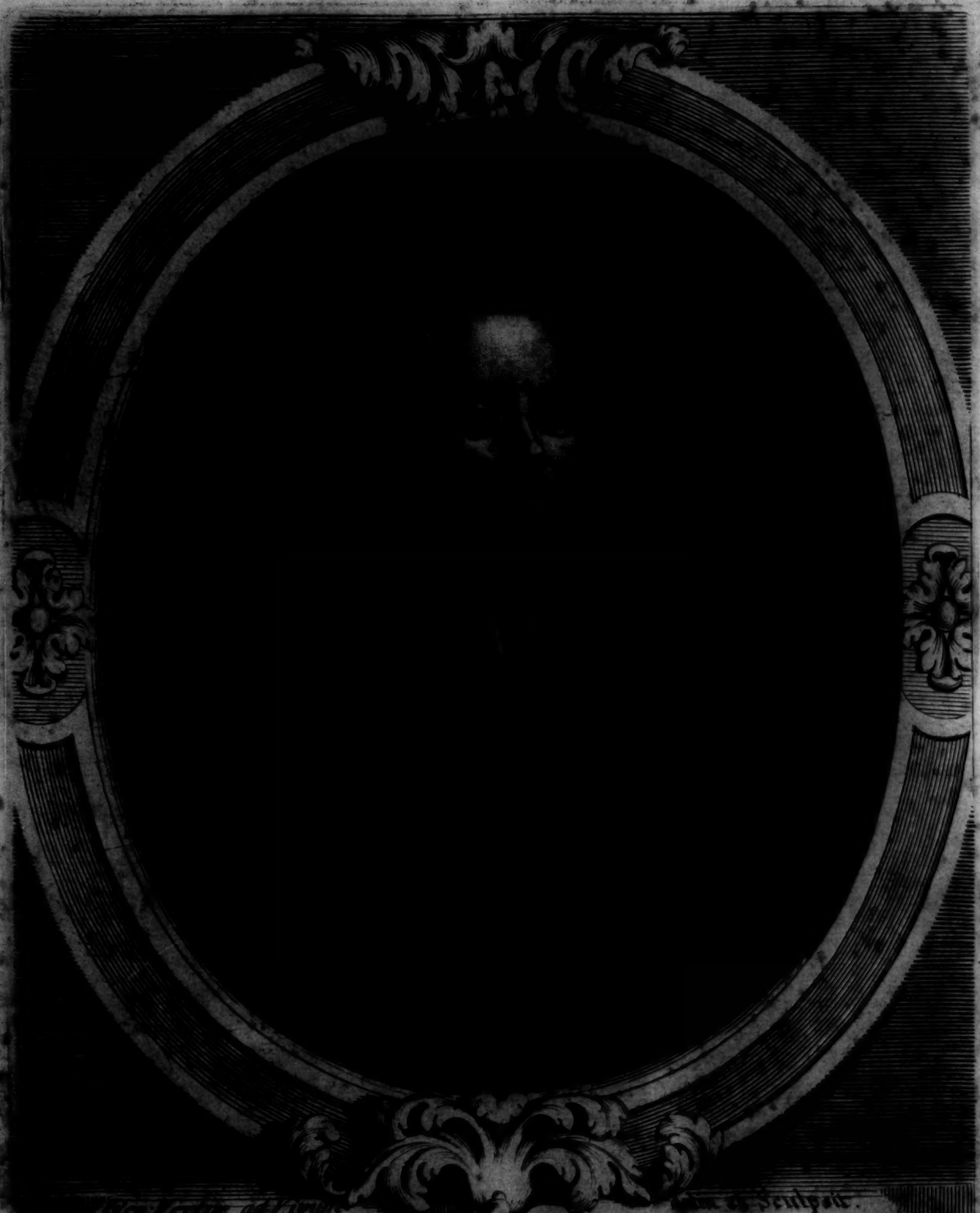


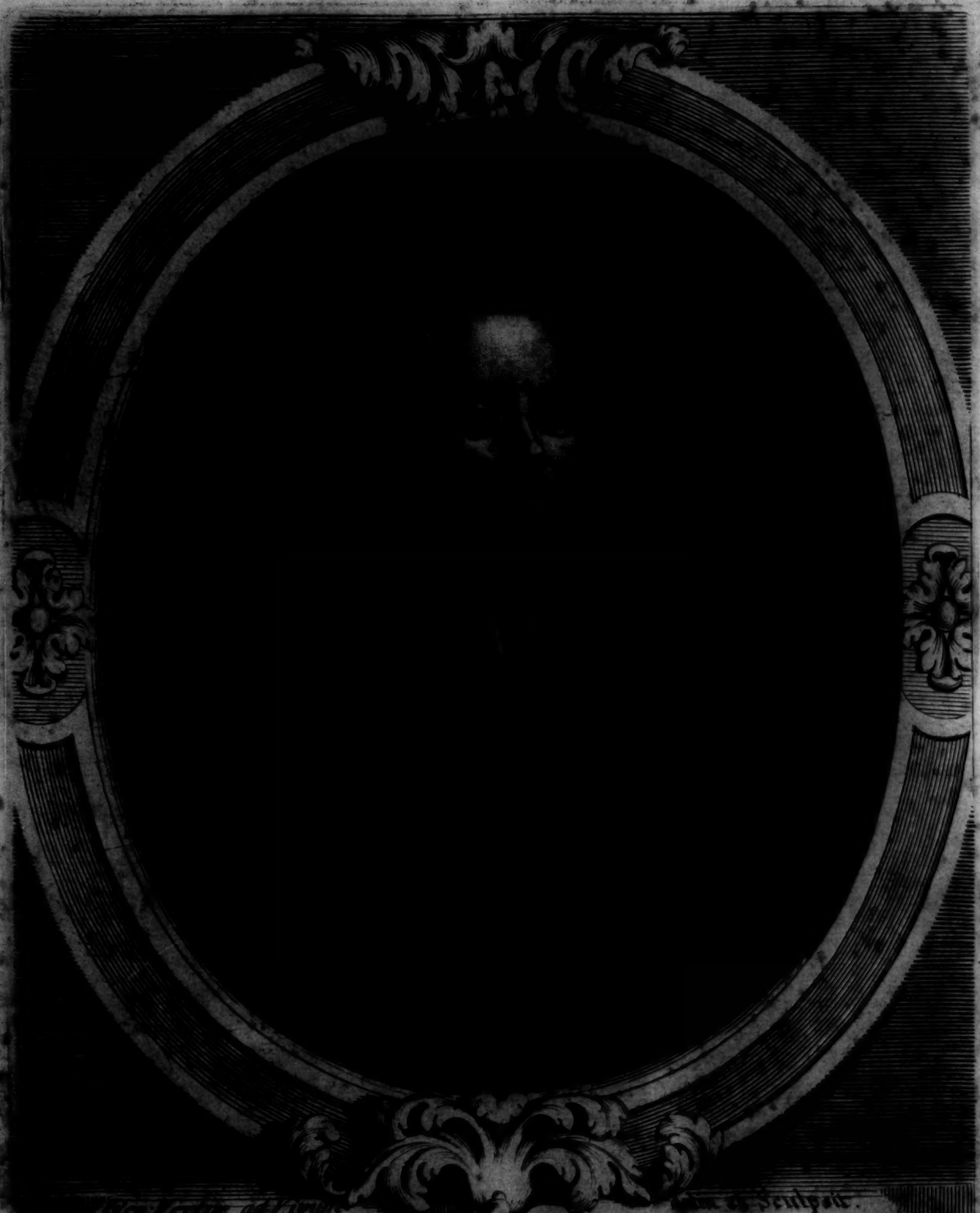


Per Vener. ad. P. 1711.

Sculpsit.



Matthaeus Henry V.D.M.



Matthaeus Henry V.D.M.

Matthaeus Henry V.D.M.



Matthaeus Henry V.D.M.

Sampson
13th September 1822

A N
EXPOSITION
Of All the
BOOKS
OF THE *Bible*
Old and New Testament:

WHEREIN

The CHAPTERS are summ'd up in Contents ; the Sacred Text inserted at large, in Paragraphs, or Verses ; and each Paragraph, or Verse, reduc'd to its proper Heads ; the Sense given, and largely illustrated,

WITH

Practical Remarks and Observations.

In Six VOLUMES.

By MATTHEW HENRY, Minister of the Gospel.

The THIRD EDITION.

L O N D O N:

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MOSES,

VIZ.

Genesis, || Leviticus,
Exodus, || Numbers,
Deuteronomy.

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AND

OBSERVATIONS.

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1. The first step in the process is to identify the problem or issue that needs to be addressed. This involves gathering information and understanding the context of the situation.

Each Chapter is
Second Text Intended
Each Paragraph
Sent Given and

PRAC TICAL REMARKS

OBSERVATIONS

146V

By MARTINEAU HENRY, Minister of the Gospel.

10 M D O M :

and J. O'Connell. MDCCLXXV.

THE PREFACE.

THough it is most my Concern, that I be able to give a good Account to God and my own Conscience, yet perhaps it will be expected, that I give the World also some Account of this bold Undertaking; which I shall endeavour to do with all Plainness, and as one who believes, That if Men must be reckoned with in the Great Day for every vain and idle Word they speak, much more for every vain and idle Line they write.

And it may be of Use, in the first Place, to lay down those Great and Sacred Principles, which I go upon and am govern'd by in this Endeavour to explain and improve these Portions of Holy Writ; which Endeavour I humbly offer to the Service of those (and to those only I expect it will be acceptable) who agree with me in these six Principles.

1. That Religion is the one thing needful; that to know and love and fear God our Maker, and in all the Instances both of devout Affection, and of a good Conversation, to keep his Commandments, is without doubt the Whole of Man; 'tis all in all to him. This the wisest of Men, after a close and copious Argument in his Ecclesiastes, lays down as the Conclusion of his whole Matter, (the Quod erat demonstrandum of his whole Discourse) and therefore I may be allowed to lay it down as a Postulatum and the Foundation of this whole Matter.

It is necessary to Mankind in general, that there should be Religion in the World; absolutely necessary for the Preservation of the Honour of the Human Nature, and no less so for the Preservation of the Order of Humane Societies. 'Tis necessary to each of us in particular that we be Religious; we cannot otherwise answer the End of our Creation, obtain the Favour of our Creator, make our selves ealie now, or happy for ever. A Man that is endued with the Powers of Reason, by which he is capable of knowing, serving, glorifying and enjoying his Maker, and yet lives without God in the World, is certainly the most despicable, and the most miserable Animal under the Sun. Eccl. xii. 13.

2. That Divine Revelation is necessary to true Religion, to the Being and Support of it. That Faith, without which it is impossible to please God, cannot come to any Perfection by seeing the Works of God, but it must come by Hearing the Word of God. The rational Soul, since it received that fatal Shock by the Fall, cannot have or maintain that just Regard to the Great Author of its Being, that Observance of him, and Expectation from him, which are both its Duty and Felicity, without some Supernatural Discovery made by himself of himself, and of his Mind and Will. Natural Light, no doubt is of excellent Use, as far as it goes; but 'tis necessary that there be a Divine Revelation to rectify its Mistakes, and make up its Deficiencies; to help us out there where the Light of Nature leaves us quite at a Loss, especially in the Way and Method of Man's Recovery from his lapsed State, and his Restoration to his Maker's Favour, which he cannot but be conscious to himself of the loss of, finding by sad Experience his own present State to be sinful and miserable. Our own Reason shews us the Wound, but nothing short of a Divine Revelation can discover to us a Remedy to be confided in. Rom. x. 17.

The Case and Character of those Nations of the Earth which had no other Guide in their Devotions but that of Natural Light, with some Remains of the Divine Institution of Sacrifices, received by Tradition from their Fathers, plainly shews how necessary Divine Revelation is to the Subsistence of Religion, for those that had not the Word of God, soon lost God himself, became vain in their imaginations concerning him, and prodigiously vile and absurd in their Worship and Divinations. 'Tis true the Jews who had the Benefit of Divine Revelation, laps'd sometimes into Idolatry, and admitted very gross Corruptions, yet with the Help of the Law and the Prophets, they recover'd and reform'd; whereas the best and most admired Philosophy of the Heathen could never do any Thing towards the Cure of the vulgar Idolatry, or so much as offered to remove any of those most barbarous and ridiculous Rites of their Religion which were the Scandal and Reproach of the Humane Nature. Let Men therefore pretend what they will, Deists are or will be Atheists; and those that under Colour of admiring the Oracles of Reason, set aside as useless the Oracles of God, undermine the Foundations of all Religion, and do what they can to cut off all Communication between Man and his Maker, and to set that Noble Creature on a level with the Beasts that perish.

3. That Divine Revelation is not now to be found or expected any where but in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, and there it is. 'Tis true, there was Religion and Divine Revelation before there was any written Word, but to argue from thence that therefore the Scriptures are not now necessary, is as absurd as it would be to argue that the World might do well enough without the Sun, because in the Creation the World had Light three days before the Sun was made.

Divine Revelations when first given were confirmed by Visions, Miracles and Prophecy, but they were to be transmitted to distant Regions, and future Ages with their Proofs and Evidences by Writing, the surest Way of Conveyance, and by which the Knowledge of other memorable things is preserv'd and propagated: We have Reason to think that even the ten Commandments, tho' spoken with such Solemnity at Mount Sinai, would have been long e'er this lost and forgotten, if they had been handed down by Tradition only, and had never been put in Writing: 'Tis that which is written that remains.

The PREFACE

The Scripture indeed is not compiled as a methodical System or Body of Divinity, *secundem artem*, but in several Ways of Writing (Histories, Laws, Prophecies, Songs, Epistles, and even Proverbs) at several Times, and by several Hands, as Infinite Wisdom saw fit, the End is effectually obtained; such Things are plainly supposed and taken for granted, and such Things are expressly revealed and made known, as being all put together, sufficiently inform us of all the Truths and Laws of that Holy Religion we are to believe, and be governed by.

2 Tim. iii.

16.

2 Pet. i. 21.

Eccl. xii. 5.

That all Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and that Holy Men spake and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost we are sure, but who dares pretend to describe that Inspiration? None knows the Way of the Spirit, nor how the Thoughts were formed in the Heart of him that was inspired, no more than we know the way of the Soul into the Body, or how the Bones are formed in the Womb of her that is with Child; but we may be sure that the Blessed Spirit did not only habitually prepare and qualifie the Penmen of Scripture for that Service, and put it into their Hearts to write, but did likewise assist their Understandings and Memories, in recording those Things which they themselves had the Knowledge of, and effectually secure them from Error and Mistake, and what they could not know but by Revelation (as for Instance, Gen. i. and Joh. i.) the same Blessed Spirit gave them clear and satisfactory Information of. And no doubt as far as was necessary to the End designed, they were directed by the Spirit even in the Language and Expression, for there were Words which the Holy Ghost taught: And God saith to the Prophet, Thou shalt speak with my Words; However, 'tis not material to us who drew up the Statute, nor what Liberty he took in using his own Words, when 'tis ratified 'tis become the Legislator's Act, and binds the Subject to observe the true Intent and Meaning of it.

1 Cor. ii. 13.

Ezek. xiii. 4.

The Scripture proves its Divine Authority and Original both to the Wise and to the Unwise; even to the Unwise and least thinking Part of Mankind, 'tis abundantly proved by the many uncontested Miracles wrought by Moses and the Prophets, Christ and his Apostles, for the Confirmation of its Truths and Laws: 'Tis an intolerable Reproach to Eternal Truth to suppose this Divine Seal affixed to a Lye. Besides this to the more wise and thinking, to the more considerate and contemplative, it recommends it self by those innate Excellencies which are self-evident Characteristics of its Divine Original. If we look wisely, we shall soon be aware of God's Image and Superinscription upon it. A Mind rightly disposed by an humble sincere Subjection to its Maker, will easily discover the Wisdom in the awful Depth of its Mysteries, the Image of his Sovereignty in the commanding Majesty of its Style; the Image of his Unity in the wonderful Harmony and Symmetry of all its Parts; the Image of his Holiness in the unspotted Purity of its Precepts; and the Image of his Goodness in the manifest Tendency of the whole to the Welfare and Happiness of Mankind in both Worlds: In short, 'tis a Work that fathers it self.

And as Atheists so Deists notwithstanding their Vain-glorious Pretensions to Reason, as if Wisdom must dye with them, run themselves upon the grossest and most dishonourable Absurdities imaginable; for if the Scriptures be not the Word of God, then there's no Divine Revelation now in the World, no Discovery at all of God's Mind concerning our Duty and Happiness; so that let a Man be never so desirous and solicitous to do his Maker's Will, he must without Remedy perish in the Ignorance of it, since there is no Book but this, that will undertake to tell him what it is; a Consequence which can by no Means be reconciled to the Idea we have of the Divine Goodness. And (which is no less an Absurdity) if the Scriptures be not really a Divine Revelation, they are certainly as great a Cheat as ever was put upon the World: But we have no Reason to think them so: For Bad Men would never write so good a Book, nor would Satan have so little Subtilty as to help to cast out Satan; and Good Men would never do so ill a thing as to counterfeit the Broad Seal of Heaven, and affix it to a Patent of their own framing, tho' in it self never so just: No, These are not the Words of him that hath a Devil.

Rom. xv.

4.

Heb. iv. 2.

1 Cor. x.

11.

Heb. xii. 5.

4. That the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament were purposely design'd for our Learning. 'Twas possible they might be a Divine Revelation to those into whose Hands they were first put, and yet we at this distance be no way concerned in them, but it is certain they were intended to be of universal and perpetual Use and Obligation, to all Persons in all Places, and all Ages, that have the Knowledge of them, even to us upon whom the ends of the World are come. Tho' we are not under the Law as a Covenant of Innocency, for then being guilty we should unavoidably perish under its Curse, yet it is not therefore an antiquated Statute, but a standing Declaration of the Will of God, concerning Good and Evil, Sin and Duty, and its Obligation to Obedience is in as full force and virtue as ever: And unto us is the Gospel of the Ceremonial Law preached as well as unto them to whom it was first delivered, and much more plainly. The Histories of the Old Testament were written for our Admonition and Direction, and not barely for the Information and Entertainment of the Curious. The Prophets, tho' long since dead, Prophecie again by their Writings before Peoples and Nations; and Solomon's Exhortation speaketh unto us as unto Sons.

The Subject of the Holy Scripture is universal and perpetual, and therefore of common Concern. 'Tis intended, (1.) To revive the universal and perpetual Law of Nature, the very Remains of which (or Ruins rather) in Natural Conscience give us Hints that we must look somewhere else for a fairer Copy. (2.) To reveal the universal and perpetual Law of Grace, which God's common Beneficence to the Children of Men, such as puts them into a better State than that of Devils, gives us some Ground to expect. The Divine Authority likewise which in this Book commands our Belief and Obedience, is universal and perpetual, and knows no Limits of either Time or Place; it follows therefore that every Nation and every Age, to which these sacred Writings are transmitted, is bound to receive them with the same Veneration and pious Regard that they commanded at their first Entrance.

Heb. i. 1.

Though God hath in these last Days spoken to us by his Son, yet we are not therefore to think that what he spake at sundry times and in divers manners to the Fathers is of no use to us, or that the

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the Old Testament is an Almanack out of Date; no, we are built upon the Foundation of the Prophets as well as of the Apostles, Christ himself being the corner Stone, in whom both these Sides of this Blessed Building meet and are united: They were those ancient Records of the Jewish Church which Christ and his Apostles so oft refer'd to, so oft applied to, and commanded us to search and to take heed to. The Preachers of the Gospel, like Jehoshaphat's Judges, where-ever they went had this Book of the Law with them, and found it a great Advantage to them to speak to them that knew the Law. That celebrated Translation of the Old Testament in the Greek Tongue by the Seventy, between two and three hundred Years before the Birth of Christ, was to the Nations a happy Preparative for the Entertainment of the Gospel, by spreading the Knowledge of the Law. For as the New Testament Expounds and Compleats the Old, and thereby makes it more serviceable to us now, than it was to the Jewish Church, so the Old Testament confirms and illustrates the New, and shews us Jesus Christ, the same yesterday that he is to day, and will be for ever.

5. That the holy Scriptures were not only designed for our Learning, but are the settled standing Rule of our Faith and Practise, by which we must be governed now, and judged shortly; 'Tis not only a Book of general Use, so the Writings of Wise and Good Men maybe, but it is of Sovereign and commanding Authority; the Statute-Book of God's Kingdom, which our Oath of Allegiance to him as our Supreme Lord binds us to the Observance of. Whether we will hear, or whether we will forbear, we must be told, that this is the Oracle we are to consult, and to be determined by; the Touchstone we are to appeal to, and try Doctrines by; the Rule we are to have an Eye to, by which we must in every Thing order our Affections and Conversations, and from which we must always take our Measures. This is the Testimony, this is the Law which is bound up and sealed among the Disciples, that Word according to which if we do not speak, it is because there is no light in us.

The making of the Light within our Rule, which by Nature is Darkness, and by Grace is but a Copy of, and conformable to the written Word, is setting the Judge above the Law; And the making of the Traditions of the Church Rivals with the Scripture, is no better; 'tis making the Clock, which every one concerned puts backward or forward at pleasure, to correct the Sun, that faithful Measurer of Time and Days. These are Absurdities, which being once granted, thousands follow, as we see by sad Experience.

6. That therefore it is the Duty of all Christians diligently to search the Scriptures, and it is the Office of Ministers to guide and assist them herein. How useful soever this Book of Books is in itself, it will be of no Use to us if we do not acquaint our selves with it, by reading it daily, and meditating upon it, that we may understand the Mind of God in it, and may apply what we understand to our selves for our Direction, Rebuke, and Comfort, as there is Occasion. It is the Character of the Holy and Happy Man, that his Delight is in the Law of the Lord, and as an Evidence thereof, he converseth with it as his constant Companion, and adviseth with it as his most wise and trusty Counsellor, for in that Law doth he meditate day and night.

It concerns us to be ready in the Scriptures, and to make our selves so by constant Reading, and careful Observation, and especially by earnest Prayer to God for the promised Gift of the Holy Ghost, whose Office it is to bring things to our Remembrance which Christ hath said to us; that thus we may have some good Word or other at hand for our Use in our Addresses to God, and in our Converse with Men; in our Resistance of Satan, and in communing with our own Hearts; and may be able with the good Householder to bring out of this Treasury things new and old, for the Entertainment and Edification both of our selves and others. If any Thing will make a Man of God perfect in this World, will compleat both a Christian and a Minister, and thoroughly furnish him for every good Work, it must be this.

It concerns us also to be mighty in the Scriptures, as Apollo was, that is, to be thoroughly acquainted with the true Intent and Meaning of them, that we may understand what we read, and may not misinterpret or misapply it, but by the Conduct of the Blessed Spirit, may be led into all Truth, and may hold it fast in Faith and Love, and put every Part of Scripture to that Use for which it was intended. The Letter either of Law or Gospel profits little without the Spirit.

The Ministers of Christ are herein Ministers to the Spirit for the Good of the Church; their Business is, to open and apply the Scriptures; thence they must fetch their Knowledge, thence their Doctrines, Devotions, Directions, and Admonitions, and thence their very Language and Expression. Expounding the Scripture was the most usual Way of Preaching in the first and purest Ages of the Church. What have the Levites to do, but to teach Jacob the Law, not only to read it, but to give the sense, and cause them to understand the reading? which, how shall they do, except some Man guide them? As Ministers would hardly be believed without Bibles to back them, so Bibles would hardly be understood without Ministers to explain them, but if having both, we perish in Ignorance, and Unbelief, our Blood will be upon our own Head.

Being fully perswaded therefore of these Things, I conclude, that whatever Help is offered to good Christians in searching the Scriptures, is real Service done to the Glory of God, and to the Interests of his Kingdom among Men, and that's it which hath drawn me into this Undertaking, which I have gone about in Weakness, and in Fear, and in much Trembling, lest I should be found exercising my self in things too high for me, and so laudable an Undertaking should suffer Damage by an unskilful Management.

If any desire to know how so mean and obscure a Person as I am, who in Learning, Judgment, Felicity of Expression, and all Advantages, for such a Service, am less than the least of all my Master's Servants, came to venture upon so great a Work, I can give no other Account of it but this. It has long been my Practice, what little time I had to spare in my Study from my constant Preparations for the Pulpit, to spend it in drawing up Expositions upon some Parts of the New Testament, not so much

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for my own Use, as purely for my own Entertainment, because I knew not how to employ my Thoughts and Time more to my Satisfaction. Trahit sua quemque voluptas; Every Man that studies hath some beloved Study, which is his Delight above any other, and this is mine. 'Tis that Learning which it was my Happiness from a Child to be trained up in, by my ever Honoured Father, whose Memory must always be very dear and precious to me; He often minded me that a Good Textuary is a Good Divine; And that I should read other Books with this in my Eye, that I might be the better able to understand and apply the Scripture.

While I was thus employing my self, came out Mr. Burkitt's Exposition of the Gospels first, and afterwards of the Acts and the Epistles, which met with very good Acceptance among serious People, and no Doubt by the Blessing of God will continue to do great Service to the Church. Soon after he had finished that Work, it pleased God to call him to his Rest; upon which I was urged by some of my Friends, and was my self inclined to attempt the like upon the Old Testament, in the Strength of the Grace of Christ. This here upon the Pentateuch is humbly offered as a Specimen; If it find Favour, and be found any way useful, it is my present Purpose in Dependence upon Divine Aids, to go on so long as God shall continue my Life and Health, and as my other Work will permit.

1 Chr.
xxii. 14.

Many Helps I know we have of this Kind in our own Language, which we have a great deal of Reason to value, and to be very thankful to God for. But the Scripture is a Subject that can never be Exhausted. Semper habet aliquid relegendibus. When David had amass'd a vast Treasure for the Building of the Temple, yet, saith he to Solomon, Thou may'st add thereto; Such a Treasure is Scripture-Knowledge, 'tis still capable of Increase, till we all come to the perfect Man.

1 Cor. xii.
4, 6.

The Scripture is a Field or Vineyard, which finds Work for Variety of Hands, and about which may be employed a great Diversity of Gifts and Operations, but all from the same Spirit, and for the Glory of the same Lord. The Learned in the Languages, and in ancient Usages, have been very serviceable to the Church, the blessed Occupant of this Field, by their curious and elaborate Searches into its various Products, their Anatomies of its Plants, and the entertaining Lectures they have read upon them. The Philology of the Criticks hath been of much more Advantage to Religion, and lent more Light to Sacred Truth, than the Philosophy of the School-Divines. The Learned also in the Arts of War have done great Service in defending this Garden of the Lord against the violent Attacks of the Powers of Darkeness, successfully pleading the Cause of the Sacred Writings against the spiteful Cavils of Atheists, Deists, and the prophane Scoffers of these later Days. Such as these stand in the Posts of Honour, and their Praise is in all the Churches; yet the Labours of the Vine-dressers and the Husbandmen, tho' they are the Poor of the Land, who till this Ground, and gather in the Fruits of it, are no less necessary in their place, and beneficial to the Household of God, that out of these precious Fruits every one may have his Portion of meat in due Season. These are the Labours, which according to my Ability I have here set my Hand unto. And as the plain and practical Expositors, would not for a World say of the learned Criticks, There is no need of them, so it is hoped those Eyes and Heads will not say to the Hands and Feet, There is no need of you.

2 Kin.
xxiv. 12.

1 Cor. xii.
21.

The Learned have of late received very great Advantages in their Searches into this Part of Holy Writ, and the Books that follow, (and still hope for more) by the excellent and most valuable Labours of that Great and Good Man Bishop Patrick, whom for vast Reading, solid Judgment, and a most happy Application to these best of Studies, even in his advanced Years, and Honours, succeeding Ages no doubt will rank among the first Three of Commentators, and bless God for him.

2 Cor. x.
16.

Mr. Pool's English Annotations (which having had so many Impressions we may suppose got into most Hands) are of Admirable Use, especially for the explaining of Scripture-Phrases, opening the Sense, referring to parallel Scriptures, and the clearing of Difficulties that occur, I have therefore all along been brief upon that which is there most largely discuss'd, and have industriously declin'd, as much as I could, what is to be found there; For I would not actum agere, nor (if I may be allowed to borrow the Apostle's Words) boast of things made ready to our Hand.

Pf. cxix.
106.

These and other Annotations which are referr'd to the particular Words and Clauses they are designed to explain, are most easie to be consulted, upon Occasion; But the Exposition which (like this here) is put into a continued Discourse, digested under proper Heads, is much more easy and ready, to be read through for one's own or other's Instruction. And, I think, the observing of the Connexion of each Chapter, (if there be Occasion) with that which goes before, and the general Scope of it, with the Thread of the History or Discourse, and the collecting of the several Parts of it to be seen at one View, will contribute very much to the Understanding of it, and will give the Mind abundant Satisfaction in the general Intention, tho' there may be here and there a difficult Word or Expression which the best Criticks cannot easily account for. This therefore I have here endeavour'd.

But we are concern'd not only to understand what we read, but to improve it to some good Purpose, and in Order thereunto to be affected with it, and to receive the Impressions of it. The Word of God is designed to be not only a Light to our Eyes, the entertaining Subject of our Contemplation, but a Light to our Feet, and a Lamp to our Path, to direct us in the Way of our Duty, and to prevent our turning aside into any By-way: We must therefore in searching the Scriptures enquire, not only What is this? but What is this to us? What Use may we make of it? How may we accommodate it to some of the Purposes of that Divine and Heavenly Life, which by the Grace of God we are resolv'd to live? Enquiries of this Kind I have here aimed to answer.

When the Stone is rolled from the Wells Mouth by a critical Explication of the Text, still there are those who would both drink themselves, and water their Flocks, but they complain, The Well is deep, and they have nothing to draw, How then shall they come by this living Water? Some such may perhaps find a Bucket here, or Water drawn to their Hands; and pleas'd enough shall I be with this Office of the Gibeonites, to draw Water for the Congregation of the Lord, out of these Wells of Salvation.

That which I aim at in the Exposition is, to give what I thought the genuine Sense, and to make it as plain as I could to ordinary Capacities, not troubling my Reader with the different Sentiments of Expositors, which

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which would have been to transcribe Mr. Pool's Latin Synopsis, where this is done abundantly to our Satisfaction and Advantage.

As to the Practical Observations, I have not obliged my self to raise Doctrines out of every Verse or Paragraph, but only have endeavoured to mix with the Exposition such Hints or Remarks as I thought improveable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, and for Instruction in Righteousness, aiming in all to promote practical Godliness, and carefully avoiding Matters of doubtful Disputation, and Strifes of Words. 'Tis only the Prevalency of the Power of Religion in the Hearts and Lives of Christians that will redress our Grievances, and turn our Wilderness into a fruitful Field.

And since our Lord Jesus Christ is the true Treasure hid in the Field of the Old Testament, and was the Lamb slain from the Foundation of the World, I have been careful to observe what Moses wrote of him, to which he himself oft appealed. In the Writings of the Prophets, we meet with more of the plain and express Promises of the Messiah, and the Grace of the Gospel; But here in the Books of Moses we find more of the Types, both real and personal, Figures of him that was to come; Shadows of which the Substance is Christ. Those to whom to live is Christ, will find in those that which is very instructive and affecting, and will give great Assistance to their Faith and Love, and Holy Joy. This in a particular Manner we search the Scriptures for, to find what they testify of Christ and Eternal Life. Rom. v. 14. Joh. v. 39.

Nor is it any Objection against the Application of the Ceremonial Institutions to Christ and his Grace; That they to whom they were given could not discern this Sense, or Use of them: But 'tis rather a Reason why we should be very thankful that the Vail which was upon their Minds in the reading of the Old Testament, is done away in Christ. Tho' they then could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished, it doth not therefore follow but that we who are happily furnished with a Key to those Mysteries, may in them as in a Glass, behold the Glory of the Lord Jesus. And yet perhaps the Pious Jews saw more of the Gospel in their Ritual, than we think they did: They had at least a general Expectation of Good Things to come by Faith in the Promises made to the Fathers, as we have of the Happiness of Heaven, tho' they could not of that World to come, no more than we can of this, form any distinct or certain Idea. Our Conceptions of the future State perhaps are as dark and confused, as short of the Truth, and as wide from it as theirs then were of the Kingdom of the Messiah; but God requires Faith only, according to the Revelation he gives. They then were accountable for no more Light than they had, and we now are accountable for that greater Light which we have in the Gospel, by the help of which we may find much more of Christ in the Old Testament than they could. 2 Cor. iii. 13, 14, 18.

If any think our Observations sometimes take rise from that which to them seems too minute, let them remember that Maxim of the Rabbins, Non est in lege vel una litera a qua non pendent magni montes. We are sure there is not an idle Word in the Bible.

I would desire the Reader not only to read the Text entire, before he reads the Exposition, but as the several Verses are referred to in the Exposition, to cast his Eye upon them again, and then he will the better understand what he reads. And if he have Leisure, he will find it of Use to him to turn to the Scriptures which are sometimes only referred to, for Brevity sake, comparing Spiritual Things with Spiritual.

It is the declared Purpose of the Eternal Mind in all the Operations, both of Providence and Grace, to magnify the Law, and to make it honourable; nay, to magnify his Word above all his Name, so that when we pray, Father, Glorify thy Name, we mean this among other things, Father, Magnify the Holy Scriptures, and to that Prayer made in Faith, we may be sure of that Answer, which was given to our Blessed Saviour when he prayed it, with particular Respect to the fulfilling the Scriptures in his own Sufferings, I have both glorified it, and I will glorify it yet again. To this great Design I humbly desire to be some Way serviceable; in the Strength of that Grace by which I am what I am, hoping that what may help to make the reading of the Scripture more Easy, Pleasant, and Profitable, will be graciously accepted by him that smiled on the Widow's Two Mites cast into the Treasury, as an Intention to magnify it, and make it honourable; And if I can but gain that Point in any Measure, with some, I shall think my Endeavours abundantly recompensed, however, by others, I and my Performances may be vilified, and made contemptible. Isa. xlii. 21. Ps. 138. 2. Joh. xii. 28.

I have now nothing more to add, but to recommend my self to the Prayers of my Friends, and them to the Grace of the Lord Jesus, and so rest an unworthy Dependant upon that Grace, and through that, an Expectant of the Glory to be revealed.

9 OC 65

Chester,
Oct. 2.
1706.

M. H.

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E P I S T L E T O T H E R E A D E R.

IT is not so much our Design to recommend this Excellent Performance, as to tell the World how sensible we are that it can never need our Recommendation : We are fully assured it is able to speak for it self, and if it were not so, we know very well that our Names and Sentiments can never contribute any Authority to it.

We will not take notice of those Extrinsic and Occasional Advantages, which give unto Books a precarious and short-liv'd Reputation, such as the Capacity of the generality of Readers, the Humours of the Age, and intire Subserviency, or a direct Opposition to the prevailing Interests of the Places in which we live ; But this is certain, the real Intrinsic and abiding Value of any Work of this Nature, must arise from the Excellency of its Subject, together with the just Manner in which it is treated.

The Subject of this Book may with very good Reason challenge the Preference to every thing else in this World ; It is the first Volume of the Oracles of God, of equal Authority with the rest of the Bible, and of excellent Use to explain and confirm the other Parts of Sacred Writ unto us.

The Study of *Antiquity* has been always accounted a very profitable and pleasing Thing, and there is no Antiquity like unto that which we have in the Books of *Moses* ; other Histories are Novel and Modern if compared with this, some of them perhaps may lead us a Thousand Years back, Two Thousand is a great Way, those that pretend to go higher lose themselves, and us too, in the dark and untrodden Paths of Fancy and Conjecture ; but here we have a Book that gives us a certain Rational Satisfactory Account of the Beginning of Time, the Creation of the World, the Original of Nations, the Division of Languages, and what most concerns us to know, the unhappy Source of all that Vanity and Vice, that have Corrupted Humane Nature, and made so deplorable a Breach betwixt God and Man, together with the wonderful Counsels and Methods of Divine Love, for the Recovery of Sinners by the Promised Seed, so directly shadowed forth, especially by the Typical Sacrifices of the Levitical Law.

It ought to be very grateful to us to consider how in giving us the Bible, our gracious God has most kindly supplied the manifest Deficiencies of our personal Knowledge : We are short-Liv'd, and short-Sighted Creatures, it is but very little that falls under our own Observation, but God has put a Book into our Hands, by the help whereof, we may stretch out our Knowledge to a vast Compass ; if we look into the Historical Part of it, we may go as far back as to the Beginning of Time ; and if we consult the Prophetical, we may look as far forward as to the End of Days, and may take a View from first to last of all those Things in which our Duty and Happiness are most nearly interested.

As to the Manner in which the Reverend Author has Treated this Noble Subject, we shall only say it is worthy of Himself, that is, of one that from a Child has known the Holy Scriptures, that by the Example and Advice of an Excellent Father, by the help of a Pious and Learned Education, has searched very narrowly into them, and not only made them the delightful Subject of his Solitary Hours, but constantly allowed them a large Room, both in his Family Devotions and Publick Ministrations : How great and manifest Advantages have resulted from hence to himself as to his own Temper and Conduct, and to the Happy People amongst whom he has spent so much of his Life and Labours, We must not say, because we would not offend him, but leave it to the impartial Thoughts of all those that will be so kind to themselves, as to accept of the Assistance that is here offered unto them.

We cannot conclude without expressing our Heart's Desire and Prayer to God, that our Dear and Honoured Brother may live to see the Good Success of this Part of his Work, and may have the Opportunity to pursue and perfect all his further Designs of this Nature.

AN EXPOSITION UPON THE First Book of MOSES, called GENESIS, WITH PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

*We have now before us, 1. The Holy Bible, or Book, for so Bible signifies. We call it the Book by way of Eminency, for it is incomparably the best Book that ever was written, the Book of Books, shining like the Sun in the Firmament of Learning; other valuable and useful Books, like the Moon and Stars, borrowing their Light from it. We call it the Holy Book, because it was written by Holy Men, indited by the Holy Ghost; 'tis perfectly pure from all Falshood, and corrupt Intention, and the manifest Tendency of it is to promote Holiness among Men.—The Great Things of God's Law and Gospel are here written to us, that they might be reduced to a Greater Certainty, might spread further, remain longer, and be transmitted to distant Places and Ages more Pure and Entire than possibly they could be by Report and Tradition. And we shall have a great deal to answer for, if these Things which belong to our Peace, being thus committed to us in black and white, be neglected by us as a strange and foreign Thing, Hof. 8. 12.—The Scriptures, or Writings of the several inspired Penmen, from Moses down to St. John, in which Divine Light, like that of the Morning, shone gradually, (the Sacred Canon being now compleated) are all put together in this Blessed Bible, which thanks be to God we have in our Hands, and they make as perfect a Day, as we are to expect on this side Heaven. Every Part was Good, but All together, very Good. This is the Light that shines in a dark Place, 2 Pet. 1. 19. and a dark Place indeed the World would be without the Bible. — 2. We have before us that Part of the Bible which we call the Old Testament, containing the Acts and Monuments of the Church from the Creation, almost to the coming of Christ in the Flesh, which was about Four Thousand Years; The Truths then revealed, the Laws then enacted, the Devotions then paid, the Prophecies then given, and the Events that were concerning that distinguish'd Body, so far as God saw fit to preserve to us the Knowledge of them. This is call'd a Testament, or Covenant, (*Διαθήκη*) because it was a settled Declaration of the Will of God concerning Man in a Federal Way, and had its Force from the designed Death of the Great Testator, the Lamb slain from the Foundation of the World, Rev. 13. 8.—'Tis called the Old Testament with relation to the New, which doth not cancel and supersede it, but Crown and Perfeet it by the bringing in of that better Hope which was typified and foretold in it. The Old Testament still remains glorious, tho' the New far exceeds in Glory, 2 Cor. 3. 9.— 3. We have before us that Part of the Old Testament which we call the Pentateuch, or Five Books of Moses that Servant of the Lord, who excell'd all the other Prophets, and typified the Great Prophet. In our Saviour's Distribution of the Books of the Old Testament into the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms, or Hagiographa, these are the Law; for they contain not only the Laws given to Israel in the Four last, but the Laws given to Adam, to Noah, and to Abraham in the First. These Five Books were, for ought we know, the First that ever were written; for we have not the least mention of any Writing in all the Book of Genesis, nor till God bid Moses write, Exod. 17. 14. and some think Moses himself never learn'd to write, till God set him his Copy in the Writing of the Ten Commandments upon the Tables of Stone. However we are sure these Books are the most ancient Writings now extant, and therefore best able to give us a satisfactory Account of the most ancient Things.— 4. We have before us the First and Longest of those Five Books which we call Genesis, written, some think, when Moses was in Midian, for the Instruction and Comfort of his Suffering Brethren in Egypt; I rather think he wrote it in the Wilderness, after he had been in the Mount with God, where probably he received full and particular Instructions for the writing of it. And as he framed the Tabernacle, so he did the more excellent and durable Fabrick of this Book, exactly according to the pattern shewed him in the Mount; into which it is better to resolve the Certainty of the Things herein contained, than into any Tradition which possibly might be handed down from Adam to Methuselah, from him to Shem, from him to Abraham, and so to the Family of Jacob.—Genesis is a Name borrowed from the Greek: It signifies the Original, or Generation: Fitly is this Book so call'd, for it is a History of Originals; The Creation of the World, the Entrance of Sin and Death into it, the Invention of Arts, the Rise of Nations, and especially the Planting of the Church, and the State of it in its early Days. 'Tis also a History of Generations, The Generations of Adam, Noah, Abraham, &c. not endless but useful Genealogies.— The Beginning of the New Testament is called Genesis too, Matt. 1. 1. *Βελαγονισμος*. The Book of the Genesis, or Generation of Jesus Christ. Blessed be God for that Book which shews us our Remedy, as this opens our Wound. Lord, open our Eyes, that we may see the wondrous Things both of thy Law and Gospel.*

CHAP. I.

The Foundation of all Religion being laid in our Relation to God as our Creator, 'twas fit that the Book of Divine Revelations, which was intended to be the Guide, Support, and Rule of Religion in the World, should begin, as it doth, with a plain and full Account of the Creation of the World; in answer to that first Enquiry of a Good Conscience, Where is God my Maker? Job 35. 8. Concerning this, the Pagan Philosophers wretchedly blunder'd, and became vain in their Imaginations, some asserting the World's Eternity and Self-existence; Others ascribing it to a fortuitous Concurrence of Atoms; Thus the World by Wisdom knew not God, but took a great deal of Pains to lose him: The Holy Scripture therefore designing, by Revealed Religion, to maintain and improve Natural Religion, to repair the Decays of it, and supply the Defects of it, since the Fall, for the reviving of the Precepts of the Law of Nature, lays down at first this Principle of the unclouded Light of Nature; That this World was in the Beginning of Time; Created by a Being of infinite Wisdom, and Power, who was himself before all Time, and all Worlds. The entrance into God's Word gives this Light, Pl. 119. 130. The first Verse of the Bible gives us a surer and better, a more satisfying and useful Knowledge of the Origin of the Universe, than all the Volumes of the Philosophers. The lively Faith of humble Christians understands this Matter better than the elevated Fancies of the greatest Wits, Heb. 11. 3.

We have Three Things in this Chapter, (1.) A General Idea given us of the Work of Creation, v. 1. 2. (2.) A particular Account of the several Days Work, registered as in a Journal, distinctly and in order. The Creation of the Light the First Day, v. 3-5. Of the Firmament the Second Day, v. 6-8. Of the Sea, the Earth, and its Fruits the Third Day, v. 9-13. Of the Lights of Heaven the Fourth Day, v. 14-19. Of the Fifth and Sixth the Fifth Day, v. 20-23. Of the Beasts, v. 24-25. Of Man, v. 26-28. And Food for both the Sixth Day, v. 29-30. (3.) The Review and Approbation of the whole Work, v. 31.

IN the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. 2 And the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

In these Verses we have the Work of Creation in its Epitome, and in its Eymbryo.

1. In its Epitome, v. 1. Where we find to our Comfort the First Article of our Creed, That God the Father Almighty is the Maker of Heaven and Earth, and as such we believe in him. Observe in this Verse Four Things. 1. The Effect produced, the Heaven and the Earth, i. e. The World, including the whole Frame and Furniture of the Universe, the World and all things therein, Acts 17. 24. The World is a Great House consisting of Upper and lower Stories, the Structure stately and magnificent, uniform and convenient, and every Room well and wisely furnished. 'Tis the visible Part of the Creation that Moses here designs to account for, therefore he mentions not the Creation of Angels: But as the Earth has not only its Surface adorn'd with Grasse and Flowers, but also its Bowels enrich'd with Metals and precious Stones, which partake more of its solid Nature; and are more valuable, but the Creation of them not mentioned here; so the Heavens are not only beautified to our Eye with glorious Lamps which garnish its out-side, of whose Creation we hear read; But they are within replenish'd with glorious Beings, out of our Sight, more Celestial, and more Surpassing them in Worth and Excellency, than the Gold or Sapphires do the Lilies of the Field. In the visible World it is easy to observe, (1.) Great Variety. Several sorts of Beings vastly differing in their Nature and Constitution from each other. Lord, how manifold are thy Works, and all Good? (2.) Great Beauty. The azure Sky, and verdant Earth are charming to the Eye of the curious Spectator, much more the Ornaments of both. How transcendent then must the Beauty of the Creator be! (3.) Great Exactness, and Accuracy. To those that with the help of Microscopes narrowly look into the Works of Nature, they appear far more fine than any of the Works of Art. (4.) Great Power. 'Tis not a Lump of dead inactive Matter, but there is Virtue more or less in every Creature; the Earth itself hath a magnetick Power. (5.) Great Order. A mutual Dependence of Beings, an exact Harmony of Motions, and an admirable Chain and Connexion of Causes. (6.) Great Mystery. There are Phenomena in Nature which cannot be solv'd, Secrets which cannot be fathom'd, nor accounted for. But from what we see of Heaven and Earth, we may easily enough infer the eternal Power and Godhead of the Great Creator, and may furnish our selves with abundant Matter for his Praises. And let our Make and Place, as Men, mind us of our Duty, as Christians, which is always to keep Heaven in our Eye, and the Earth under our Feet.

2. The Author and Cause of this Great Work, God. The Hebrew Word is Elohim, which speaks (1.) The Power of God Creator. El signifies the Strong God; And what less than an Almighty Strength could bring all things out of nothing? (2.) The Plurality of Persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This Plural Name of God in Hebrew, which speaks of him as Many tho' he be one, was to the Gentiles perhaps a Savor of Death unto Death, hardning them in their Idolatry, but it is to us a Savor of Life unto Life, confirming our Faith in the Doctrine of the Trinity, which tho' but darkly insinuated in the Old Testament, is clearly revealed in the New. The Son of God, the Eternal Word and Wisdom of the Father, was with him when he made the World, Pr. 8. 30. Nay, we are often told that the World was made by him, and nothing made without him, Job. 1. 3. 10. Eph. 3. 9. Col. 1. 16. Heb. 1. 2. Oh! what high Thoughts should this form in our Minds of that Great God whom we draw nigh to in Religious Worship, and that Great Mediator in whose Name we draw near.

3. The Way and Manner how this Work was effected. God Created, i. e. made it out of nothing: There was not any pre-existent Matter out of which the World was produced. The Fish and Fowl were indeed produced out of the Waters, and the Beasts and Man out of the Earth; But that Earth and those Waters were made out of nothing. By the ordinary Power of Nature it is impossible that something should be made out of nothing; no Artificer can work unless he hath something to work on: But by the Almighty Power of God 'tis not only possible that something should be made of nothing, the God of Nature is not subject to the Laws of Nature, but in the Creation, 'tis impossible it should be otherwise, for nothing is more injurious to the Honour of the Eternal Mind, than the Supposition of Eternal Matter. Thus the Excellency of the Power is of God, and all the Glory, is to him.

4. When this Work was produced. In the Beginning, i. e. In the beginning of Time, when that Clock was first set a-going: Time began with the production of those Beings that are measured by Time. Before the beginning of Time there was none but that Infinite Being that inhabits Eternity. Should we ask why God made the World no sooner, we should but darken Counsel by Words without Knowledge; for how could there be sooner or later in Eternity! And he did make it in the beginning of Time, according to his eternal Counsels before all Time. The Jewish Rabbins have a Saying that there were Seven Things which God created before the World, by which they only mean to express the Excellency of these Things: The Law; Repentance; Paradise; Hell; The Throne of Glory; The House of the Sanctuary; and the Name of the Messiah. But to us it is enough to say, In the beginning was the Word, Joh. 1. 1.

Let us learn hence, 1. that Atheism is Folly, and Atheists are the greatest Fools in Nature, for they see there is a World that could not make itself, and yet they will not own there is a God that made it. Doubtless they are without Excuse, but the God of this World hath blinded their Minds. 2. That God is sovereign Lord of all by an uncontestable Right. If he be the Creator, no doubt he is the Owner and Possessor of Heaven and Earth. 3. That with God all things are possible, and therefore Happy are the People that have him for their God, and whose Help and Hope stands in his Name, Ps. 121. 2-124. 1. 4. That the God we serve is worthy of, and yet is exalted far above all Blessing and Praise, Neh. 9. 5, 6. If he made the World, he needs not our Services, nor can be benefited by them, Acts 17. 24, 25. and yet he justly requires them, and deserves our Praise, Rev. 4. 11. If all be of him, all must be to him.

2. Here's the Work of Creation in its Embryo, v. 2. where we have an Account of the First Matter, and the First Mover. 1. A Chaos was the First Matter. 'Tis here called the Earth, (tho' the Earth properly taken, was not made till the Third Day, v. 10.) because it did most resemble that which afterwards was called Earth, meer Earth, destitute of its Ornaments, such a heavy unweildy Mass was it: 'Tis also call'd the Deep, both for its Vastness, and because the Waters which were afterwards separated from the Earth, were now mixed with it. This mighty Bulk of Matter was it out of which all Bodies, even the Firmament, and visible Heavens themselves, were afterwards produc'd, by the Power of the Eternal Word. The Creator could have made his Work perfect at first; but by this gradual Proceeding he would shew what is ordinarily the Method of his Providence and Grace. Observe, the Description of this Chaos. (1.) There was nothing in it desirable to be seen, for it was without form and void. Tobu and Bobu, Confusion and Emptiness, so those Words are render'd, Isa. 34. 11. 'Twas Shapeless, 'twas Useless, 'twas without Inhabitants, without Ornaments, the Shadow or rough Draught of Things to come, and not the Image of the Thing, Heb. 10. 1. The Earth is almost reduced to the same Condition again by the Sin of Man, under which the Creation groans: see Jer. 4. 23. I beheld the Earth, and lo it was without form and void. To those who have their Hearts in Heaven, this lower World in comparison with that upper, still appears to be nothing but Confusion and Emptiness. There's no true Beauty to be seen, no satisfying Fulness to be enjoy'd in this Earth, but in God only. (2.) If there had been any thing desirable to be seen, yet there was no Light to see it by.

for Darkneſs, thick Darkneſs was upon the face of the Deep. God did not create this Darkneſs, (as he is ſaid to create the Darkneſs of Affliction, *Iſa.* 45. 7.) for it was only the want of Light, which yet could not be ſaid to be wanted till ſomething was made that might be ſeen by it, nor need the want of it be much complained of, when there was nothing to be ſeen but Confuſion and Emptineſs. If the Work of Grace in the Soul be a New Creation, this Chaos repreſents the State of an unregenerate graceleſs Soul: There is *Diſorder, Confuſion, and every evil Work*; 'Tis Empty of all Good, for it is without God: 'Tis Dark, 'tis Darkneſs it ſelf: This is our Condition by Nature, till Almighty Grace effects a bleſſed Change. 2. The Spirit of God was the *Fiſt Mover*; He moved upon the face of the Waters. When we conſider the Earth without form and void, methinks 'tis like the Valley full of dead and dry Bones. Can thoſe live? Can this confuſed Maſs of Matter be form'd into a Beautiful World? Yes, if a Spirit of Life from God enter into it, *Ezek.* 37. 9. Now there is Hope concerning this thing, for the Spirit of God begins to work, and if he work, who or what ſhall hinder? God is ſaid to make the World by his Spirit, *Pſ.* 33. 6. *Job* 26. 13. And by the ſame mighty Worker, the New Creation is effected. He moved upon the Face of the Deep, as *Elijah* ſtretched himſelf upon the dead Child: As the Hen gathers her Chickens under her Wings, and hovers over them, to warm and cheriſh them, *Mat.* 23. 37. As the Eagle ſirs up her Neſt, and fluttereth over her Young, ('tis the ſame Word that is here uſ'd) *Deut.* 32. 11. Learn hence, That God is not only the Author of all Being, but the Fountain of Life, and Spring of Motion. Dead Matter would be for ever dead, if he did not quicken it. And this makes it credible to us that God ſhould raiſe the Dead. That Power which brought ſuch a World as this out of Confuſion, Emptineſs and Darkneſs at the Beginning of Time, can at the End of Time bring our vile Bodies, out of the Grave, tho' it be a Land of Darkneſs as Darkneſs it ſelf, and without any Order, *Job* 10. 22. and can make them Glorious Bodies.

3 And God ſaid, Let there be light: and there was light. 4 And God ſaw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkneſs. 5 And God called the light Day, and the darkneſs he called Night: and the evening and the morning were the fiſt day.

We have here a further Account of the fiſt Day's Work. In which Obſerve, 1. That the fiſt of all viſible Beings which God created was Light: Not that by it he himſelf might ſee to work, for the Darkneſs and Light are both alike to him; but that by it we might ſee his Works, and his Glory in them, and might work our Works while it is Day. The Works of Satan and his Servants are Works of Darkneſs; but he that doth Truth, and doth Good; cometh to the Light, and coveteth it, that his Deeds may be made manifeſt, *Joh.* 3. 21. Light is the great Beauty and Bleſſing of the Univerſe: Like the Fiſt-born, it doth of all viſible Beings, moſt reſemble its Great Parent in Purity and Power, Brightneſs and Beneficence; 'Tis of great Affinity with the Spirit, and is next to it; tho' by it we ſee other things, and are ſure that it is, yet we know not its Nature, nor can deſcribe what it is, or by what way the Light is parted, *Job* 38. 19. 24. By the Sight of it let us be led to and aſſiſted in the believing Contemplation of Him who is Light, infinite and eternal Light, *1 Joh.* 1. 5. and the Father of Lights, *Jam.* 1. 17. and who dwells in inacceſſible Light, *1 Tim.* 6. 16. In the New Creation, the fiſt thing wrought in the Soul is Light: The Bleſſed Spirit captivates the Will and Affections, by enlightning the Underſtanding, ſo coming into the Heart by the Door, like the good Shepherd whoſe own it is, while Sin and Satan like Thieves and Robbers climb up ſome other way. They that by Sin were darkneſs, by Grace become Light in the Lord. 2. That the Light was made by the Word of God's Power; He ſaid, Let there be Light. He willed and appointed it, and it was done immediately, there was Light, ſuch a Copy as exactly answered the original Idea in the Eternal Mind. O the Power of the Word of God! He ſpoke, and it was done; done really and effectually, and for Perpetuity, not in ſhew only and to ſerve a preſent turn, for he commanded and it ſtood faſt; with him 'twas *Dictum, Factum*, a Word, and a World. The Word of God, that is, his Will and the good Pleaſure of it, is quick and powerful. Chriſt is the Word, the Eſſential Eternal Word, and by him the Light was produced, for in him was Light, and he is the true Light, the Light of the World, *Joh.* 1. 9. 5. The Divine Light which ſhines in Sanctified Souls is wrought by the Power of God, the Power of his Word, and of the Spirit of Wiſdom and Revelation, opening the Underſtanding, ſcattering the Miſts of Ignorance and Miſtake, and giving the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the Face of Chriſt, as at fiſt, God commanded the Light to ſhine out of Darkneſs, *2 Cor.* 4. 6. Darkneſs had been perpetually upon the Face of Fallen Man, if the Son of God had not come and given us an Underſtanding, *1 Joh.* 5. 20. 3. That the Light which God willed, when it was produced, he approv'd of. God ſaw the Light that it was good. 'Twas exactly as he deſign'd it, and it was fit to answer the End for which he deſign'd it. 'Twas

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uſeful and profitable; the World that now is a Palace, would have been a Dungeon without it: 'Twas amiable and pleaſant. Truly Light is ſweet, *Ecc.* 11. 7. It rejoiceth the Hearts, *Pr.* 15. 30. What God commands, he will approve and graciously accept of, and be well pleas'd with the Work of his own Hands. That's good indeed which is ſo in the ſight of God, for he ſees not as Man ſees. If the Light be Good, how good is he that is the Fountain of Light, from whom we receive it, and to whom we owe all Praise for it, and all the Services we do by it? 4. That God divided the Light from the Darkneſs, ſo put them aſunder as that they could never be joyned together or reconciled, for what fellowship has Light with Darkneſs? *2 Cor.* 6. 14. And yet he divided Time between them, the Day for Light, and the Night for Darkneſs, in a conſtant and regular Succeſſion each to other. Tho' the Darkneſs was now ſcatter'd by the Light, yet it was not condemn'd to a perpetual Banishment, but takes its turn with the Light, and has its Place; becauſe it has its Uſe; for as the Light of the Morning befriends the Buſineſs of the Day, ſo the Shadows of the Evening befriend the Repoſe of the Night, and draw the Curtains about us that we may ſleep the better. See *Job* 7. 2. God has thus divided Time between Light and Darkneſs, becauſe he would daily mind us that this is a World of Mixtures and Changes. In Heaven there is perfect and perpetual Light, and no Darkneſs at all: In Hell utter Darkneſs, and no Gleam of Light. In that World betwixt theſe two there is a great Gulf fix'd, but in this World they are counter-chang'd, and we paſs daily from one to t'other; that we may learn to expect the like Viciffitudes in the Providence of God, Peace and Trouble, Joy and Sorrow, and may ſet the one over againſt the other, and accommodate our ſelves to both, as we do to the Light and Darkneſs, bidding both welcome, and making the beſt of both. 5. That God divided them from each other by diſtiniſhing Names. He called the Light Day, and the Darkneſs he called Night. He gave them Names as Lord of both, for the Day is his, the Night alſo is his, *Pſ.* 74. 16. He is the Lord of Time, and will be ſo till Day and Night ſhall come to an end, and the Stream of Time be ſwallowed up in the Ocean of Eternity. Let us acknowledge God in the conſtant Succeſſion of Day and Night, and conſecrate both to his Honour, by working for him every Day, and reſting in him every Night, and meditating in his Law, Day and Night. 6. That this was the fiſt Day's Work, and a good Day's Work it was, the Evening and the Morning were the fiſt Day. The Darkneſs of the Evening was before the Light of the Morning, that it might ſerve for a Foil to ſet it off, and make it ſhine the brighter. This was not only the fiſt Day of the World, but the fiſt Day of the Week: I obſerve it to the Honour of that Day; becauſe the New World began on the fiſt Day of the Week likewiſe in the Reſurrection of Chriſt, as the Light of the World early in the Morning. In him the Day-ſpring from on high hath viſited the World, and happy are we, for ever happy, if that Day-Star ariſe in our Hearts.

6 ¶ And God ſaid, Let there be a firmament in the midſt of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. 7 And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament, from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was ſo. 8 And God called the firmament Heaven: and the evening and the morning were the ſecond day.

We have here an Account of the Second Day's Work, the Creation of the Firmament, in which Obſerve, 1. The Command of God concerning it. Let there be a Firmament, an Expanſion, ſo the Hebrew Word ſignifies, like a Sheet ſpread, or a Curtain drawn out. This includes all that is viſible above the Earth, between it and the third Heavens, the Air, its higher, middle, and lower Region, the Celeſtial Globe, and all the Spheres and Orbs of Light above: It reaches as high as the Place where the Stars are fix'd, for that's call'd here the Firmament of Heaven, *v.* 14. 15. and as low as the Place where the Birds fly, for that alſo is called the Firmament of Heaven, *v.* 20. When God had made the Light, he appointed the Air to be the Receptacle, and Vehicle of its Beams, and to be as a Medium of Communication between the inviſible and the viſible World; for tho' between Heaven and Earth there is an unconceivable Diſtance, yet there is not an unpaſſable Gulph, as there is between Heaven and Hell. This Firmament is not a Wall of Partition, but a Way of Intercourſe. See *Job* 26. 7-37. 18. *Pſ.* 104. 3. *Amos* 9. 6. 2. The Creation of it. Left it ſhould ſeem as if God had only commanded it to be done, and ſome one elſe had done it, he adds, and God made the Firmament. What God requires of us, he himſelf works in us, or it is not done. He that commands Faith, Holineſs, and Love, creates them by the Power of his Grace, going along with his Word, that he may have all the Praise. Lord, give what thou commandeſt, and then command what thou pleaſeſt.

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The Firmament is said to be the Work of God's Fingers, Pl. 8. 3. Tho' the vastness of its Extent speaks it the Work of his Arm stretched out, yet the admirable Fineness of its Constitution speaks it like a curious Piece of Art, the Work of his Fingers. 3. The Use and Design of it; to divide the Waters from the Waters; i. e. to distinguish between the Waters that are wrapt up in the Clouds, and those that cover the Sea. The Waters in the Air, and those in the Earth. See the Difference between these two carefully observed, Deut. 11. 10, 11. where Canaan is upon this account preferred before Egypt, that Egypt was moistened and made fruitful with the Waters that are under the Firmament, but Canaan with Waters from above, out of the Firmament; even the Dew of Heaven which carrieth not for the Sons of Men, Mic. 5. 7. God hath in the Firmament of his Power, Chambers, Store-Chambers, whence he watereth the Earth, Pl. 104. 13-65. 9, 10. He hath also Treasures or Magazines of Snow and Hail which he hath reserved against the Day of Battle and War, Job 38. 22, 23. O what a great God is he who is thus provided for the Comfort of all that serve him, and the Confusion of all that hate him! 'Tis good having him our Friend, and bad having him our Enemy. 4. The Naming of it. He called the Firmament Heaven. 'Tis the visible Heaven, the Pavement of the Holy City; Above the Firmament God is said to have his Throne, Ezek. 1. 26. for he has prepared it in the Heavens; the Heavens therefore are said to rule, Dan. 4. 26. Is not God in the Height of Heaven? Job 22. 12. Yes, he is, and we should be led by the Contemplation of the Heavens that are in our Eye, to consider Our Father which is in Heaven. The Height of the Heavens should mind us of God's Supremacy, and the Infinite Distance that is between us and him; The Brightness of the Heavens, and their Purity should mind us of his Glory and Majesty, and perfect Holiness; The vastness of the Heavens, and their encompassing the Earth, and Influence upon it, should mind us of his Immenity and universal Providence.

9 ¶ And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. 10 And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the Waters, called he Seas: and God saw that it was good. 11 And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in it self, upon the earth: and it was so. 12 And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in it self, after his kind: and God saw that it was good. 13 And the evening and the morning were the third day.

The Third Days Work is related in these Verses, The Forming of the Sea and the Dry Land, and the making of the Earth fruitful. Hitherto the Power of the Creator had been exerted and employ'd about the upper Part of the visible World, the Light of Heaven was kindled, and the Firmament of Heaven fixed; But now he descends to this lower World, the Earth, which was designed for the Children of Men, design'd both for their Habitation, and for their Maintenance, and here we have an Account of the fitting of it for both; the Building of their House, and the spreading of their Table. Observe, 1. How the Earth was prepared to be a Habitation for Man, by the gathering of the Waters together, and the making of the Dry Land to appear. Thus instead of that Confusion which was v. 2. when Earth and Water were mixed in one great Mass; behold now there is Order, by such a Separation as render'd them both useful. God said, Let it be so, and it was so, no sooner said but done. (1) The Waters which had covered the Earth, were order'd to retire, and to gather into one place, viz. those Hollows which are fitted and appointed for their Reception and Rest: The Waters thus cleared, thus collected, and thus lodg'd in their proper Place he called Seas; for tho' they are many, in distant Regions, and washing several Shores, yet either above Ground, or under Ground, they have communication with each other, and so they are One, and the common Receptacle of Waters, into which all the Rivers run, Eccl. 1. 7. Waters and Seas oft in Scripture signify Troubles and Afflictions, Ps. 69. 2, 14, 15-42. 7. God's own People are not exempted from these in this World, but it is their Comfort that they are only Waters under the Heaven, there are none in Heaven, and that they are all in the Place that God hath appointed them, and within the Bounds that he hath set them. How the Waters were gathered together at first, and how they are still bound and limited by the same Almighty Hand that first confined them, is elegantly described, Ps. 104. 6-9. and is there mentioned as Matter of Praise. They that go down to the Sea in Ships ought

to acknowledge daily the Wisdom, Power, and Goodness of the Creator, in making the great Waters serviceable to Man for Trade and Commerce; And they that tarry at Home must own themselves indebted to him that keeps the Sea with Bars and Doors in its decreed Place, and stays its proud Waves, Job 36. 10, 11. (2.) The Dry Land was made to appear, and emerge out of the Waters, and was called Earth, and given to the Children of Men. The Earth it seems was in being before; but it was of no use because it was under Water: Thus many of God's Gifts are received in vain, because they are buried; Make them to appear and they become serviceable. We that to this Day enjoy the Benefit of the Dry Land (tho' since this, it was once Delug'd, and dry'd again) must own our selves Tenants to, and Dependants upon that God whose Hands prepared the Dry Land, Pl. 95. 5. Jon. 1. 9.

2. How the Earth was furnished for the Maintenance and Support of Man, v. 11, 12. Present Provision was now made, by the immediate Products of the Upstart Earth, which in obedience to God's Command, was no sooner made but it became fruitful, and brought forth Grass for the Cattle, and Herb for the Service of Man. Provision was likewise made for time to come, by the perpetuating of the several Species of Vegetables, which are numerous, various, and all curious, and every one having its Seed in itself after its Kind, that during the continuance of Man upon the Earth, Food might be fetched out of the Earth, for his Use and Benefit. Lord, what is Man that he is thus visited and regarded? That such Care should be taken, and such Provision made for the Support and Preservation of those Guilty and Obnoxious Lives which have been a Thousand Times forfeited?

Observe here, 1. That not only the Earth is the Lords, but the Fulness thereof, and he is the rightful Owner and sovereign Disposer, not only of it but of all its Furniture. The Earth was Emptiness, v. 2. but now by a Word's speaking, 'tis become full of God's Riches; and his they are still: His Corn and his Wine, his Wool and his Flax, Hof. 2. 9. Tho' the Use of 'em be allowed to us, the Property still remains in him, and to his Service and Honour they must be us'd. 2. That common Providence is a continued Creation, and in it our Father worketh hitherto. The Earth still remains under the Efficacy of this Command, to bring forth Grass and Herbs, and its annual Products, tho' being according to the common Course of Nature they are not standing Miracles, yet they are standing Instances of the unexhausted Power, and unexhausted Goodness of the World's great Maker and Master. 3. That tho' God ordinarily makes use of the Agency of Second Causes according to their Nature, yet he neither needs them nor is tied to them; for though the precious Fruits of the Earth are usually brought forth by the Influences of the Sun and Moon, Deut. 33. 14. yet here we find the Earth bearing a great abundance of Fruit, probably ripe Fruit, before the Sun and Moon were made. 4. That it is good to provide things necessary before we have occasion to use them: Before the Beasts and Man were made, here was Grass and Herb prepared for them. God thus dealt wisely and graciously with Man, let no Man then be foolish and unwise for himself. 5. That God must have the Glory of all the Benefit we receive from the Products of the Earth, either for Food or Physick. 'Tis he that bears the Heavens, when they bear the Earth, Hof. 2. 21, 22. And if we have through Grace an Interest in him who is the Fountain, when the Streams are dried up, and the Fig-tree doth not blossom, we may rejoice in him.

14 ¶ And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven, to divide the day from the night: and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years. 15 And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven, to give light upon the earth: and it was so. 16 And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. 17 And God set them in the firmament of the heaven, to give light upon the earth, 18 And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. 19 And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

This is the History of the Fourth Day's Work, the Creating of the Sun, Moon, and Stars, which are here accounted for; not as they are in themselves, and in their own Nature, to satisfy the Curious, but as they are in relation to this Earth, to which they serve as Lights; and this is enough to furnish us with Matter for Praise and Thanksgiving. Holy Job mentions this as an Instance of the glorious Power of God, that by his Spirit he hath garnished the Heavens, Job 26. 13. And here we have an Account of that Garniture, which is not only so much the Beauty of the upper World, but so much the Blessing of this lower;

lower; for *though Heaven be high, yet hath it respect to this Earth*, and therefore should have respect from it. Of the Creation of the Lights of Heaven we have an account, 1. In General, v. 14, 15. where we have, (1.) The Command given concerning them; *Let there be Lights in the Firmament of Heaven*. God had said, v. 3. *Let there be Light, and there was Light*. But that was as it were a Chaos of Light, scattered and confus'd, now it was collected and modelled, and made into several Luminaries, and so render'd both more glorious and more serviceable. God is the God of Order, and not of Confusion: And as he is *Light*, so he is the Father and Former of *Lights*. Those Lights were to be in the Firmament of Heaven, that vast Expanse which enfoldeth the Earth, and is conspicuous to all, for no Man when he has lighted a Candle, puts it under a Bushel, but on a Candlestick, Luke 8. 16. and a stately Golden Candlestick the Firmament of Heaven is, from which these Candles give Light to all that are in the House. The Firmament it self is spoken of, as having a brightness of its own, Dan. 12. 3. But that was not sufficient to give Light to the Earth; and perhaps for that Reason it is not expressly said of the Second Day's Work in which the Firmament was made, that it was good, because till it was adorn'd with these Lights on the Fourth Day, it was not become serviceable to Man. (2.) The Use they were intended to be of, to this Earth. (1.) They must be for the Distinction of Times, of Day and Night, Summer and Winter, which are interchang'd by the Motion of the Sun; whose rising makes Day, his setting Night; his approach towards our Tropick makes Summer, his recess to the other, Winter: And thus under the Sun there is a Season to every Purpose, Eccl. 3. 1. (2.) They must be for the Direction of Actions. They are for Signs of the Change of Weather, that the Husbandman may order his Affairs with Discretion, foreseeing by the Face of the Sky, when second Causes have begun to work, whether it will be fair or foul, Matt. 16. 2, 3. They do also give Light upon the Earth that we may walk, (John 11. 9.) and work, (John 9. 4.) according as the Duty of every Day requires. The Lights of Heaven do not shine for themselves, nor for the World of Spirits above, they need 'em not, but they shine for us, and for our Pleasure and Advantage. Lord, what is Man that he should be thus regarded! Ps. 8. 3, 4. How ungrateful and inexcusable are we, if when God hath set up these Lights for us to work by, we Sleep, or Play, or Trifle away the Time of Business, and neglect the great Work we were sent into the World about? The Lights of Heaven are made to serve us, and they do it faithfully, and shine in their Season without fail; but we are set as Lights in this World, to serve God; and do we in like manner answer the End of our Creation? No, we do not, our Light doth not shine before God, as his Lights shine before us, Matt. 5. 14. We burn our Master's Candles, but do not mind our Master's Work. 2. In particular, v. 16, 17, 18. The Lights of Heaven are the Sun, Moon, and Stars, and these all are the Work of God's Hands. 1. The Sun is the greatest Light of all, One-hundred-sixty-six times bigger than the Earth, and the most Glorious and Useful of all the Lamps of Heaven; a noble Instance of the Creator's Wisdom, Power, and Goodness, and an invaluable Blessing to the Creatures of this lower World. Let us learn from Psal. 19. 1-6. how to give unto God the Glory due to his Name, as the Maker of the Sun. 2. The Moon is a lesser Light, and yet is here reckon'd one of the greater Lights, because tho' in regard of its Magnitude and borrowed Light, it is inferiour to many of the Stars, yet by virtue of its Office as Ruler of the Night, and in respect of its usefulness to the Earth, it is more excellent than they. Those are most valuable that are most serviceable; and they are the greater Lights, not that have the best Gifts, but that humbly and faithfully do the most Good with them. *Whoever will be great among you, let him be your Minister*, Mat. 20. 26. 3. He made the Stars also, which are here spoken of as they appear to vulgar Eyes, without distinguishing between the Planets and the fixed Stars, or accounting for their Number, Nature, Place, Magnitude, Motions, or Influences; for the Scriptures were written not to gratify our Curiosity, and make us Astronomers, but to lead us to God, and make us Saints. Now these Lights are said to rule, v. 16, 18. not that they have a supreme Dominion as God has, but they are Deputy-Governours, Rulers under him. Here the lesser Light, the Moon, is said to rule the Night, but Psal. 136. 9. the Stars are mentioned as Sharers in that Government, the Moon and Stars to rule by Night. No more is meant, but that they give Light, Jer. 31. 35. The best and most honourable way of ruling is by giving Light, and doing good: Those command Respects that live a useful Life; and so shine as Lights. Learn from all this, 1. The Sin and Folly of that ancient Idolatry, the worshipping of the Sun, Moon, and Stars, which some think took rise, or countenance at least, from some broken Traditions in the Patriarchal Age, concerning the Rule and Dominion of the Lights of Heaven. But the Account here given of them plainly shews that they are both God's Creatures and Man's Servants, and therefore it is both a great Affront to God, and a great Reproach to our selves to make Deities of them, and give them Divine Honours. See Deut. 4. 19. 2. The Duty

and Wisdom of daily worshipping of that God who made all these Things, and made them to be that to us which they are. The Revolutions of the Day and Night oblige us to the solemn Sacrifice of Prayers and Praises every Morning and Evening.

20 And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly about the earth in the open firmament of heaven. 21 And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good. 22 And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. 23 And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

Each Day hitherto hath produced very noble and excellent Beings, which we can never sufficiently admire; But we do not read of the Creation of any Living Creature till the fifth Day, which these Verses gives us an Account of. The Work of Creation not only proceeded gradually from one thing to another, but rose and advanced gradually, from that which was less excellent to that which was more so, teaching us to press towards Perfection, and endeavour that our last Works may be our best Works. 'Twas on the fifth Day that the Fish and Fowl were created, and both out of the Waters; though there be one kind of Flesh of Fishes, and another of Birds, yet they were made together, and both out of the Waters; for the Power of the first Cause can produce very different Effects from the same second Causes.

Observe, 1. The Making of the Fish and Fowl at first, v. 20, 21. God commanded them to be produced, he said, *Let the Waters bring forth abundantly*; Not as if the Waters had any productive Power of their own, but let them be brought into Being, the Fish in the Waters, and the Fowl out of them. This Command he himself executed, God created great Whales, &c. Insects which perhaps are as various and as numerous as any Species of Animals, and there Structure as curious, were part of this Day's Work, some of them being allied to the Fish, and others to the Fowl. Mr. Boyle (I remember) saith, he admires the Creator's Wisdom and Power as much in an Ant as in an Elephant. Notice is here taken of the various Species of Fish and Fowl, each after their kind; and of the great Numbers of both that were produced, for the Waters brought forth abundantly; and particular mention of great Whales, the largest of Fishes, whose Bulk and Strength exceeding that of any other Animal, are remarkable Proofs of the Power and Greatness of the Creator. The express Notice here taken of the Whale, above all the rest, seems sufficient to determine what Animal is meant by the Leviathan, Job 41. 1. The curious Formation of the Bodies of Animals, their different Sizes, Shapes and Natures, with the admirable Powers of the Sensitive Life with which they are endued, when duly consider'd, serve not only to Silence and Shame the Objections of Atheists and Infidels, but to raise high Thoughts and high Praises of God in pious and devout Souls, Ps. 104. 25, &c.

2. The Blessing of them in order to their Continuance. Life is a wasting thing, its Strength is not the Strength of Stones, 'tis a Candle that will burn out, if it be not first blown out; And therefore the wise Creator not only made the Individuals, but provided for the Propagating of the several Species, v. 22. God blessed them, saying, *Be fruitful and multiply*. God will bless his own Works, and not forsake them; and what he doth it shall be for a Perpetuity, Eccl. 3. 14. The Power of God's Providence preserves all things as at first his creating Power produced them. Fruitfulness is the Effect of God's Blessing, and must be ascribed to it; The Multiplying of the Fish and Fowl from Year to Year, is still the Fruit of this Blessing here. Well, let us give to God the Glory of the Continuance of these Creatures to this Day for the Benefit of Man. See Job 12. 7, 8, 9. 'Tis pity that Fishing and Fowling, Recreations innocent in themselves, should ever be abus'd to divert any from God and their Duty, while they are capable of being improv'd, to lead us to the Contemplation of the Wisdom, Power, and Goodness of him that made all these things, and to engage us to stand in awe of him, as the Fish and Fowl do of us.

24 ¶ And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. 25 And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their

their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

We have here the first Part of the Sixth Day's Work; The Sea was the Day before replenished with its Fish, and the Air with its Fowl; And this Day the Beasts of the Earth were made, Cattle, and the *creeping things* that pertain to the Earth. Here as before. (1.) *The Lord gave the Word*; He said, *Let the Earth bring forth*, not as if the Earth had any such prolifick Virtue as to produce these Animals; or as if God resign'd his creating Power to it, but let these Creatures now come into being upon the Earth, and out of it in their respective Kinds, conformable to the Ideas of them in the Divine Counsels concerning their Creation. (2.) He also *did the Work*; he made them all *after their Kind*, not only of divers Shapes, but of divers Natures, Manners, Food, and Fashions. Some to be tame about the House, others to be wild in the Fields: Some living upon Grass and Herbs, others upon Flesh: Some Harmless, and others Ravenous: Some Bold, and others Timorous: Some for Man's Service, and not his Sustainance, as the Horse; others for his Sustainance, and not Service, as the Sheep; others for both, as the Ox; and some for neither, as the wild Beasts. In all which appears the *manifest Wisdom* of the Creator.

26 ¶ And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him: male and female created he them. 28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

We have here the second part of the Sixth Day's Work. The Creation of Man, which we are in a special manner concern'd to take notice of, that we may *know our selves*. Observe, 1. That Man was *made last* of all the Creatures, that it might not be suspected that he had been any way an helper to God in the Creation of the World: That Question must be for ever humbling and mortifying to him, *Where wast thou, or any of thy Kind, when I laid the Foundations of the Earth?* Job 38. 4. Yet it was both an Honour and a Favour to him that he was made last; An Honour, for the Method of the Creation was to advance from that which was less perfect, to that which was more so; And a Favour, for it was not fit he should be lodged in the Palace designed for him, till it was completely fitted up and furnished for his Reception. Man as soon as he was made, had the whole visible Creation before him both to contemplate, and to take the Comfort of. Man was made the same Day that the Beasts were, because his Body was made of the same Earth with theirs; and while he is in the Body, he inhabits the same Earth with them. God grant that by indulging the Body, and the Desires of it, we do not make our selves *like the Beasts that perish*! 2. That Man's Creation was a more signal and immediate Act of Divine Wisdom and Power, than that of the other Creatures. The Narrative of it is introduced with something of Solemnity, and a manifest Distinction from the rest: Hitherto it had been said, *Let there be Light*; and *let there be a Firmament*; Or, *Let the Earth or Waters bring forth* such a thing, but now the Word of Command is turned into a Word of Consultation. *Let us make Man*, for whose sake the rest of the Creatures were made: This is a Work we must take into our own Hands. In the former he speaks as one having Authority, in this as one having Affection, for his *Delights were with the Sons of Men*, Prov. 8. 31. It should seem as if this were the Work which he long'd to be at, *q. d.* Having at last seal'd the Preliminaries, let us now apply our selves to the Business, *Let us make Man*. Man was to be a Creature different from all that had been hitherto made. Flesh and Spirit, Heaven and Earth must be put together in him, and he must be ally'd to both Worlds. And therefore God himself not only undertakes to make, but is pleas'd so to express himself, as if he call'd a Council to consider of the making of him. *Let us make Man*. The three Persons of the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, consult about it, and concur in it, because Man when he was made was to be dedicated and devoted to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Into that Great Name we are with good reason baptized, for to that great Name we owe our Being. Let them rule Man who said, *Let us make Man*.

3. That Man was made in *God's Image*, and *after his Likeness*; two Words to express the same thing, and making each other the more expressive. *Image and Likeness* is the Liket Image, the nearest resemblance of any of the visible Creatures. Man was not made in the likeness of any Creature that went before him, but in the likeness of his Creator, yet still between God and Man there is an infinite Distance. Christ only is the *express Image* of God's Person, as the Son of his Father, having the same Nature. 'Tis only *some of God's Honour* that is put upon Man, who is God's Image only as the Shadow in the Glass, or the King's Impress upon the Coin. God's Image upon Man consists in these three things: (1.) In his *Nature and Constitution*, not that of his Body, for God has not a Body, but that of his Soul. This Honour indeed God has put upon the Body of Man, that the Word was made Flesh, the Son of God was clothed with a Body like unto ours, and will shortly cloath ours with a Glory like unto his. And this we may safely say, that he *by whom God made the Worlds*, not only the Great World, but Man the little World, form'd the Humane Body at the first, according to the Platform he design'd for himself in the Fullness of Time. But it is the Soul, the great *Soul of Man* that doth especially bear God's Image. The Soul is a Spirit, an intelligent immortal Spirit, an influencing active Spirit, herein resembling God, the Father of Spirits, and the Soul of the World. *The Spirit of Man is the Candle of the Lord*. The Soul of Man considered in its three noble Faculties, Understanding, Will, and Active Power, is perhaps the brightest, clearest Looking-Glass in Nature wherein to see God. (2.) In his *Place and Authority*. Let us make Man in our Image, and let him have Dominion. As he has the Government of the Inferiour Creatures, he is as it were God's Representative, or Vice-Roy upon Earth; they are not capable of fearing and serving God, therefore God has appointed them to fear and serve Man. Yet his Government of himself by the *Freedom of his Will*, has in it more of God's Image, than his Government of the Creatures. (3.) In his *Purity and Rectitude*. God's Image upon Man consists in Knowledge, Righteousness and true Holiness, Eph. 4. 24. Col. 3. 10. He was *upright*, Eccl. 7. 29. He had an habitual Conformity of all his Natural Powers to the whole Will of God. His Understanding saw Divine Things clearly and truly, and there were no Errors or Mistakes in his Knowledge: His Will complied readily and universally with the Will of God, without Reluctancy or Resistance: His Affections were all regular, and he had no inordinate Appetites or Passions: His Thoughts were easily brought and fixed to the best Subjects, and there was no Vanity or Ungovernableness in them. All the Inferiour Powers were subject to the Dictates and Directions of the Superiour without any Mutiny or Rebellion. Thus Holy, thus Happy were our first Parents in having the Image of God upon them. And this Honour put upon Man at first, is a good Reason why we should not speak ill one of another, Jam. 3. 9. nor do ill one to another, Gen. 9. 6. and a good reason why we should not *debase* our selves to the Service of Sin, and why we should *devote* our selves to God's Service. But how art thou fallen, O Son of the Morning! How is this Image of God upon Man defac'd, how small are the Remains of it, and how great the Ruins of it! The Lord renew it upon our Souls by his Sanctifying Grace!

4. That Man was made *Male and Female*, and blessed with the Blessing of Fruitfulness and Increase. God said, *Let us make Man*, and immediately it follows, *So God created Man*; He performed what he resolv'd. With us, Saying and Doing are two Things, but they are not so with God. He created him *Male and Female*, Adam and Eve; Adam first out of Earth, and Eve out of his Side, Chap. 2. It should seem that of the rest of the Creatures God made many Couples, but of Man, *Did not he make one?* (Mal. 2. 15.) *tho' he had the residue of the Spirit*: From whence Christ gathers an Argument against Divorce, Mat. 19. 4. 5. Our first Father Adam was confin'd to one Wife, and if he had put her away, there was no other for him to Marry, which plainly intimates that the Bond of Marriage is not to be dissolved at Pleasure. Angels were not made *Male and Female*, for they were not to propagate their Kind, (Luke 20. 34, 35, 36.) but Man was made so, that the Nature might be propagated, and the Race continued. Fires and Candles, the Luminaries of this lower World, because they waste and go out, have a Power to *light more*, but it is not so with the Lights of Heaven, Stars do not kindle Stars. God made but *one Male and one Female*, that all the Nations of Men might know themselves to be *made of one Blood*, Descendants from one common Stock, and might thereby be induced to love one another. God having made them capable of transmitting the Nature they had received, said to them, *Be Fruitful, and Multiply, and replenish the Earth*. Here he gave them, 1. A large Inheritance, *replenish the Earth*; that's it that is bestowed upon the Children of Men. They were made to *dwell upon the Face of all the Earth*, Acts 17. 26. That's the Place in which God has set Man, to be the Servant of his Providence, in the Government of the Inferiour Creatures, and as it were the Intelligence of this Orb; And to be the receiver of God's Bounty which other Creatures live upon, but do not know it: To be likewise the *Collector of his Praises* in this lower World, and to pay them in to the Exchequer above, Ps. 145. 10. And (lastly) to be a Probationer for a better State. 2. A numerous lasting Family,

Family to enjoy this Inheritance ; pronouncing a Blessing upon them, in the virtue of which their Posterity should extend to the utmost Corners of the Earth, and continue to the utmost Period of Time. Fruitfulness and Increase depends upon the Blessing of God; *Obed Edom, had eight Sons, for the Lord blessed him, 1 Chr. 26. 5.* 'Tis owing to this Blessing which God commanded at first, that the Race of Mankind is still in being, and that as *one Generation passeth away, another comes.*

5. That God gave to Man when he had made him, a Dominion over the inferior Creatures, *over the Fish of the Sea, and over the Fowl of the Air;* tho' Man provides for neither, he has Power over both, much more over every living thing that moveth upon the Earth, which are more under his Care and within his Reach. God designed hereby to put an Honour upon Man, that he might find himself the more strongly obliged to bring Honour to his Maker. This Dominion is very much diminished and lost by the Fall, yet God's Providence continues so much of it to the Children of Men as is necessary to the Safety and Support of their Lives; and God's Grace has given to the Saints a new and better Title to the Creature, than that which was forfeited by Sin, for *all is ours if we be Christs, 1 Cor. 3. 22.*

29 ¶ And God said, Behold I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the Earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. 30 And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.

We have here the third Part of the sixth Day's Work, which was not any new Creation, but a gracious Provision of Food for all Flesh, *Pf. 136. 25.* He that made Man and Beast, thus took care to preserve both, *Pf. 36. 6.* Here is, (1.) Food provided for Man, *v. 29.* Herbs and Fruits must be his Meat, including Corn, and all the Products of the Earth, these were allowed him, but (it should seem) not Flesh till after the Flood, *Gen. 9. 3.* And before the Earth was delug'd, much more before it was cur'd for Man's sake, its Fruits no doubt were more pleasing to the Taste, and more strengthening and nourishing to the Body than Marrow and Fatness, and all the Portion of the King's Meat is now. See here, 1. That which should make us humble. As we were made out of the Earth, so we are maintained out of it. Once indeed, *Man did eat Angels Food, Bread from Heaven,* but they died, *Joh. 6. 49.* It was to them but as Food out of the Earth, *Pf. 104. 14.* There is Meat that endures to everlasting Life, the Lord evermore give us that. 2. That which should make us Thankful. The Lord is for the Body, and from him we receive all the Supports and Comforts of this Life; and to him we must give Thanks. He gives us all things richly to enjoy, not only for Necessity, but Plenty, Dainties, and Varieties for Ornament and Delight. How much are we indebted! How careful should we be as we live upon God's Bounty to live to his Glory! 3. That which should make us Temperate and Content with our Lot. Tho' Adam had Dominion given him over Fish and Fowl, yet God confined him in his Food to Herbs and Fruits, and he never complained of it. Tho' afterwards he coveted forbidden Fruits for the sake of the Wisdom and Knowledge he promised himself from it, yet we never read that he coveted forbidden Flesh. If God give us Food for our Lives, let not us with murmuring *Israel ask Food for our Lusts, Pf. 78. 18.* See *Dan. 1. 15.* (2.) Food provided for the Beasts, *v. 30.* Doth God take care for Oxen? Yes certainly, he provides Food convenient for them, and not for Oxen only that were us'd in his Sacrifices, and Man's Service, but even the young Lions, and the young Ravens are the Care of his Providence, they ask and have their Meat from God. Let us give to God the Glory of his Bounty to the inferior Creatures, that are all fed as it were at his Table every Day. He is a great House-keeper, a very rich and bountiful one, that satisfies the Desire of every living Thing. Let this encourage God's People to cast their Care upon him, and not be solicitous what they shall Eat, and what they shall Drink. He that provided for Adam without his Care; and still provides for all the Creatures without their Care, will not let those that trust him want any good thing, *Mat. 6. 26.* He that feeds his Birds, will not starve his Babes.

31 And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

We have here the Approbation and Conclusion of the whole Work of Creation. As for God, his Work is perfect, and if he begin, he will also make an end, in Providence and Grace as well as here in Creation. Observe, 1. The Review God took of his Work, He saw every thing that he had made. So he doth

still, all the Works of his Hands are under his Eye. He that made all sees all, he that made us sees us, *Pf. 139. 1, 13.* Omniscience cannot be separated from Omnipotence. Known unto God are all his Works, *Acts 15. 18.* But this here was the Eternal Mind's solemn Reflection upon the Copies of its own Wisdom, and the Products of its own Power. God hath hereby set us an Example of reviewing our Works. Having given us a Power of Reflection, he expects we should use that Power, *see our Way, Jer. 2. 23.* and think of it, *Pf. 119. 59.* When we have finished a Day's Work, and are entering upon the Rest of the Night, we should commune with our own Hearts about what we have been doing that Day. So likewise when we have finished a Week's Work, and are entering upon the Sabbath Rest, we should thus prepare to meet our God: And when we are finishing our Life's Work, and are entering upon our rest in the Grave, that's a time to bring to remembrance, that we may die repenting, and so take leave of it. 2. The Complacency God took in his Work. When we come to review our Works, we find to our Shame, that much has been very bad, but when God reviewed his, all was very good. He did not pronounce it good, till he had seen it so, to teach us not to answer a Matter, before we hear it. The Work of Creation was a very good Work. All that God made was well made, and there was no Flaw or Defect in it. (1.) It was good. Good, for it is all agreeable to the Mind of the Creator, just as he would have it to be: When the Transcript came to be compar'd with the great Original, 'twas found to be exact, no Errata in it, not one misplac'd Stroke. Good, for it answers the end of its Creation, and is fit for the Purpose for which it was designed. Good, for it is serviceable to Man, whom God had appointed Lord of the visible Creation. Good, for it is all for God's Glory. There is that in the whole visible Creation which is a Demonstration of God's Being and Perfections, and which tends to beget in the Soul of Man a religious Regard to him, and Veneration of him. (2.) It was very Good. Of each Day's Work (except the second) 'twas said, that it was Good, but now it is very Good. For, 1. Now Man was made, who was the chief of the Ways of God, who was designed to be the visible Image of the Creator's Glory, and the Mouth of the Creation in his Praises. 2. Now All was made, every Part was good, but all together very good. The Glory and Goodness, the Beauty and Harmony of God's Works both of Providence and Grace, as this of Creation will best appear when they are perfected. When the Top-stone is brought forth, we shall cry, *Grace, Grace to it, Zech. 4. 7.* Therefore judge nothing before the Time. 3. The Time when this Work was concluded: The Evening and the Morning were the sixth Day. So that in Six Days God made the World. We are not to think but that God could have made the World in an Instant: He that said, *Let there be Light, and there was Light,* could have said, *Let there be a World, and there would have been a World, in a Moment, in the twinkling of an Eye,* as at the Resurrection, *1 Cor. 15. 52.* But he did it in six Days, That he might show himself a free Agent, doing his own Work, both in his own Way, and in his own Time; that his Wisdom, Power and Goodness might appear to us, and be meditated upon by us, the more distinctly; And that he might set us an Example of working Six Days and resting the Seventh, 'tis therefore made the Reason of the Fourth Commandment. So much would the Sabbath conduce to the keeping up of Religion in the World, that God had an Eye to it in the timing of his Creation. And now as God reviewed his Work, let us review our Meditations upon it, and we shall find them very lame and Defective, and our Praises Low and Flat: Let us therefore stir up our selves, and all that is within us, to worship him that made the Heaven, Earth, and Sea, and the Fountains of Waters, according to the Tenour of the everlasting Gospel which is preached to every Nation, *Rev. 14. 6, 7.* All his Works in all Places of his Dominion do bless him, and therefore Bless thou the Lord, O my Soul.

CHAP. II.

This Chapter is an Appendix to the History of the Creation, more particularly explaining, and enlarging upon that part of the History which relates immediately to Man, the Favourite of this Lower World. We have in it, 1. The Institution and Sanctification of the Sabbath which was made for Man, and to further his Holiness and Comfort, *v. 1-3-2.* A more particular Account of Man's Creation, as the Centre and Summary of the whole Work, *v. 4-7-3.* A Description of the Garden of Eden, and the placing of Man in it under the Obligations of a Law and Covenant, *v. 8-17-4.* The Creation of the Woman, her Marriage to the Man, and the Institution of the Ordinance of Marriage, *v. 18.* ad fin.

1 THUS the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. 2 And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made: and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. 3 And God bless-

blest the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work, which God created and made.

We have here, (1.) *The Settlement of the Kingdom of Nature*, in God's resting from the Work of Creation, v. 1, 2. where observe, 1. That the Creatures made both in Heaven and Earth, are the *Hosts*, or Armies of them, which speak them Numerous, but Marshall'd, Disciplin'd, and under Command. How great is the Sum of them! And yet every one knows and keeps his Place. God useth them as his Hosts for the Defence of his People, and the Destruction of his Enemies, for he is the Lord of Hosts, of all these Hosts, Dan. 4. 35. 2. That the Heavens and the Earth are *finished Pieces*, and so are all the Creatures in them. So perfect is God's Work, that nothing can be added to it, or taken from it, Eccl. 3. 14. God that began to build, shewed himself well able to finish. 3. That after the end of the first six Days, God ceased from all Works of Creation. He hath so ended his Work, as that tho' in his Providence he *worketh hitherto*, Joh. 5. 17. preserving and governing all the Creatures, and particularly forming the Spirit of Man within him, yet he doth not make any new Species of Creatures. In Miracles he has controll'd and over-ruled Nature, but never chang'd its settled Course, nor repeal'd, or added to any of its Establishments. 4. That the eternal God, tho' infinitely Happy in the Enjoyment of himself, yet took a Satisfaction in the Work of his own Hands. He did not rest as one weary, but as one well-pleas'd with the Instances of his own Goodness, and the Manifestations of his own Glory. (2.) *The Commencement of the Kingdom of Grace*, in the Sanctification of the Sabbath-Day, v. 3. Here rested on that Day, and took a Complacency in his Creatures, and then Sanctified it, and appointed us on that Day to rest and take a Complacency in the Creator, and his Rest is in the Fourth Commandment made a Reason for ours after six Days Labour. Observe, 1. That the solemn Observation of one Day in seven, as a Day of Holy Rest, and Holy Work, to God's Honour, is the indispensable Duty of all those to whom God has revealed his holy Sabbaths. 2. That the Way of Sabbath-Sanctification, is the good old Way, Jer. 6. 16. Sabbaths are as ancient as the World; and I see no reason to doubt that the Sabbath being now instituted in Innocency, was religiously observed by the People of God throughout the Patriarchal Age. 3. That the Sabbath of the Lord is truly honourable, and we have reason to honour it; honour it for the sake of its Antiquity, its great Author, and the Sanctification of the first Sabbath by the Holy God himself, and in obedience to him by our first Parents in Innocency. 4. That the Sabbath-Day is a blessed Day, for God blessed it, and that which he blessed is blessed indeed. God hath put an Honour upon it, hath appointed us on that Day to bless him, and hath promised on that Day to meet us and bless us. 5. That the Sabbath-Day is a Holy Day; for God hath sanctified it. He hath separated and distinguished it from the rest of the Days of the Week, and he hath consecrated it, and set it apart to himself and his own Service and Honour. Though it is commonly taken for granted, that the Christian Sabbath we observe, reckoning from the Creation, is not the Seventh but the First Day of the Week, yet being a Seventh Day, and we in it celebrating the Rest of God the Son, and the finishing the Work of our Redemption, we may and ought to act Faith upon this Original Institution of the Sabbath-Day, and to commemorate the Work of Creation, to the Honour of the Great Creator, who is therefore worthy to receive on that Day Blessing, and Honour, and Praise from all religious Assemblies.

4 ¶ These are the generations of the heavens, and of the earth, when they were created; in the day that the Lord God made the earth, and the heavens. 5 And every plant of the field, before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field, before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground. 6 But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground. 7 And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

In these Verses, 1. Here is a Name given to the Creator, which we have not yet met with, and that is, *Jehovah*; the LORD in Capital Letters, which is constantly used in our English Translation to intimate that in the Original it is *Jehovah*. All along in the First Chapter he was call'd *Elohim*, a God of Power, but now *Jehovah Elohim*, a God of Power and Perfection, a finishing God. As we find him known by his Name *Jehovah*, when he appear'd to perform what he had promis'd, Exod. 6. 3. so now we have him known by that Name, when he had perfected what he had begun. *Jehovah* is that great and incommunicable Name of

God, which speaks his having his Being of himself, and his giving his Being to all Things; fitly therefore is he called by that Name now Heaven and Earth were finish'd. 2. Further Notice taken of the Production of Plants and Herbs, because they were made and appointed to be Food for Man, v. 5, 6. where observe, (1.) The Earth did not bring forth its Fruits of it self by any innate virtue of its own, but purely by the Almighty Power of God, which form'd every Plant, and every Herb, before it grew in the Earth. Thus Grace in the Soul, that Plant of Renown, grows not of it self in Nature's Soil, but is the Work of God's own Hands. (2.) Rain also is the Gift of God, it came not till the Lord God caused it to Rain. If Rain be wanted, 'tis God that with-holds it; if Rain come plentifully in its season, 'tis God that sends it; if it comes in a distinguishing way, 'tis God that causeth it to rain upon one City and not upon another, Amos 4. 7. (3.) Tho' God ordinarily works by Means, yet he is not ty'd to them, but when he pleases he can do his own Work without them. As the Plants were produc'd before the Sun was made, so they were before there was either Rain to Water the Earth, or Man to Till it. Therefore though we must not tempt God in the neglect of Means, yet we must trust God in the want of Means. (4.) Some way or other God will take care to water the Plants that are of his own Planting. Though as yet there was no Rain, God made a Mist equivalent to a Shower, and with it watered the whole Face of the Ground. Thus he chose to fulfill his Purpose by the weakest Means, that the excellency of the Power may be of God. Divine Grace descends like a Mist or silent Dew, and waters the Church without noise, Deut. 32. 2. 3. A more particular Account of the Creation of Man, v. 7. Man is a little World consisting of Heaven and Earth, Soul and Body; now here we have an account of the Original of both, and the putting of both together, let us seriously consider it, and say to our Creator's Praise, we are fearfully and wonderfully made, Psal. 139. 14. *Elihu* in the Patriarchal Age refers to this History, when he saith, Job 33. 6. *I also am formed out of the Clay*, and v. 4. *The Breath of the Almighty hath given me Life*; and Ch. 32. 8. *There is a Spirit in Man*. Observe then, 1. The mean Original, and yet the curious Structure of the Body of Man. (1.) The Matter was despicable: He was made of the Dust of the Ground; a very unlikely thing to make a Man of; but the same infinite Power that made the World of Nothing, made Man its Master-piece of next nothing. He was made of the Dust, the small Dust, such as is upon the Surface of the Earth. Probably not dry Dust, but Dust moisten'd with the Mist that went up, v. 6. He was not made of Gold Dust, Powder of Pearl, or Diamond Dust, but common Dust, Dust of the Ground. Hence he is said to be of the Earth *mundus, dusty*, 1 Cor. 15. 47. And we also are of the Earth, for we are his Offspring, and of the same Mold. So near an affinity is there between the Earth and our earthly Parents, that our Mothers Womb out of which we were born, is call'd the Earth, Psal. 139. 15. and the Earth, in which we must be buried, is called our Mothers Womb, Job 1. 21. Our Foundation is on the Earth, Job 4. 19. Our Fabrick is Earthy, and the fashioning of it like that of an earthen Vessel, Job 10. 9. Our Food is out of the Earth, Job 18. 5. Our Familiarity is with the Earth, Job 17. 14. Our Fathers are in the Earth, and our own final tendency is to it; and what have we to be proud of then? Isa. 51. 1. (2.) Yet the Maker was great, and the Make fine. The Lord God, the great Fountain of Being and Power, formed Man. Of the other Creatures it is said, they were created and made; but of Man, that he was formed, which notes a gradual Process in the Work with great Accuracy and Exactness. To express the Creation of this new thing, he takes a new Word: a Word (some think) borrow'd from the Potter's forming his Vessel upon the Wheel, for we are the Clay, and God the Potter, Is. 64. 8. The Body of Man is curiously wrought. Psal. 139. 15, 16. *Materiam superabat opus*. Let us present our Bodies to God as living Sacrifices, Rom. 12. 1. as living Temples, 1 Cor. 6. 19. and then these vile Bodies shall shortly be new form'd like Christ's glorious Body, Phil. 3. 21. 2. The high Original, and yet the admirable serviceableness of the Soul of Man. (1.) It takes its rise from the Breath of Heaven, and is produced by it. It was not made of the Earth as the Body was; it is pity then it should cleave to the Earth, and mind earthly Things. It came immediately from God; he gave it to be put into the Body, (Eccl. 12. 7.) as afterwards he gave the Tables of Stone of his own writing to be put into the Ark, and the Urim of his own framing to be put into the Breast-Plate. Hence God is not only the Former, but the Father of Spirits. Let the Soul which God has breath'd into us, breathe after him; and let it be for him, since it is from him. Into his Hands let us commit our Spirits, for from his Hands we had them. (2.) It takes its lodging in a House of Clay, and is the Life and Support of it. 'Tis by it that Man is a living Soul, i. e. a living Man, for the Soul is the Man. The Body would be a worthless, useless, loathsome Carcass, if the Soul did not animate it. To God that gave us these Souls, we must shortly give an Account of them, how we have employ'd them, us'd them, portion'd them, and dispos'd of them: And if then it be found that we have lost them, tho' it were to gain the World, we are undone for ever. Since the Extraction of the Soul is so Noble, and its Nature and Faculties so

so Excellent, let us be not of those Fools that *despise their own Souls*, by preferring their Bodies before them, *Pr. 15. 32.* When our Lord Jesus *anointed the blind Man's Eyes with Clay*, perhaps he intimated, that 'twas he who at first formed Man out of the Clay; And when he *breathed on his Disciples, saying, Receive ye the Holy Ghost*, he intimated, that 'twas he that first *breathed into Man's Nostrils the Breath of Life*. He that made the Soul is alone able to new-make it.

8 And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. 9 And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food: the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. 10 And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. 11 The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. 12 And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx-stone. 13 And the name of the second river is Gihon; the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. 14. And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates. 15 And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it and to keep it.

Man consisting of Body and Soul, a Body made out of the Earth, and a rational immortal Soul the Breath of Heaven, we have in these Verses the Provision that was made for the Happiness of both; he that made him, took care to make him happy, if he could but have kept himself so, and known when he was well. That part of Man, by which he is ally'd to the World of Sense was made happy, for he was put in the *Paradise of God*; that Part by which he is ally'd to the World of Spirits was well provided for, for he was taken into *Covenant with God*. Lord, what is Man, that he should be thus dignified? Man that is a Worm! Here we have,

1. A Description of the Garden of Eden, which was intended for the Mansion and Demesne of this great Lord, the Palace of this Prince. The inspired Penman in this History writing for the Jews first, and calculating his Narratives for the Infant-State of the Church, describes things by their outward sensible Appearances, and leaves us by further Discoveries of the Divine Light, to be led into the understanding of the Mysteries couch'd under them; spiritual things were *strong Meat*, which they could not yet bear, but he writes to them as unto carnal, *1 Cor. 3. 1.* Therefore he doth not so much insist upon the Happiness of Adam's Mind, as upon that of his outward Estate. The Mosaick History, as well as the Mosaick Law, has rather the *Patterns of heavenly Things*, than the *heavenly Things themselves*, *Heb. 9. 23.* Observe, (1.) The Place appointed for Adam's Residence was a Garden; not an Ivory House, or a Palace over-laid with Gold, but a Garden, furnish'd and adorn'd by Nature, not by Art. What little reason have Men to be proud of stately and magnificent Buildings, when it was the Happiness of Man in Innocency that he *needed none*; as *Clothes* came in with Sin, so did *Houses*. The Heaven was the Roof of Adam's House, and never was any Roof so curiously *ceiled and painted*: The Earth was his Floor, and never was any Floor so richly *inlaid*: The Shadow of the Trees was his Retirement, under them were his Dining-Rooms, his Lodging-Rooms, and never were any Rooms so finely hung as these; *Solomon's* in all their Glory were not *array'd* like them. The better we can accommodate our selves to plain things, and the less we indulge our selves with those artificial Delights which have been invented to gratify Men's Pride and Luxury, the nearer we approach to a State of Innocency. Nature is content with a little, and that which is most natural. Grace with *Less*, but Lust with *Nothing*. (2.) The Contrivance and Furniture of this Garden was the immediate work of God's Wisdom and Power. The Lord God planted this Garden, *i. e.* he had planted it, upon the third Day when the Fruits of the Earth were made. We may well suppose it to be the most accomplish'd Place for Pleasure and Delight that ever the Sun saw, when the All-sufficient God himself designed it to be the present Happiness of his beloved Creature Man in Innocency, and a Type and Figure of the Happiness of the chosen Remnant in Glory. No Delights can be agreeable or satisfying to a Soul, but those that God himself has provided and appointed for it; no true Paradise but of God's planting; the *Light of our own Fires*, and the *Sparks of our own kindling* will soon leave us in the dark, *Isa. 50. 11.* The whole Earth was now a Paradise

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compar'd with what it is since the Fall, and since the Flood; the finest Gardens in the World are a Wilderness compar'd with what the whole Face of the Ground was before it was cur'd for Man's sake; yet that was not enough, God planted a Garden for Adam. God's chosen Ones shall have distinguishing Favours shew'd them. (3.) The situation of this Garden was extremely sweet; 'twas in Eden, which signifies Delight and Pleasure. The Place is here particularly pointed out by such Marks and Bounds as were sufficient (I suppose) when Moses wrote, to specify the Place to those who knew that Country; but now it seems the *Curious* cannot satisfy themselves concerning it. Let it be our Care to make sure a Place in the Heavenly Paradise, and then we need not perplex our selves with a Search after the Place of the Earthly Paradise. 'Tis certain wherever it was, it had all desirable Conveniences, and (which never any House or Garden on Earth was) without any Inconvenience; Beautiful for Situation, the Joy and Glory of the whole Earth was this Garden. Doubtless it was Earth in its highest Perfection. 4. The Trees wherewith this Garden was planted. (1.) It had all the best and choicest Trees in common with the rest of the Ground. 'Twas beautified and adorn'd with every Tree that for its Height or Breadth, its Make or Colour, its Leaf or Flower was pleasant to the Sight, and charm'd the Eye; 'twas replenish'd and enriched with every Tree that yielded Fruit grateful to the Taste, and useful to the Body, and so good for Food. God, as a tender Father, consulted not only Adam's Profit but his Pleasure, for there is a Pleasure consistent with Innocency; nay, there is a true and transcendent Pleasure in Innocency. God delights in the Prosperity of his Servants, and would have them *easy*; 'tis long of themselves if they be *uneasy*. When Providence puts us into an Eden of Plenty and Pleasure, we ought to serve him with joyfulness and gladness of Heart in the abundance of the good Things he gives us. But (2.) It had two extraordinary Trees peculiar to it self, on Earth there were not their like. 1. There was the Tree of Life in the midst of the Garden, which was not so much a Memorandum to him of the Fountain and Author of his Life, nor perhaps any natural Means to preserve or prolong Life, but 'twas chiefly intended to be a Sign and Seal to Adam, assuring him of the continuance of Life and Happiness, even to Immortality, and everlasting Bliss, through the Grace and Favour of his Maker, upon Condition of his Perseverance in this State of Innocency and Obedience. Of this he might eat and live. Christ is now to us the Tree of Life, *Rev. 2. 7.—22. 2.* and the Bread of Life, *John 6. 48, 53.* 2. There was the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, so call'd, not because it had any virtue in it to beget or increase useful Knowledge, surely then it would not have been forbidden; but, (1.) Because there was an express positive Revelation of the Will of God concerning this Tree, so that by it he might know moral Good and Evil. What is Good? 'Tis good not to eat of this Tree. What is Evil? 'Tis evil to eat of this Tree. The distinction between all other moral Good and Evil was written in the Heart of Man by Nature, but this which resulteth from a positive Law was written upon this Tree. (2.) Because in the Event it prov'd to give Adam an Experimental Knowledge of Good by the loss of it, and of Evil by the sense of it. As the Covenant of Grace hath in it not only, believe and be sav'd, but also, believe not and be damn'd, *Mark 16. 16.* so the Covenant of Innocency had in it not only, Do this and live, which was seal'd and confirm'd by the Tree of Life, but, Fail and Dye, which he was assur'd of by this other Tree; touch it at your Peril; so that in these two Trees God set before Adam Good and Evil, the Blessing and the Curse, *Deut. 30. 19.* these two Trees were as two Sacraments. 5. The Rivers wherewith this Garden was water'd, *v. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.* These four Rivers (or one River branch'd into four Streams) contributed much both to the Pleasantness and the Fruitfulness of this Garden. The Land of Sodom is said to be well water'd every where as the Garden of the Lord, *Gen. 13. 10.* Observe, that which God plants he will take care it shall be water'd. The Trees of Righteousness are set by the Rivers, *Psal. 1. 3.* In the heavenly Paradise there is a River infinitely surpassing these, for it is a River of the Water of Life, not coming out of Eden, as this here, but proceeding out of the Throne of God, and of the Lamb, *Rev. 22. 1.* a River that makes glad the City of our God, *Psal. 46. 4.* Hiddekel and Euphrates are Rivers of Babylon, which we read of elsewhere; by these the Captiv'd Jews sat down and wept when they remembered Sion, *Psal. 137. 1.* but methinks they had much more reason to weep (and so have we) at the remembrance of Eden; Adam's Paradise was their Prison, such wretched work hath Sin made. Of the Land of Havilah 'tis said, *v. 11, 12.* that the Gold of that Land was good, and that there was bdellium and the onyx-stone: Surely this is mention'd that the Wealth which the Land of Havilah boasted of, might be as a Foil to that which was the Glory of the Land of Eden. Havilah had Gold and Spices and precious Stones, but Eden had that which was infinitely better, the Tree of Life, and Communion with God. So we may say of the Africans and Indians, they have the Gold, but we have the Gospel. The Gold of their Land is good, but the Riches of ours infinitely better.

2. The placing of Man in this Paradise of Delight, *ver. 15.* where observe, 1. How God put him in possession of it. The Lord

Lord God took the Man, and put him into the Garden of Eden. So v. 8. *Note here,* 1. That Man was made out of Paradise, for after God had formed him he put him into the Garden: He was made of common Clay, not of Paradise Dust. He liv'd out of Eden before he liv'd in it, that he might see all the Comforts of his Paradise-State owing to God's Free Grace. He could not plead a Tenant-Right to the Garden, for he was not born upon the Premises, nor had any thing but what he receiv'd: All *Beasting* was hereby for ever excluded. 2. The same God that was the Author of his Being, was the Author of his Bliss: The same Hand that made him a living Soul, planted the Tree of Life for him, and settled him by it: He that made us is alone able to make us happy: He that is the Former of our Bodies, and the Father of our Spirits; He, and none but He can effectually provide for the Felicity of Both. 3. It adds much to the Comfort of any Condition if we have plainly seen God going before us, and putting us into it. If we have not *forced* Providence but *followed* it, and taken the Hints of Direction it has given us, we may hope to find a Paradise there, where otherwise we could not have expected it; see *Psal.* 47. 4.-2. How God appointed him Business and Employment; he put him there, not like *Leviathan* into the Waters, to play therein, but to dress the Garden, and to keep it. Paradise it self was not a Place of Exemption from Work. *Note here,* 1. That we were none of us sent into the World to be Idle. He that made us these Souls and Bodies, has given us something to Work with; and he that gave us this Earth for our Habitation, has made us something to Work on. If either a high Extraction, or a great Estate, or a large Dominion, or perfect Innocency, or a Genius for pure Contemplation, or a small Family, could have given a Man a *Wrist of Ease*; *Adam* had not been set to Work, but He that gave us *Being* hath given us *Business*, to serve him and our Generation, and to work out our Salvation: If we do not mind our Business, we are unworthy of our Being and Maintenance. 2. That Secular Employments will very well consist with a State of Innocency, and a Life of Communion with God. The Sons and Heirs of Heaven, while they are here in this World, have something to do about this Earth, which must have its Share of their Time and Thoughts, and if they do it with an Eye to God, they are as truly serving him in it, as when they are upon their Knees. 3. That the Husbandman's Calling is an ancient and honourable Calling; 'twas needful even in Paradise. The Garden of Eden, tho' it needed not to be walled, for Thorns and Thistles were not yet a Nuisance, yet it must be dressed and kept. Nature, even in its primitive State, left room for the Improvements of Art and Industry. 'Twas a Calling fit for a State of Innocency, making Provision for Life and not for Lust; and giving opportunity of admiring the Creator, and acknowledging his Providence; while his Hands were about his Trees, his Heart might be with his God. 4. There is a true Pleasure in the Business which God calls us to, and employs us in; *Adam's* Work was so far from being an Allay, that it was an Addition to the Pleasures of Paradise; he could not have been Happy if he had been Idle: 'Tis still a Law, he that will not Work has no right to Eat, 2 *Theff.* 3. 10. *Prov.* 27. 23.

3. The Command which God gave to Man in Innocency, and the Covenant he then took him into. Hitherto we have seen God Man's powerful Creator, and his bountiful Benefactor, now he appears as his Ruler and Law-giver. God put him into the Garden of Eden, not to live as he list there, but to be under Government. As we are not allowed to be Idle in this World, and to do nothing, so we are not allowed to be wilful and do what we please: When God had given Man a Dominion over the Creatures, he would let him know that still he himself was under the Government of his Creator.

16. And the LORD commanded the Man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat. 17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely dye.

Observe here, 1. God's Authority over Man, as a Creature that had Reason and Freedom of Will. The Lord God commanded the Man, who stood now as a publick Person, the Father and Representative of all Mankind, to receive Law as he had lately receiv'd a Nature for himself and all his. God commanded all the Creatures according to their Capacity, the settled course of Nature is a Law, *Pf.* 148. 6.-104. 9. The Brute Creatures have their respective Instincts, but Man was made capable of performing reasonable Service, and therefore receives not only the Command of a Creator, but the Command of a Prince and Master. Tho' *Adam* was a very great Man, a very good Man, and a very happy Man, yet the Lord God commanded him, and the Command was no Disparagement to his Greatness, no Reproach to his Goodness, nor any Diminution at all to his Happiness. Let us acknowledge God's Right to rule us, and our own Obligations to be rul'd by him, and never allow a-

ny Will of our own in contradiction to, or competition with the holy Will of God. 2. The particular Act of this Authority, in prescribing to him what he should do, and upon what Terms he should stand with his Creator. Here is, (1.) A Confirmation of his present Happiness to him in that Grant, Of every Tree in the Garden thou mayest freely Eat: This was not only an allowance of Liberty to him, in taking the delicious Fruits of Paradise as a Recompence for his Care and Pains in dressing and keeping it (1. *Cor.* 9. 7, 10.) but it was withal an Assurance of Life to him, immortal Life upon his Obedience: For the Tree of Life being put in the midst of the Garden, v. 4. as the Heart and Soul of it, doubtless God had an Eye to that, especially in this Grant, and therefore when upon his Revolt this Grant is recall'd, no notice is taken of any other Tree of the Garden as prohibited to him, but only the Tree of Life, *Gen.* 3. 22. of which 'tis there said, he might have eaten and live for ever, that is, never dy'd, nor ever lost his Happiness. Continue Holy as thou art, in conformity to thy Creator's Will, and thou shalt continue Happy as thou art in the Enjoyment of thy Creator's Favour, either in this Paradise or in a better. Thus upon condition of perfect personal and perpetual Obedience, *Adam* was sure of Paradise to him and his Heirs for ever. (2.) A Trial of his Obedience upon pain of the Forfeiture of all his Happiness; but of the other Tree, which stood very near the Tree of Life (for they are both said to be in the midst of the Garden) and which was call'd the Tree of Knowledge, in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely dye, q. d. Know (*Adam*) that thou art now upon thy Good Behaviour, thou art put into Paradise upon Trial, be observant, be obedient, and thou art made for ever, otherwise thou wilt be as Miserable as now thou art Happy. Here, 1. *Adam* is threaten'd with Death in case of Disobedience; dying thou shalt dye, noting a sure and dreadful Sentence, as in the former part of this Covenant, eating thou shalt eat, notes a free and full Grant. Observe, (1.) That even *Adam* in Innocency was aw'd with a threatening; Fear is one of the handles of the Soul, by which it is taken hold of and held. If he then needed this Hedge, much more do we now. (2.) The Penalty threaten'd is Death, thou shalt Dye, i. e. thou shalt be debar'd from the Tree of Life, and all the Good that is signified by it, all the Happiness thou hast either in Possession or Prospect; and thou shalt become liable to Death, and all the Miseries that preface it and attend it. (3.) This was threaten'd as the immediate consequent of Sin, In the day thou eatest, thou shalt dye, i. e. thou shalt become mortal and capable of dying; the Grant of Immortality shall be recalled, and that Defence shall depart from thee: Thou shalt become obnoxious to Death, like a condemn'd Malefactor that is dead in Law; only because *Adam* was to be the Root of Mankind, he was repriev'd as Women with Child are. Nay, the Harbingers and Fore-runners of Death shall immediately seize thee, and thy Life thence-forward shall be a dying Life: And this surely, 'tis a settled Rule, the Soul that sinneth is shall dye. 2. *Adam* is try'd with a positive Law, not to eat of the Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. Now it was very proper to make trial of his Obedience by such a Command as this, (1.) Because the Reason of it is fetch'd purely from the Will of the Law-maker: *Adam* had in his Nature an Aversion to that which was Evil in it self, and therefore he is try'd in a thing which was Evil only because it was Forbidden; and being in a small thing, 'twas the more fit to prove his Obedience by. (2.) Because the Restraint of it is laid upon the Desires of the Flesh and of the Mind, which, in the corrupt Nature of Man, are the two great Fountains of Sin. This Prohibition check'd both his Appetite towards sensitive Delights, and his Ambition of curious Knowledge; that his Body might be rul'd by his Soul, and his Soul by his God.

Thus Easy, thus Happy was Man in his State of Innocency, having all that Heart could wish to make him so. How good was God to him? How many Favours did he load him with? How easy were the Laws he gave him? How kind the Covenant he made with him? Yet *Man* being in Honour understood not his own Interest, but soon became as the Beasts that perish.

18. And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone: I will make him an help meet for him. 19 And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air, and brought them unto *Adam* to see what he would call them; and whatsoever *Adam* called every living creature, that was the name thereof. 20 And *Adam* gave names to all cattel, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field: but for *Adam* there was not found an help meet for him.

Here we have, 1. An Instance of the Creator's Care of Man, and

and his fatherly Concern for his Comfort, v. 18. tho' God had let him know that he was a Subject, by giving him a Command, v. 16. yet here he lets him know also, for his Encouragement in his Obedience, that he was a Friend and a Favourite, and one whose Satisfaction he was tender of. *Observe, (1.)* How God graciously pity'd his Solitude, *It is not good that Man, this Man should be alone.* Tho' there was an upper World of Angels, and a lower World of Brutes, and He between them, yet there being none of the same Nature and Rank of Beings with himself, none that he could converse familiarly with, he might be truly said to be alone. Now he that made him, knew both him, and what was good for him, better than he did himself, and he said, it is not good that he should continue thus alone. (1.) It is not for his Comfort, for Man is a sociable Creature, 'tis a Pleasure to him to exchange Knowledge and Affection with those of his own Kind, to inform and to be inform'd, to love and to be lov'd; what God here saith of the first Man, Solomon saith of all Men, *Ecc. 4. 9. &c. that two is better than one, and Wo to him that is alone:* If there were but one Man in the World, what a melancholly Man must he needs be? Perfect Solitude would turn a Paradise into a Desert, and a Palace into a Dungeon. Those therefore are foolish who are selfish, and would be placed alone in the Earth. (2.) It is not for the Increase and Continuance of his Kind; God could have made a World of Men at first to replenish the Earth, as he replenished Heaven with a World of Angels, but the Place would have been too strait for the designed Number of Men to live together at once, therefore God saw fit to make up that Number by a Succession of Generations, which as God had formed Man must be from two, and those Male and Female; One will be ever one. (2.) How God graciously resolv'd to provide Society for him. The result of this Reasoning concerning him was this kind Resolution, *I will make a Help meet for him; a Help like him, so some read it, one of the same Nature, and the same Rank of Beings. A Help near him; so others; one to cohabit with him, and to be always at hand; a Help before him, so others; one that he shall look upon with Pleasure and Delight.* Note hence, 1. That in our best State in this World we have need of one another's Help, for we are Members one of another, and the Eye cannot say to the Hand, *I have no need of thee, 1 Cor. 12. 21.* we must therefore be glad to receive Help from others, and give Help to others as there is occasion. 2. That it is God only who perfectly knows our Wants, and is perfectly able to supply them all, *Phil. 4. 19.* in him alone our Help is, and from him are all our Helpers. 3. That a suitable Wife is a help meet: and is from the Lord: The Relation is then likely to be comfortable when Meanness directs and determines the Choice, and mutual Helpfulness is the constant Care and Endeavour, *1 Cor. 7. 33, 34.* 4. That Family Society, if that be agreeable, is a Redress sufficient for the Grievance of Solitude: He that has a good God, a good Heart, and a good Wife to converse with, and yet complains he wants Conversation, would not have been easy and content in Paradise, for Adam himself had no more: Yet even before Eve was created we do not find that he complain'd of being alone, knowing that he was not alone, for the Father was with him. Those that are most satisfied in God, and his Favour, are in the best Way, and in the best Frame to receive the Good Things of this Life, and shall be sure of them as far as infinite Wisdom sees good. 2. An Instance of the Creatures Subjection to Man, and his Dominion over them, v. 19, 20. every Beast of the Field, and every Fowl of the Air God brought to Adam, either by the Ministry of Angels, or by a special Instinct directing them to come to Man as their Master, teaching the Ox betimes to know his Owner. Thus God gave Man Livery and Seisin of that fair Estate he had granted him, and put him in Possession of his Dominion over the Creatures. God brought them to him that he might name them, and so might give, (1.) A Proof of his Knowledge, as a Creature endued with the Faculties both of Reason and Speech, and so taught more than the Beasts of the Earth, and made wiser than the Fowls of Heaven, *Job 35. 11.* And, (2.) a Proof of his Power, 'Tis an Act of Authority to impose Names, *Dan. 1. 7.* and of Subjection to receive them. The Inferiour Creatures did now, as it were, do Homage to their Prince at his Inauguration, and swear Fealty and Allegiance to him. If Adam had continued Faithful to his God, we may suppose the Creatures themselves would so well have known and remember'd the Names Adam now gave them as to have come at his Call at any time, and answer'd to their Names. God gave Names to the Day and Night, to the Firmament, to the Earth and Sea, and he calleth the Stars by their Names, to shew that he is the supreme Lord of these; but he gave Adam leave to name the Beasts and Fowl, as their subordinate Lord, for having made him in his own Image, he thus puts some of his Honour upon him.

3. An Instance of the Creature's Insufficiency to be a Happiness for Man; but among them all, For Adam there was not found a Help meet for him. Some make these to be the Words of Adam himself, observing all the Creatures come to him by Couples to be named, he thus intimates his Desire to his Maker, Lord, these have all Helps meet for them, but what shall I do?

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here's never a one for me! 'Tis rather God's Judgment upon the Review: He brought them all together, to see if there were ever a suitable Match for Adam in any of the numerous Families of the inferiour Creatures, but there was none. *Observe here, 1.* The Dignity and Excellency of the Humane Nature; on Earth there was not its like, nor its Peer to be found among all the visible Creatures; they were all look'd over, but it could not be match'd among 'em all. 2. The Vanity of this World, and the Things of it, put them all together, and they will not make a Help meet for Man. They will not suit the Nature of his Soul, nor supply its Needs, nor satisfy its just Desires, nor run parallel with its never-failing Duration. God creates a new thing to be a Help meet for Man, not so much the Woman, as the Seed of the Woman.

21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof. 22 And the rib which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. 23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man. 24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. 25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

Here we have, 1. The making of the Woman, to be a Help meet for Adam. This was done upon the sixth Day, as was also the placing of Adam in Paradise, tho' it be here mention'd after an Account of the Seventh Day's Rest; but what was said in general, Chap. 1. 27. that God made Man Male and Female, is more distinctly related here. *Observe, (1.)* That Adam was first form'd, then Eve, *1 Tim. 2. 13.* and she was made of the Man, and for the Man, *1 Cor. 11. 8, 9.* all which are urged there as Reasons for the Humility, Modesty, Silence, and Submissiveness of that Sex in general, and particularly the Subjection and Reverence which Wives owe to their own Husbands. Yet Man being made last of the Creatures as the Best, and most Excellent of all, Eve's being made after Adam, and out of him, puts an Honour upon that Sex, as the Glory of the Man, *1 Cor. 11-7.* If Man be the Head, She is the Crown, a Crown to her Husband, the Crown of the visible Creation. The Man was Dust refin'd, but the Woman was Dust double-refin'd, one remove further from the Earth. (2.) That Adam slept while his Wife was in making, that no room might be left to imagine that he had herein directed the Spirit of the Lord, or been his Counsellor, *Isa. 40. 13.* He had been made sensible of his want of a meet Help, but God having undertaken to provide him one, he doth not afflict himself with any Care about it; but lies him down and sleeps sweetly as one that had cast all his Care on God, with a cheerful Resignation of himself and all his Affairs to his Maker's Will and Wisdom: *Jehovah-jirah, let the Lord provide when and whom he pleaseth.* If we graciously rest in God, God will graciously work for us, and work all for Good. (3.) That God caus'd the Sleep to fall on Adam, and made it a deep sleep, that so the opening of his Side might be no Grievance to him; while he knows no Sin, God will take care he shall feel no Pain. When God by his Providence doth that to his People which is grievous to the Flesh, and Blood, he not only consults their Happiness in the Issue, but by his Grace he can so quiet and compose their Spirits as to make them easy under the sharpest Operations. (4.) That the Woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam; not made out of his Head to top him, nor out of his Feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his Side to be equal with him, under his Arm, to be protected, and near his Heart to be beloved. Adam lost a Rib, and without any diminution to his Strength or Comeliness, for doubtless the Flesh was clos'd without a Scar, but in lieu thereof he had a Help meet for him, which abundantly made up his Loss: What God takes away from his People he will one way or other restore with Advantage. In this (as in many other things) Adam was a Figure of him that was to come: For out of the Side of Christ the second Adam his Spouse, the Church was formed when he slept the sleep, the deep sleep of Death upon the Cross: In order to which, his Side was open'd, and there came out, Blood and Water, Blood to purchase his Church, and Water to purify it to himself: See *Eph. 5. 25, 26.*

2. The Marriage of the Woman to Adam. Marriage is honourable, but this surely was the most honourable Marriage that ever was, in which God himself had all along an immediate Hand: Marriages (they say) are made in Heaven, we are sure this was, for the Man, the Woman, the Match were all God's own

own Work: He by his Power, made them *both*, and now by his Ordinance made them *one*. This was a Marriage made in perfect Innocency, and so was never any Marriage since. (1.) God, as *her Father*, brought the Woman to the Man, as his second Self, and a Help meet for him; when he had made her, he did not leave her to her own dispose; No, she was his Child, and she must not Marry without his Consent. Those are likely to settle to their Comfort, who by Faith and Prayer, and an humble dependance upon Providence, put themselves under a Divine Conduct. That Wife that is of God's making by special Grace, and of God's bringing by special Providence, is likely to prove a Help meet for a Man. (2.) From God as his Father Adam received her, v. 23. *This is now Bone of my Bone*; now I have what I wanted, and which all the Creatures could not furnish me with, a *Help meet for me*. God's Gifts to us are to be received with an humble thankful Acknowledgment of his Wisdom, in suiting them to us, and his Favour in bestowing them on us. Probably 'twas reveal'd to Adam in Vision, when he was asleep, that this lovely Creature now presented to him was a Piece of himself, and was to be his Companion, and the Wife of his Covenant. Hence some have fetch'd an Argument to prove that glorified Saints in the heavenly Paradise shall know one another. Further, in token of his acceptance of her, he gave her a Name, not peculiar to her, but common to her Sex, she shall be called *Woman*, *Isha*, a *She-man*, differing from Man in Sex only, not in Nature. Made of Man, and joined to Man.

3. The Institution of the Ordinance of Marriage, and the settling of the Law of it, v. 24. The Sabbath and Marriage were two Ordinances instituted in Innocency, the former for the Preservation of the Church, the latter for the Preservation of the World of Mankind. It appears by *Mat. 19. 4. 5.* That it was God himself who said, here a Man must leave all his Relations to cleave to his Wife: But whether he spake it by *Moses* the Pen-man, or by *Adam* who spake, v. 23. is uncertain; it should seem they are the Words of *Adam*, in God's Name laying down this Law to all his Posterity. (1.) See here how great the Virtue of a divine Ordinance is; The Bonds of it are stronger even than those of Nature. To whom can we be more firmly bound than to the Fathers that begat us, and the Mothers that bare us, yet the Son must *quit* them to be joyned to his Wife, and the Daughter *forget* them to cleave to her Husband, *Psal. 45. 11, 12.* (2.) See how necessary it is that Children should take their Parents Consent along with them in their Marriage, and how *unjust* they are to their Parents, as well as *undutiful*, if they Marry without it, for they *rob* them of their Right to them, and Interest in them, and alienate it to another fraudulently and unnaturally. (3.) See what need there is both of Prudence and Prayer in the Choice of this Relation which is so near and so lasting. That had need be well done which is to be done for Life. (4.) See how firm the Bond of Marriage is, not to be divided and weakened by having many Wives, *Mal. 2. 15.* nor to be broken or cut off by Divorce for any Cause, but Fornication or voluntary Desertion. (5.) See how dear the Affection ought to be between Husband and Wife, such as there is to our own Bodies, *Eph. 5. 28.* They two are *one Flesh*, let them then be *one Soul*.

4. An Evidence of the Purity and Innocency of that State wherein our first Parents were created, v. 25. they were *both naked*. They needed no Cloaths for Defence against Cold or Heat, for neither could be injurious to them: They needed none for Ornament, *Solomon in all his Glory was not array'd like one of these*. Nay, they needed none for Decency, they were *naked*, and had no reason to be *ashamed*. They knew not what *Shame* was, so the *Chaldees* reads it. Blushing is now the Colour of Virtue, but it was not then the Colour of Innocency. They that had no Sin in their Conscience might well have no Shame in their Faces, tho' they had no Cloaths to their Backs.

CHAP. III.

The Story of this Chapter is, perhaps, as sad a Story (all things consider'd) as any we have in all the Bible: In the foregoing Chapters we have had the pleasant View of the Holiness and Happiness of our first Parents, the Grace and Favour of God, and the Peace and Beauty of the whole Creation, all good, very good: But here the Scene is alter'd. We have here an account of the Sin and Misery of our first Parents, the Wrath and Curse of God against them, the Peace of the Creation disturb'd, and its Beauty stain'd and sullied, all bad, very bad: How is the Gold become dim, and the most fine Gold changed? O that our Hearts were deeply affected with this Record! for we are all nearly concerned in it; Let it not be to us as a Tale that is told. The general Contents of this Chapter we have, *Rom. 5. 12.* By one Man Sin entred into the World, and Death by Sin, and so Death pass'd upon all Men, for that all have Sinned. More particularly we have here, 1. The Innocent tempted, v. 1-5. 2. The Tempted

transgressing, v. 6, 7, 8. 3. The Transgressors arraign'd, v. 9-10. 4. Upon their Arraignment convicted, v. 11-13. 5. Upon their Conviction Sentenc'd, v. 14-19. 6. After Sentence Repriev'd, v. 20, 21. 7. Notwithstanding their Reprieve, Execution in part done, v. 22. ad fin. And were it not for the gracious Intimations here given of Redemption by the Promised Seed, they and all their degenerate guilty Race had been left to an endless Despair.

NOW the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made: and he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? 2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: 3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. 4 And the serpent said unto the woman, ye shall not surely die. 5 For God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened: and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

We have here an account of the Temptation wherewith Satan assaulted our first Parents to draw them to Sin, and which prov'd fatal to them. And here *Observe*.

1. The Tempter, and that was the Devil in the Shape and likeness of a Serpent. 1. 'Tis certain it was the Devil that beguiled Eve; the Devil and Satan is the Old Serpent, *Rev. 12. 9.* a malignant Spirit, by Creation an Angel of Light, and an immediate Attendant upon God's Throne, but by Sin become an Apostate from his first State, and a Rebel against God's Crown and Dignity. Multitudes of them fell, but this that attack'd our first Parents, was surely the Prince of the Devils, the Ring-leader in the Rebellion: No sooner was he a Sinner but he was a Satan, no sooner a Traitor but a Tempter, as one enrag'd against God and his Glory, and envious of Man and his Happiness. He knew he could not destroy Man but by debauching him. Balaam could not curse Israel, but he could tempt Israel, *Rev. 2. 14.* The Game therefore which Satan had to play, was to draw our first Parents to Sin, and so to separate between them and their God. Thus the Devil was from the beginning a Murderer, and the great Mischief-maker. The whole Race of Mankind had here, as it were, but one Neck, and at that Satan struck. The Adversary and Enemy is that wicked One. 2. 'Twas the Devil in the likeness of a Serpent. Whether it was only the visible Shape and Appearance of a Serpent, as some think those were, of which we read, *Exod. 7. 12.* Or whether it was a real living Serpent, acted and possess'd by the Devil, is not certain; by God's Permission it might be either. The Devil chose to act his Part in a Serpent, (1.) Because it is a specious Creature, has a spotted dappled Skin, and then went erect. Perhaps it was a flying Serpent, which seemed to come from on high, as a Messenger from the upper World, one of the Seraphim, for the fiery Serpents were flying, *Isa. 14. 29.* Many a dangerous Temptation comes to us in gay fine Colours, that are but Skin-deep; and seems to come from above, for Satan can seem an Angel of Light. And, (2.) Because it is a subtil Creature. That's here taken notice of. Many Instances are given of the Subtlety of the Serpent, both to do Mischief, and to secure himself in it when it is done; we are bid to be *Wise as Serpents*. But this Serpent, as acted by the Devil, no doubt was more subtil than any other; for the Devil, tho' he has lost the Sanctity retains the Sagacity of an Angel, and is *Wise to do Evil*. He knew of more Advantage by making use of the Serpent than we are aware of. *Observe*, There is not any thing by which the Devil serves himself and his own Interest more, than by un-sanctified Subtlety. What Eve thought of this Serpent speaking to her, we are not likely to tell, when I believe she herself did not know what to think of it: At first perhaps she suppos'd it might be a good Angel, and yet afterwards might suspect something amiss. It is remarkable that the Gentile Idolaters did many of them worship the Devil in the Shape and Form of a Serpent, thereby avowing their Adherence to that Apostate Spirit, and wearing his Colours.

2. The Person Tempted was the Woman, now alone, and at a Distance from her Husband, but near the forbidden Tree. 'Twas the Devil's Subtlety, (1.) To assault the weaker Vessel, with his Temptations; tho' Perfect in her Kind, yet we may suppose inferior to Adam in Knowledge and Strength, and Presence of Mind. Some think Eve received the Command not immediately from God, but at second-hand, by her Husband, and therefore might the easier be perswaded to discredit it. (2.) 'Twas his Policy to enter into discourse with her when she was alone. Had she

she kept close to the Side out of which she was lately taken, she had not been so much expos'd. There are many Temptations to which Solitude gives great Advantage; but the Communion of Saints contributes much to their Strength and Safety. (3.) He took Advantage by finding her near the forbidden Tree, and probably gazing upon the Fruit of it, only to satisfy her Curiosity. They that would not eat the forbidden Fruit, must not come near the forbidden Tree. *Avoid it, pass not by it.* Prov. 4. 15. (4.) Satan tempted Eve, that by her he might tempt Adam; so he tempted Job by his Wife, and Christ by Peter. 'Tis his Policy to send Temptations by unsuspected Hands, and theirs that have most Interest in us, and Influence upon us.

3. The Temptation is self, and the artificial Management of it. We are often in Scripture told of our Danger by the Temptations of Satan, his Devices, 2 Cor. 2. 11. his Depths, Rev. 2. 24. his Wiles, Eph. 6. 11. Now the greatest Instance we have of them, were in his Tempting of the two Adams, Here, and Mas. 4. In this here he prevailed, but in that he was baffled. What he spake to them, of whom he had no hold by any Corruption in them, he speaks in us by our own deceitful Hearts, and their carnal Reasonings, which makes his Assaults on us less discernable, but not less dangerous. That which the Devil aim'd at was to persuade Eve to eat forbidden Fruit, and to do this, he took the same Method that he doth still. 1. He questions whether it were a Sin or no, v. 1. 2. He denies that there was any Danger in it, v. 4. 3. He suggests much Advantage by it, v. 5. And these are his common Topicks.

1. He questions whether it were a Sin or no, to eat of this Tree, and whether really the Fruit of it was forbidden, *Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat?* The first Word intimated something said before introducing this, and with which it is connected. Perhaps some Discourse Eve had with her self which Satan took hold of, and grafted this Question upon. In the Chain of Thoughts one thing strangely brings in another, and perhaps something ill at last. *Observe here,* (1.) He doth not discover his Design at first, but puts a Question which seem'd innocent enough; I hear a piece of News, pray is it true? Hath God forbidden you to eat of this Tree? Thus he would begin a Discourse, and draw her into a Parley. Those that would be safe have need to be suspicious, and shy of talking with the Tempter. (2.) He quotes the Command fallaciously, as if it were a Prohibition not only of that Tree, but of all; God hath said, of every Tree ye may eat, except one, he by aggravating the Exception, endeavours to invalidate the Concession, *Hath God said, ye shall not eat of every Tree?* The Divine Law cannot be reproached unless it be first misrepresented. (3.) He seems to speak it tauntingly, upbraiding the Woman with her Shiness of meddling with that Tree, *q. d.* You are so nice and cautious, and so very precise, because God has said, *ye shall not eat.* The Devil, as he is a Liar, so he is a Scoffer from the beginning, and the Scoffers of the last Days are his Children. (4.) That which he aim'd at in the first Onset was to take off her Sense of the Obligation of the Command. Sure you are mistaken, it cannot be, that God should tye you out from this Tree: he would not do so unreasonable a Thing. See here, That it is the Subtlety of Satan to blemish the Reputation of the Divine Law, as uncertain, or unreasonable, and so to draw People to Sin; and that it is therefore our Wisdom to keep up a firm Belief of, and a high Respect for the Command of God. *Hath God said, Ye shall not lie, nor take his Name in vain, nor be drunk, &c.* Yes, I am sure he hath, and it is well said, and by his Grace I will abide by it, whatever the Tempter suggests to the contrary.

Now in answer to this Question, the Woman gives him a plain and full account of the Law they were under, v. 2, 3. Where *Observe,* 1. It was her Weakness to enter into Discourse with the Serpent: She might have perceived by his Question, that he had no good Design, and should therefore have started back with a *Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an Offence to me.* But her Curiosity, and perhaps her Surprize to hear a Serpent speak, led her into further Talk with him. Note, It is a dangerous thing to treat with a Temptation, which ought at first to be rejected with Disdain and Abhorrence. The Garrison that sounds a Parley, is not far from being surrender'd. Those that would be kept from Harm, must keep out of Harm's-way. See Prov. 14. 7-19. 27. 2. It was her Wisdom to take notice of the Liberty God had granted them, in answer to his sly Insinuation, as if God had put 'em into Paradise only to tantalize them with the sight of fair, but forbidden Fruits. Yea, saith she, *we may eat of the Fruit of the Trees;* Thanks to our Maker, we have Plenty and Variety enough allow'd us. Note, To prevent our being uneasy at the Restraints of Religion, 'tis good often to take a View of the Liberties and Comforts of it. 3. It was an Instance of her Resolution, that she adher'd to the Command, and faithfully repeated it, as of unquestionable certainty, *God hath said, I am confident he hath said it, ye shall not eat of the Fruit of this Tree;* and that which she adds, *neither shall ye touch it,* seems to have been with a good Intention, not (as some think) tacitly to reflect upon the Command as too strict, *Touch not, taste not, handle not.* But to make a Fence about it, we must not eat, therefore we will not touch. 'Tis forbidden in the

highest Degree, and the Authority of the Prohibition is sacred to us. 4. She seems a little to waver about the Threatning, and is not so particular and faithful in the Repetition of that as of the Precept. God had said, *In the Day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely Dye;* all she makes of that is, *Left ye Dye.* Note, wavering Faith, and wavering Resolutions, give great Advantage to the Tempter.

2. He denies that there was any Danger in it: Though it might be the transgressing of a Precept, yet it would not be the incurring of a Penalty, v. 4. *Ye shall not surely dye.* Ye shall not dying die, so the Word is, in direct Contradiction to what God had said. Either, (1.) It is not certain that ye shall die, so some. 'Tis not so sure as you are made to believe it is. Thus Satan endeavours to shake that which he cannot overthrow, and invalidates the Force of Divine Threatnings by questioning the Certainty of them; and when once it is suppos'd possible that there may be Falshood or Fallacy in any Word of God, a Door is then open'd to down-right Infidelity. Satan teaches Men first to doubt, and then to deny; he makes them Scepticks first, and so by degrees makes them Atheists. Or, (2.) It is certain ye shall not dye, so others. He avers his Contradiction with the same Phrase of Assurance that God had us'd in ratifying the Threatning. He began to call the Precept in question, v. 1. but finding that the Woman adher'd to that, he quit- ted that Battery, and made his second Onset upon the Threat- ning, where he perceiv'd her to waver; for he is quick to spy all Advantages, and to attack the Wall where it is weakest, *Ye shall not surely die.* This was a Lie, a down-right Lie; for, 1. It was contrary to the Word of God, which we are sure is true, see 1 Joh. 2. 21, 27. 'Twas such a Lie as gave the Lie to God himself. 2. It was contrary to his own Knowledge; when he told them there was no danger in Disobedience and Rebellion, he said that which he knew to be false by woful Ex- perience. He had broken the Law of his Creation, and had found to his Cost that he could not prosper in it, and yet he tells our first Parents they shall not die. He conceals his own Misery, that he might draw them into the like: Thus he still deceives Sinners into their own Ruine. He tells them, though they Sin they shall not die, and gains Credit rather than God, who tells them, *The Wages of Sin is Death.* Note, Hopes of Impunity is a great support to all Iniquity, and Impenitency in it. *I shall have Peace tho' I go on,* Deut. 29. 19.

3. He promiset them Advantage by it, v. 5. Here he fol- lows his Blow, and it was a Blow at the Root, a fatal Blow to the Tree we are Branches of. He not only would undertake they should be no losers by it, he would be bound to save them harmless; but (if they would be such Fools as to venture upon the Security of one that was himself become a Bankrupt) he undertakes they shall be Gainers by it, unpeakable Gainers. He could not have persuaded them to run the Hazard of ru- ining themselves if he had not suggested to them a great proba- bility of mending themselves.

1. He insinuates to them the great Improvements they would make by eating of this Fruit. And he suits the Temptation to the pure State they were now in, proposing to them not only carnal Pleasures or Gratifications, but intellectual Delights and Satisfaction. These were the Baits wherewith he cover'd his Hook. 1. *Your Eyes shall be opened;* you shall have much more of the Power and Pleasure of Contemplation than now you have; you shall fetch a larger Compass in your intellectual Views, and see further into Things than now you do. He speaks as if now they were but dim-sighted, and short-sighted, in comparison of what they would be then. 2. *You shall be as Gods, as Elohim,* mighty God's, not only Omniscient, but Omnipotent too: Or, you shall be as God himself, equal to him, Rivals with him, you shall be Sovereigns, and no longer Subjects; self-sufficient, and no longer depending. A most absurd Suggestion! As if it were possible for Creatures of Yesterday to be like their Crea- tor that was from Eternity. 3. *You shall know Good and Evil.* i. e. every thing that is desirable to be known. To support this part of the Temptation, he abuseth the Name given to this Tree, 'twas intended to teach the practical Knowledge of Good and Evil, that is, of Duty and Disobedience, and it would prove the Experimental Knowledge of Good and Evil, that is, of Happi- ness and Misery. And in these Senses the Name of the Tree, was a Warning to them not to eat of it: But he perverts the Sense of it, and wrefts it to their Destruction; as if this Tree would give them a speculative notional Knowledge of the Na- tures, Kinds, and Originals of Good and Evil. And, 4. all this presently, *in the Day you eat thereof,* you will find a sudden and immediate Change for the better. Now in all these Insi- nuations he aims to beget in them, (1.) Discontent with their present State, as if it were not so good as it might be, and should be. Note, No Condition will of it self bring Contentment, unless the Mind be brought to it. Adam was not easy, no, not in Paradise, nor the Angels in their first State, Jude 6. (2.) Am- bition of Preferment, as if they were fit to be Gods. Satan had ruin'd himself by desiring to be like the most High, Isa. 14. 14. and therefore seeks to infect our first Parents with the same De- sire, that he might ruin them too.

2. He insinuates to them that God had no good Design upon them in forbidding them this Fruit. *For God doth know how much it will advance you, and therefore in Envy and ill Will to you he has forbidden it; as if he durst not let them eat of that Tree, because then they would know their own Strength, and would not continue in an inferior State, but be able to cope with him: Or as if he grudg'd them the Honour and Happiness which their eating of that Tree would prefer them to.* Now, 1. This was a great Affront to God, and the highest Indignity that could be done him; A Reproach to his Power, as if he fear'd his Creatures, and much more a Reproach to his Goodness, as if he hated the Work of his own Hands, and would not have those whom he has made to be made happy. Shall the best of Men think it strange to be misrepresented and evil spoken of, when God himself is so? Satan as he is the Accuser of the Brethren before God, so he accuseth God before the Brethren: Thus he sows Discord, and is the Father of them that do so. 2. It was a most dangerous Snare to our first Parents, as it tended to alienate their Affections from God, and so to withdraw them from their Allegiance to him. Thus still the Devil draws People into his Interest, by suggesting to them *hard Thoughts of God, and false Hopes of Benefit, and Advantage by Sin.* Let us therefore in opposition to him, always think well of God as the Best Good, and think ill of Sin as the Worst of Evils. Thus let us resist the Devil, and he will flee from us.

6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat. 7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked: and they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons. 8 And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.

Here we see what Eve's Parley with the Tempter ended in; Satan at length gains his Point, and the strong Hold is taken by his Wiles. God try'd the Obedience of our first Parents by forbidding them the Tree of Knowledge, and Satan doth as it were joyn Issue with God, and in that very Thing undertakes to seduce them into a Transgression; and here we find how he prevail'd, God permitting it for Wife and Holy Ends.

1. We have here the Inducements that mov'd them to transgress. *The Woman being deceiv'd by the Tempter's artful Management was Ring-leader in the Transgression, 1 Tim. 2. 14.* She was first in the Fault, and it was the Result of her Consideration, or rather her Inconsideration. 1. She saw no Harm in this Tree more than in any of the rest. It was said of all the rest of the Fruit-Trees wherewith the Garden of Eden was planted, that they were pleasant to the Sight, and good for Food, Chap. 2. 9. Now in her Eye this was like all the rest; it seem'd as good for Food as any of them, and she saw nothing in the Colour of its Fruit that threaten'd Death or Danger, 'twas as pleasant to the Sight as any of them, and therefore what Hurt could it do them? Why should this be forbidden them rather than any of the rest? Note, When there is thought to be no more Harm in forbidden Fruit than in other Fruit, Sin lies at the Door, and Satan soon carries the Day. Nay perhaps it seem'd to her to be better for Food, more grateful to the Taste, and more nourishing to the Body than any of the rest, and to her Eye it was more pleasant than any. We are often betray'd into Snares by an inordinate Desire to have our Senses gratified. Or, if it had nothing in it more inviting than the rest, yet it was the more coveted because it was prohibited, whether it were so in her or no, we find that in us, that is in our Flesh, in our corrupt Nature, there dwells a strange Spirit of Contradiction, and a desire of that which is forbidden, *Nititur in vetitum.* 2. She imagin'd a greater Benefit by this Tree than by any of the rest, that it was a Tree not only not to be dreaded, but to be desired to make one wise, and therein excelling all the rest of the Trees. This she saw, i. e. She perceiv'd and understood it by what the Devil had said to her; And some think she saw the Serpent eat of that Tree; and that he told her he thereby had gain'd the Faculties of Speech and Reason, whence she infer'd its Power to make one wise, and was persuaded to think, If it made a Brute Creature Rational, why might it not make a Rational Creature Divine. See here how the Affectation of unnecessary Knowledge, under the mistaken Notion of Wisdom, proves hurtful and destructive to many. Our first Parents who knew so much did not know this that they knew enough. Christ is a Tree to be desir'd to make one Wise, (Col. 3. 3. 1 Cor. 1. 30.) let us by Faith feed upon him, that we may

be Wife to Salvation. In the heavenly Paradise the Tree of Knowledge will not be a forbidden Tree, for there shall we know as we are known; let us therefore long to be there, and in the mean time not exercise our selves in things too high, or too deep for us, nor covet to be wise above what is written.

2. The Steps of the Transgression; not Steps upward but downward towards the Pit, Steps that took hold on Hell. 1. She saw, she should have turn'd away her Eyes from beholding Vanity, but she enters into Temptation by looking with Pleasure on the forbidden Fruit. Observe, That a great deal of Sin comes in at the Eye. At those Windows Satan throws in those fiery Darts which pierce and poison the Heart. The Eye afflicts the Heart with Guilt as well as Grief. Let us therefore with holy Job make a Covenant with our Eyes, not to look on that which we are in danger of lusting after, Prov. 23. 31. Mat. 5. 28. Let the Fear of God be always to us for a covering of the Eyes, Gen. 20. 16. 2. She took; 'Twas her own Act and Deed. The Devil did not take it and put it into her Mouth whether she would or no, but she herself took it. Satan may Tempt, but he cannot Force; may persuade us to cast our selves down, but he cannot cast us down, Mat. 4. 6. Eve's taking was stealing, like Achan's taking the accursed Thing, taking that which she had no Right to. Sure she took it with a trembling Hand. 3. She did eat: When she look'd, perhaps she did not intend to take, or when she took, not to eat, but it ended in that. Note, The way of Sin is Down-Hill; a Man cannot stop himself when he will: The beginning of it is the breaking forth of Water, to which it is hard to say, *Hitherto it shall come and no further.* Therefore 'tis our Wisdom to suppress the first Motions of Sin, and to leave it off before it be meddled with. Obsta Principiis. 4. She gave also to her Husband with her. 'Tis likely he was not with her when she was tempted, surely if he had, he would have interpos'd to prevent the Sin, but he came to her when she had eaten, and was prevail'd with by her to eat likewise, for its easier to learn that which is ill, than to teach that which is Good. She gave it to him, persuading him with the same Arguments, that the Serpent had us'd with her, adding this to all the rest, that she herself had eaten of it, and found it so far from being deadly, that it was extremely pleasant and grateful. Stollen Waters are sweet. She gave it to him under colour of Kindness, she would not eat these delicious Morfels alone; But really it was the greatest Diskindness she could do him. Or perhaps she gave it to him that if it should prove hurtful, he might share with her in the Misery, which indeed looks ill-natur'd enough, and yet may without Difficulty be supposed to enter into the Heart of one that had eaten forbidden Fruit. Note, Those that have themselves done ill, are commonly willing to draw in others to do the same. As was the Devil so was Eve, no sooner a Sinner but a Tempter. 5. He did eat, overcome by his Wife's Importunity. 'Tis needless to ask what would have been the Consequence if Eve only had transgress'd; the Wisdom of God, we are sure, would have decided the Difficulty according to Equity: But, alas! the Case was not so; Adam also did eat. And what great harm if he did, say the corrupt and carnal Reasonings of a vain Mind? What harm? Why, there was in it the Unbelief of God's Word and Confidence in the Devil's; Discontent with his present State, Pride in his own Merits, and an Ambition of the Honour which comes not from God; Envy at God's Perfections, and Indulgence of the Appetites of the Body: In neglecting the Tree of Life which he was allow'd to eat of, and eating of the Tree of Knowledge which was forbidden, he plainly shew'd a Contempt of the Favours God had bestowed on him, and a Preference given to those God did not see fit for him. He would be both his own Carver, and his own Master, would have what he pleas'd, and do what he pleas'd: His Sin was in one Word *Disobedience, Rom. 5. 19.* Disobedience to a plain, easy, and express Command, which probably he knew to be a Command of Trial. He sins against great Knowledge, many Mercies, against Light and Love, the clearest Light, and the dearest Love that ever Sinner sinn'd against. He had no corrupt Nature within him to betray him; But had a Freedom of Will, not enslav'd, and was in his full Strength, not weaken'd or impaired. He turn'd aside quickly. Some think he fell the same Day he was made; tho' I see nor how to reconcile that with God's pronouncing all very good in the Clofe of that Day: Others suppose he fell on the Sabbath-Day, the better Day, the worse Deed: however, 'tis certain he kept his Integrity but a very little while: Being in Honour he continued not. But the greatest Aggravation of his Sin was, that he involved all his Posterity in Sin and Ruin by it. God having told him, that his Race should replenish the Earth, surely he could not but know that he stood as a Publick Person, and that his Disobedience would be fatal to all his Seed; and if so, it was certainly both the greatest Treachery, and the greatest Cruelty that ever was. The Humane Nature being lodg'd intirely in our first Parents, from hence-forward it could not but be transmitted from them under an Attainder of Guilt, a Stain of Dishonour, and an Hereditary Disease of Sin and Corruption. And can we say then, that Adam's Sin had but little Harm in it?

3. The immediate Consequences of the Transgression. Shame and Fear seiz'd the Criminals, *ipso facto*, these came into the World along with Sin, and still attend it. 1. Shame seiz'd them unseen, v. 7. where observe, 1. The strong Convictions they fell under, in their own Bosoms; *The Eyes of them both were open'd*. 'Tis not meant of the Eyes of the Body, those were open before, by the same token that the Sin came in at them; *Jonathan's Eyes were enlighten'd* by eating forbidden Fruit, 1 Sam. 14. 27. i. e. he was refresh'd and reviv'd by it; but theirs were not so. Nor is it meant of any Advances made hereby in true Knowledge, but the Eyes of their Consciences were open'd; *Their Hearts smote them* for what they had done. Now, when it was too late, they saw the Folly of eating forbidden Fruit. They saw the Happiness they were fallen from, and the Misery they were fallen into. They saw a loving God provok'd, his Grace and Favour forfeited, his Likeness and Image lost, Dominion over the Creatures gone; they saw their Natures corrupted and deprav'd; felt a Disorder in their own Spirits which they had never before been conscious of; they saw a Law in their Members, warring against the Law of their Minds, and captivating them both to Sin and Wrath: They saw as Balaam when his Eyes were open'd, (Numb. 22. 31.) the Angel of the Lord standing in the Way, and his Sword drawn in his Hand; and perhaps they saw the Serpent that had abus'd them insulting over them. The Text tells us, they saw *that they were naked*, i. e. 1. That they were strip'd, depriv'd of all the Honours and Joys of their paradise State, and expos'd to all the Miseries that might justly be expected from an angry God; they were disarm'd, their Defence was departed from them. 2. That they were shamed, for ever shamed before God and Angels; they saw themselves disrob'd of all their Ornaments and Ensigns of Honour, degraded from their Dignity, and disgrac'd in the highest Degree; laid open to the Contempt and Reproach of Heaven and Earth, and their own Consciences. Now, see here, (1.) What a Dishonour and Disquietment Sin is; it makes Mischief where-ever it is admitted, lets Men against themselves, disturbs their Peace, and destroys all their Comforts: Sooner or later it will have Shame, either the Shame of true Repentance, which ends in Glory, or that Shame and everlasting Contempt to which the Wicked shall rise at the Great Day; *Sin is a Reproach to any People*. (2.) What a Deceiver Satan is; he told our first Parents when he tempted them, that their Eyes should be open'd, and so they were; but not as they understood it, they were open'd to their Shame and Grief, not to their Honour or Advantage. Therefore when he speaks fair, believe him not. The most malicious mischievous Lies often excuse themselves with this, that they are only Equivocations; but God will not so excuse them. 2. The sorry Shift they made to palliate these Convictions, and to arm themselves against them. They sew'd or platted Fig-leaves together, and to cover, at least, part of their Shame from one another, they made themselves Aprons. See here what is commonly the Folly of those that have sinned. 1. That they are more solicitous to save their Credit before Men, than to obtain their Pardon from God; they are backward to confess their Sin, and very desirous to conceal it, as much as may be; *I have sinned, yet honour me*. 2. That the Excuses Men make to cover and extenuate their Sins, are vain and frivolous, like the Aprons of Fig-Leaves, they make the Matter never the better, but the worse; the Shame thus hid becomes the more shameful; yet thus we are all apt to cover our transgression as Adam, Job 31. 33. 2. Fear seiz'd them immediately upon their eating the forbidden Fruit, v. 8. Observe here, (1.) What was the Cause and Occasion of their Fear, they heard the Voice of the Lord God walking in the Garden in the cool of the Day. 'Twas the approach of the Judge that put them into a Fright, and yet he came in such a manner, as made it formidable only to guilty Consciences. 'Tis suppos'd he came in a humane Shape; and that he who judg'd the World now, was the same that shall judge the World at the last Day, even that Man whom God hath ordain'd; he appear'd to them now (it should seem) in no other Similitude than that wherein they had seen him when he put them into Paradise; for he came to convince and humble them, not to amuse and terrify them. He came in the Garden, not descending immediately from Heaven in their View, as afterwards on Mount Sinai, making either thick Darkness his Pavillion, or the flaming Fire his Chariot; but he came in the Garden as one that was still willing to be familiar with them. He came walking, not running, not riding upon the Wings of the Wind, but walking deliberately as one slow to Anger, teaching us when we are never so much provok'd, not to be hot or hasty, to speak and act considerately, and not rashly. He came in the cool of the Day, not in the Night, when all Fears are doubly fearful, nor in the Heat of the Day, for he came not in the Heat of his Anger; *Fury is not in him*, Isa. 27. 4. Nor did he come suddenly upon them, but they heard his Voice at some distance, giving them notice of his coming; and probably it was a still small Voice, like that in which he came to enquire after Eli-jah: Some think they heard him discoursing with himself concerning the Sin of Adam, and the Judgment now to be past upon him, perhaps as he did concerning Israel, Hos. 11. 8. 9. How shall I give thee up? Or rather, they heard him calling for

them, and coming towards them. (2.) What was the Effect and Evidence of their Fear? They hid themselves from the Presence of the Lord God? A sad Change! Before they had sinn'd, if they heard the Voice of the Lord God coming towards them, they would have run to meet him, and with an humble Joy welcom'd his gracious Visits, but now it was otherwise, God was become a Terror to them, and then no marvel that they were become a Terror to themselves, and full of Confusion; their own Consciences accus'd them, and set their Sin before 'em in its Colours; their Fig-leaves fail'd them, and would do them no service; God was come forth against them as an Enemy, and the whole Creation was at war with them; and as yet they knew not of any Mediator between them and an angry God, so that nothing remain'd but a certain fearful looking for of Judgment. In this Fright they hid themselves among the Bushes; Having offended, they fled for the same. Knowing themselves Guilty, they durst not stand a Trial, but absconded and fled from Justice. See here, 1. The fallhood of the Tempter, and the Frauds and Fallacies of his Temptations: He promis'd them they should be safe, but now they cannot so much as think themselves so: He said they should not dye, and yet now they are forc'd to fly for their Lives; he promis'd 'em they should be advanc'd, but they see themselves abas'd; never did they seem so little as now: He promis'd them they should be knowing, but they see themselves at a loss, and know not so much as where to hide themselves: He promis'd them they should be as Gods, Great and Bold, and Daring, but they are as Criminals discover'd, Trembling, Pale and Sneaking: They would not be Subjects, and so they are Prisoners. 2. The Folly of Sinners, to think it either possible or desirable to hide themselves from God: Can they conceal themselves from the Father of Lights, Psal. 139: 7, 8. Jer. 23, 24. Will they withdraw themselves from the Fountain of Life, who alone can give Help and Happiness? Jon. 2. 8. 3. The Fears that attend Sin: All that amazing Fear of God's Appearances, the Accusations of Conscience, the Approaches of Trouble, the Assaults of inferiour Creatures, and the Arrests of Death, which is common among Men, is the Effect of Sin. Adam and Eve that were Partners in the Sin, were Sharers in the Shame and Fear that attended it; and tho' Hand joyn'd in Hand (Hands so lately joyn'd in Marriage) yet could they not animate or fortify one another: Miserable Comforters they were become to each other.

9. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said, unto him, Where art thou? 10. And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden: and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid my self.

We have here the Arraignment of these Deserters before the righteous Judge of Heaven and Earth, who, tho' he is not ty'd to observe Formalities, yet proceeds against them with all possible Fairness, that he may be justified when he speaks. Observe here, 1. The startling Question wherewith God pursu'd Adam, and arrested him, *Where art thou?* Not as if God did not know where he was, but thus he would enter the Process against him. Come, where is this foolish Man? Some make it a bemoaning Question; Poor Adam, what's become of thee? *Alas for thee!* So some read it. *How art thou fallen, Lucifer, Son of the Morning!* Thou that wast my Friend and Favourite, whom I had done so much for, and would have done so much more, hast thou now forsaken me and ruin'd thy self? Is it come to this? 'Tis rather an upbraiding Question in order to his Conviction and Humiliation. *Where art thou?* Not in what Place, but in what Condition? Is this all thou hast gotten by eating forbidden Fruit? Thou that would'st vye with me, dost thou now fly from me? Note, Those who by Sin have gone astray from God, should seriously consider where they are; they are afar off from all Good, in the midst of their Enemies, in Bondage to Satan, and in the High Road to utter Ruin. This Enquiry after Adam may be look'd upon as a gracious Pursuit in Kindness to him, and in order to his Recovery. If God had not call'd to him, to reduce him, his Condition had been as desperate as that of fallen Angels; this lost Sheep had wander'd endlessly, if the good Shepherd had not sought after him, to bring him back, and in order to that, minded him where he was, where he should not be, and where he could not be either happy or easy. Note, If Sinners will but consider where they are, they will not rest till they return to God. 2. The trembling Answer which Adam gave to this Question, v. 10. *I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid*. He doth not own his Guilt, and yet in effect confesseth it by owning his Shame and Fear; but 'tis the common Fault and Folly of those that have done an ill thing when they are question'd about it, to acknowledge no more than what is manifest, and they cannot deny. Adam was afraid, because he was naked, not only unarm'd, and therefore afraid to contend with God, but uncloath'd, and therefore afraid so much as to appear before him: We have reason to be afraid of ap-
proaching

proaching to God, if we be not clothed and fenced with the Righteousness of Christ, for nothing but that will be Armour of Proof, and cover the Shame of our Nakedness: Let us therefore put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and then draw near with humble boldness.

11 And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? 12 And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. 13 And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? and the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

We have here the Offenders found Guilty by their own Confession, and yet endeavouring to excuse and extenuate their Fault; they could not *confess* and *justify* what they had done, but they *confess* and *palliate* it. *Observe*, 1. How their Confession was extorted from them, God put it to the Man, v. 11. *Who told thee that thou wast naked?* i. e. How camest thou to be sensible of thy Nakedness as thy Shame? *Hast thou eaten of the forbidden Tree?* *Note*, Tho' God knows all our Sins, yet he will know them from us, and requires from us an ingenious Confession of them, not that he may be *inform'd*, but that we may be *humbled*. In this Examination God reminds him of the Command he had given him, *I commanded thee not to eat of it; I thy Maker, I thy Master, I thy Benefactor, I commanded thee to the contrary: Sin appears most plain and most sinful in the Glass of the Commandment; therefore God here sets it before Adam, and in it we should see our Faces.* The Question put to the Woman was, v. 13. *What is this that thou hast done?* Wilt thou also own thy Fault, and make Confession of it? And wilt thou see what an ill thing it was? *Note*, It concerns those who have eaten forbidden Fruit themselves, and especially those that have enticed others to it, likewise seriously to consider *what they have done*. In eating forbidden Fruit we have offended a great and gracious God, broken a just and righteous Law, violated a sacred and most solemn Covenant, wrong'd our own precious Souls by forfeiting God's Favour, and exposing our selves to his Wrath and Curse; in enticing others to it we do the Devil's Work, make our selves guilty of other Men's Sins, and accessory to their Ruin; *What is this that we have done?* 2. How their Crime was extenuated by them in their Confession. 'Twas to no purpose to plead, Not Guilty; *the show of their Countenances testified against them*, therefore they become their own Accusers; *I did eat*, saith the Man, and *so did I*, saith the Woman, for when God judges he will overcome; but these do not look like Penitent Confessions, for instead of aggravating the Sin, and taking Shame to themselves, they excuse the Sin, and lay the Shame and Blame on others.

1. Adam lays all the Blame upon his Wife: *She gave me of the Tree*, and press'd me to eat of it, which I did only to oblige her; a frivolous Excuse. He ought to have taught her, not to be taught by her; and it was no hard matter to determine which of the two he must be rul'd by, his God or his Wife. *Learn hence* never to be brought to Sin by that which will not bring us off in the Judgment: Let not that bear us up in the Commission, which will not bear us out in the Trial: Let us therefore never be overcome by Importunity to act against our Consciences, nor ever displease God to please the best Friend we have in the World. But this is not the worst on't, he not only lays the Blame upon his Wife, but expresseth it so as tacitly to reflect on God himself; 'tis the Woman which thou gavest me, and gavest to be with me as my Companion, my Guide and my Acquaintance, she gave me of the Tree, else I had not eaten of it. Thus he insinuates, that God was accessory to his Sin; He gave him the Woman, and she gave him the Fruit, so that he seem'd to have it but at one remove from God's own Hand. *Note*, There is a strange Proneness in those that are tempted, to say, they are tempted of God, as if our Abusing of God's Gifts would excuse our Violation of God's Laws: God gives us Riches, Honours, and Relations, that we may serve him cheerfully in the enjoyment of them; but if we take occasion from them to Sin against him, instead of blaming Providence for putting us into such a Condition, we must blame our selves for perverting the gracious Designs of Providence therein.

2. Eve lays all the Blame upon the Serpent; *the Serpent beguiled me*. Sin is a Brat that no Body is willing to own; a sign 'tis a scandalous thing: Those that are willing enough to take the Pleasure and Profit of Sin, are backward enough to take the Blame and Shame of it. The Serpent, that subtle Creature of thy making, which thou didst permit to come into Paradise to us, he beguiled me, or made me to err, for our Sins are our Errors. *Learn hence*, 1. That Satan's Temptations are all Begui-

lings: His Arguments are all Fallacies, his Allurements are all Cheats; when he speaketh fair, believe him not: Sin deceives us, and by it slays us. 'Tis by the deceitfulness of Sin, that the Heart is harden'd, see Rom. 7. 11. Heb. 3. 13. 2. That though Satan's Subtlety drew us into Sin, yet 'twill not justify us in Sin: Tho' he be the Tempter, we are the Sinners, and indeed 'tis our own Lust that draws us aside and enticeth us, Jam. 1. 14. Let it not therefore lessen our Sorrow and Humiliation for Sin, that we were beguil'd into it, but rather let it increase our Self-Indignation, that we should suffer ourselves to be beguil'd by a known Cheat and a sworn Enemy. Well, this is all the Prisoners at the Bar have to say why Sentence should not be pass'd, and Execution awarded according to Law, and this All is next nothing, in some respects worse than nothing.

14 And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field: upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: 15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

The Prisoners being found Guilty by their own Confession, besides the personal and infallible Knowledge of the Judge, and nothing material being offer'd in *Arrest of Judgment*, God immediately proceeds to pass Sentence, and in these Verses he begins (where the Sin began) with the Serpent. God did not examine the Serpent, nor ask him what he had done, or why he did it, but immediately Sentenc'd him, (1.) Because he was already convicted of Rebellion against God, and his Malice and Wickedness was notorious, *not found by secret search*, but openly avow'd and declar'd as Sodom's. (2.) Because he was to be for ever excluded from all Hope of Pardon, and why should any thing be said to convince and humble him who was to find no Place for Repentance: His Wound was not *search'd*, because it was not to be *cured*. Some think the Condition of the Fallen Angels was not declar'd desperate and helpless, till now they had seduced Man into the Rebellion.

The Sentence pass'd upon the Tempter may be consider'd, [1.] As *lightning* upon the Serpent, the brute Creature which Satan made use of, which was as the rest made for the Service of Man, but was now abus'd to his Hurt; therefore to testify a Displeasure against Sin, and a Jealousy for the injur'd Honour of Adam and Eve, God fastens a Curse and a Reproach upon the Serpent, and makes it to groan, being burthen'd, Rom. 8. 20. The Devil's Instruments must share in the Devil's Punishments; thus the Bodies of the Wicked, tho' only Instruments of Unrighteousness, shall partake of everlasting Torments with the Soul, the principal Agent. Even the Ox that kill'd a Man must be stor'd, Exod. 21. 28, 29. See here, how God hates Sin, and especially how much displeas'd he is with those that entice others to Sin; 'tis a perpetual Brand upon Jeroboam's Name that he made Israel to Sin. Now, 1. The Serpent is here laid under the Curse of God; *Thou art cursed above all Cattle*; even the creeping Things when God made them, were blessed of him, Chap. 1. 22. but Sin turn'd the Blessing into a Curse. The Serpent was more subtle than any Beast of the Field, v. 1. and here cursed above every Beast of the Field; un sanctify'd Subtlety often proves a great Curse to a Man; and the more crafty Men are to do evil, the more mischief they do, and consequently they shall receive the greater Damnation. Subtle Tempters are the most accursed Creatures under the Sun.

2. He is here laid under Man's Reproach and Enmity. (1.) He is to be for ever look'd upon as a vile and despicable Creature, and a proper Object of Scorn and contempt; *upon thy Belly thou shalt go*, no longer upon Feet, or half erect, but thou shalt crawl along, thy Belly cleaving to the Earth, an Expression of a very abject miserable Condition, Psal. 44. 25. and thou shalt not avoid eating Dust with thy Meat. His Crime was, that he tempted Eve to eat that which she should not; his Punishment was, that he was necessitated to eat that which he would not. *Dust thou shalt eat*; which signifies not only a base and despicable Condition, but a mean and sneaking Spirit; 'tis said of those whose Courage is departed from them, that they lick the Dust like a Serpent, Mic. 7. 17. How sad it is that the Serpent's Curse should be the covetous Worldling's Choice, whose Character it is that they pant after the Dust of the Earth, Amos 2. 7. These chuse their own Delusions, and so shall their Doom be. 2. He is to be for ever look'd upon as a venomous noxious Creature, and a proper Object of Hatred and Detestation. *I will put enmity between thee and the Woman*. The inferior Creatures being made for Man, 'twas a Curse upon any of them to be turn'd against Man, and Man against them. And this is part of the Serpent's Curse. The Serpent is hurtful to Man, and oft bruise his Heel, because he can reach no higher; nay, notice

tice is taken of his biting the Horse-Heels, *Gen. 49. 27.* But Man is victorious over the Serpent, and *bruisseth his Head*, i. e. gives him a mortal Wound, aiming to destroy the whole *Generation of Vipers*. 'Tis the Effect of this Curse upon the Serpent; that tho' that Creature is subtle and very dangerous, yet it prevails not (as it would if God gave it Commission) to the Destruction of Mankind; but this Sentence against Serpents is much fortified by that Promise of God to his People, *Psal. 91. 13. Thou shalt tread upon the Lyon and the Adder*, and that of Christ to his Disciples, *Mark 16. 18. They shall take up Serpents*, witness *Paul*, who was unhurt by the Viper that fasten'd on his Hand. Observe here, That the Serpent and the Woman had just now been very familiar and friendly in Discourse about the forbidden Fruit, and a wonderful Agreement there was between them, but here they are irreconcilably set at Variance. Note, Sinful Friendships justly end in mortal Feuds; those that unite in Wickedness will not unite long.

[2.] This Sentence may be consider'd as levell'd at the Devil, who only made use of the Serpent, as his Vehicle in this Appearance, but was himself the principal Agent. He that spoke through the *Serpent's Mouth*, is here struck at thro' the *Serpent's Side*, and is principally intended in the Sentence, which, like the Pillar of Cloud and Fire, hath a dark Sight towards the Devil, and a bright Side towards our first Parents, and their Seed. Great things are contain'd in these Words.

1. A perpetual Reproach is here fasten'd upon that great Enemy both to God and Man. Under the cover of the Serpent he is here sentenc'd to be (1.) *Degraded and Accursed of God*. 'Tis suppos'd Pride was the Sin that turn'd Angels into Devils, which is here justly punish'd by a great Variety of Mortifications couch'd under the mean Circumstances of a Serpent crawling on his Belly, and licking the Dust. *How art thou fallen, O Lucifer!* He that would be above God, and would head a Rebellion against him, is justly expos'd here to Contempt, and lies to be trodden on; a Man's Pride will bring him low, and God will humble those that will not humble themselves. (2.) *Detested and Abhor'd of all Mankind*, even those that are really seduced into his Interest, yet profess a Hatred and Abhorrence of him, and all that are born of God, make it their constant Care to keep themselves that that wicked One touch them not, *1 Joh. 5. 18.* He is here condemn'd to a state of War, and irreconcilable Enmity. (3.) *Destroyed and Ruined* at last by the great Redeemer, signified by the *breaking of his Head*; his subtle Politicks shall be all baffled, his usurped Power shall be intirely crush'd, and he shall be for ever a captive to the injur'd Honour of the Divine Sovereignty: By being told of this now, he was tormented before the Time.

2. A perpetual Quarrel is here commenc'd between the Kingdom of God, and the Kingdom of the Devil among Men; War proclaimed between the Seed of the Woman, and the Seed of the Serpent; that War in Heaven between Michael and the Dragon began now, *Rev. 12. 7.* It is the Fruit of this Enmity, 1. That there is a continual Conflict between Grace and Corruption in the Hearts of God's People; Satan by their Corruptions assaults them, buffets them, sifts them, and seeks to devour them; they, by the exercise of their Graces, resist him, wrestle with him, quench his fiery Darts, force him to flee from them. Heaven and Hell can never be reconcil'd, nor Light and Darkness, no more can Satan and a sanctified Soul, for these are contrary the one to the other. (2.) That there is likewise a continual struggle between the Wicked and the Godly in this World: They that love God account those their Enemies that hate him. *Psal. 139. 21, 22.* And all the Rage and Malice of Persecutors against the People of God is the Fruit of this Enmity, which will continue while there is a Godly Man on this side Heaven, and a Wicked Man on this side Hell; *Marvel not therefore if the World hate you, 1 Joh. 3. 13.*

3. A Gracious Promise is here made of Christ as the Deliverer of Fallen Man from the Power of Satan, tho' it was said to the Serpent, yet it was said in the hearing of our first Parents, who doubtless took the Hints of Grace here given them, and saw a Door of Hope open'd to them, else the following Sentence upon themselves would have overwhelm'd them. Here was the Dawning of the Gospel Day; no sooner was the Wound given, but the Remedy was provided and revealed; here in the Head of the Book, as the Word is, *Heb. 10. 7. in the beginning of the Bible* it is written of Christ, that he should do the Will of God. By Faith in this Promise we have reason to think, that our first Parents, and the Patriarchs before the Flood, were justified and sav'd, and to this Promise, and the Benefit of it instantly serving God Day and Night they hoped to come. Notice is here given them of three things concerning Christ.

1. His Incarnation, that he should be the Seed of the Woman, the Seed of that Woman, therefore his Genealogy, *Luke 3.* goes so high as to shew him to be the Son of Adam, but God doth the Woman the Honour to call him rather her Seed, because she it was whom the Devil had beguil'd, and on whom Adam had laid the Blame; herein God magnifies his Grace, in that tho' the Woman was first in the Transgression, yet she shall be saved by Child-bearing (as some read it) i. e. by the promised Seed

which shall descend from her, *1 Tim. 2. 15.* He was likewise to be the Seed of a Woman only, a Virgin, that he might not be tainted with the Corruption of our Nature; he was sent forth made of a Woman, *Gal. 4. 4.* that this Promise here might be fulfill'd. It speaks great Incouragement to Sinners, that their Saviour is the Seed of the Woman, Bone of our Bone, *Heb. 2. 11, 14.* Man is therefore sinful and unclean because he is born of a Woman, *Job 25. 4.* and therefore his Days are full of Trouble, *Job 14. 1.* But the Seed of the Woman was made Sin and a Curse for us, so saving us from both.

2. His Sufferings and Death, pointed at in Satan's bruising his Heel, i. e. his Humane Nature: Satan tempted Christ in the Wilderness to draw him to Sin; and some think 'twas Satan that terrified Christ in his Agony, to have driven him to Despair; it was the Devil that put it into the Heart of Judas to betray Christ, Peter to deny him, the Chief Priests to prosecute him, the false Witnesses to accuse him, and Pilate to condemn him; aiming in all this, by destroying the Saviour to ruin the Salvation, but on the contrary 'twas by Death that Christ destroy'd him that had the Power of Death, *Heb. 2. 14.* Christ's Heel was bruised when his Feet were pierc'd and nail'd to the Cross. And Christ's Sufferings are continued in the Sufferings of the Saints for his Name: The Devil tempts them, casts them into Prison, persecutes and slays them, and so bruises the Heel of Christ, who is afflicted in their Afflictions. But while the Heel is bruise'd on Earth, 'tis well the Head is safe in Heaven.

3. His Victory over Satan thereby. Satan had now trampled upon the Woman, and insulted over her, but the Seed of the Woman should be raised up in the fulness of Time to avenge her Quarrel, and to trample upon him, to spoil him, to lead him captive, and to triumph over him, *Col. 2. 15.* He shall break his Head, i. e. He shall destroy all his Politicks, and all his Powers, and give a total overthrow to his Kingdom and Interest: Christ baffled Satan's Temptations, rescued Souls out of his Hands, cast him out of the Bodies of People, dispossessed the strong Man armed, and divided the Spoil: By his Death he gave a fatal and incurable Blow to the Devil's Kingdom, a Wound to the Head of this Beast that can never be heal'd. As his Gospel gets Ground, Satan falls, *Luke 10. 18.* and is bound, *Rev. 20. 2.* By his Grace he treads Satan under his People's Feet, *Rom. 16. 20.* and will shortly cast him into the Lake of Fire, *Rev. 20. 10.* And the Devil's perpetual Overthrow will be the compleat and everlasting Joy and Glory of the chosen Remnant.

16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception: in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children: and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

We have here the Sentence pass'd upon the Woman for her Sin; two things she is condemn'd to, a State of Sorrow, and a State of Subjection, proper Punishments of a Sin in which she had gratified her Pleasure and her Pride.

1. She is here put into a State of Sorrow; one Particular of which only is instanc'd in, that in bringing forth Children, but it includes all those Impressions of Grief and Fear which the Mind of that tender Sex is most apt to receive, and all the common Calamities which they are liable to. Note, Sin brought Sorrow into the World; that was it that made the World a Vale of Tears, brought Showers of Trouble upon our Heads, and open'd Springs of Tears in our Hearts, and so delug'd the World: Had we known no Guilt we should have known no Grief. The Pains of Child-bearing, which are great to a Proverb, a Scripture-Parable, are the Effect of Sin; every Pang, and every Groan of the travailing Woman speaks aloud the fatal Consequences of Sin: This comes of eating forbidden Fruit. Observe, 1. The Sorrows are here said to be multiplied, greatly multiplied: All the Sorrows of this present Time are so; many are the Calamities which Humane Life is liable to, of various Kinds, and oft repeated, the Clouds returning after the Rain: No marvel our Sorrows are multiplied, when our Sins are; both are innumerable Evils. The Sorrows of Child-bearing are multiplied, for they include not only the travailing Throws, but the breeding Sicknesses before, (tis Sorrow from the Conception) and the nursing Toils and Vexations after; and after all, if the Children prove wicked and foolish, they are more than ever, the Heaviness of her that bore them. Thus are the Sorrows multiplied, as one Grief is over, another succeeds in this World. 2. 'Tis God that multiplies our Sorrows, I will do it: God, as a righteous Judge, doth it, which ought to silence us under all our Sorrows; as many as they are, we have deserv'd them all, and more; nay, God, as a tender Father, doth it for our necessary Correction, that we may be humbled for Sin, and weaned from the World by all our Sorrows; and the Good we get by them, with the Comfort we have under them, will abundantly ballance all our Sorrows, how greatly soever they are multiplied.

2. She is here put into a State of Subjection: The whole Sex; which by Creation was Equal with Man, is for Sin made Inferior, and forbidden to *usurp Authority*, 1. Tim. 2. 11, 12. The Wife particularly is hereby put under the Dominion of her Husband, and is not *fui juris*, not at her own dispose, of which see an Instance in that Law, Num. 30. 6, 7, 8. where the Husband is empower'd, if he please, to disannul the Vows made by the Wife. This Sentence amounts only to that Command, *Wives be in subjection to your own Husbands*, but the entrance of Sin has made that Duty a Punishment, which otherwise it would not have been. If Man had not sinn'd, he would always have rul'd with Wisdom and Love; and if the Woman had not sinn'd, she would always have obey'd with Humility and Meekness, and then the Dominion had been no Grievance, but our own Sin and Folly makes our *Yoke heavy*: If Eve had not eaten forbidden Fruit her self, and tempted her Husband to it, she had never complained of her Subjection; therefore it ought never to be complain'd of, tho' harsh, but Sin must be complain'd of that made it so. Those Wives who not only despise and disobey their Husbands, but domineer over them, do not consider, that they not only violate a Divine Law, but thwart a Divine Sentence. Lastly, Observe here how Mercy is mixt with Wrath in this Sentence, the Woman shall have Sorrow, but it shall be in bringing forth Children, and the Sorrow shall be forgotten for Joy that a Child is born, Joh. 16. 21. she shall be subject, but it shall be to her own Husband that loves her, not to a Stranger, or an Enemy: The Sentence was not a Curse to bring her to Ruin, but a Chastisement to bring her Repentance. 'Twas well Enmity was not put between the Man and the Woman, as there was between the Serpent and the Woman.

17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkned unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. 18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee: and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. 19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

We have here the Sentence pass'd upon Adam, which is prefaced with a recital of his Crime, v. 17. *Because thou hast hearkned to the Voice of thy Wife*. He excus'd the Fault by laying it on his Wife, she gave it me, but God doth not admit the Excuse, she could but tempt him, she could not force him; tho' it was her Fault to persuade him to eat it, 'twas his Fault to hearken to her. Thus Men's frivolous Pleas will in the Day of God's Judgment not only be over-ruled, but turn'd against them, and made the Grounds of their Sentence, *Out of thine own Mouth will I judge thee*. God put Marks of his Displeasure on Adam in three Instances.

1. His Habitation is by this Sentence curs'd, *Cursed is the Ground for thy sake*; and the Effect of that Curse is, *Thorns and Thistles shall it bring forth unto thee*. 'Tis here intimated that his Habitation should be changed, he should no longer dwell in a distinguish'd blessed Paradise, but should be remov'd to common Ground, and that curs'd. The Ground or Earth is here put for the whole visible Creation, which, by the Sin of Man, is made subject to Vanity, the several Parts of it being not so serviceable to Man's Comfort and Happiness, as they were design'd to be when they were made, and would have been if he had not sinn'd. God gave the Earth to the Children of Men, designing it to be a comfortable Dwelling to them, but Sin has alter'd the Property of it; 'tis now curs'd for Man's Sin, i. e. 'tis a dishonourable Habitation, it speaks Man mean, that his Foundation is in the Dust: 'Tis a dry and barren Habitation; its spontaneous Productions are now Weeds and Briars, something nauseous or noxious; what good Fruits it produceth must be extorted from it by the Ingenuity and Industry of Man: Fruitfulness was its Blessing for Man's Service, Chap. 1. 11. 29. and now Barrenness was its Curse for Man's Punishment: 'Tis not what it was in the Day it was created: Sin turn'd a *Fruitful Land into Barrenness*, and Man being become as the *Wild Asses Colt*, he has the Wild Asses Lot, Job 39. 6. the *Wilderness* for his Habitation, and the *barren Land* his Dwelling, Psal. 68. 6. Had not this Curse been in part removed, for ought I know, the Earth had been for ever Barren, and had never produced any thing but *Thorns and Thistles*. The Ground is curs'd, i. e. doom'd to Destruction at the end of Time, when the Earth and all the Works that are therein shall be burnt up, for the Sin of Man, the Measure of whose Iniquity will then be full, 2 Pet. 3. 7, 10. But, observe a mixture of Mercy in this Sentence: (1.) Adam is not himself curs'd, as the Serpent was, v.

14. but only the Ground for his sake: God had Blessings in him, even the Holy Seed, *Destroy is not*, for that Blessing is in it, Isa. 65. 8. And he had Blessings in store for him, therefore he is not directly and immediately Curs'd, but as it were at second-hand. (2.) He is yet above Ground, the Earth doth not open and swallow him up, only 'tis not what it was: As he continues alive notwithstanding his Degeneracy from his Primitive Purity and Rectitude, to the Earth continues his Habitation, notwithstanding its Degeneracy from its Primitive Beauty and Fruitfulness. (3.) This Curse upon the Earth, which cut off all Expectations of a Happiness in things below, might direct and quicken him to look for Bliss and Satisfaction, only in things above.

2. His Employments and Enjoyments are all embitter'd to him. (1.) His Business shall from henceforth become a toil to him, and he shall go on with it in the sweat of his Face, v. 19. His Business before he sinn'd was a constant Pleasure to him, the Garden was then dress'd without any uneasy Labour, and kept without any uneasy Care; But now his Labour shall be a weariness and shall waste his Body; his Care shall be a Torment and shall afflict his Mind. The Curse upon the Ground which made it barren, and produced *Thorns and Thistles*, made his Employment about it much the more difficult and toilsome. If Adam had not sinn'd he had not sweat. Observe here, 1. That Labour is our Duty, which we must faithfully perform; not as Creatures only, but as Criminals we are bound to Work, 'tis part of our Sentence, which Idleness daringly defies. 2. That Uneasiness and Weariness with Labour is our just Punishment, which we must patiently submit to, and not complain of, since it is less than our Iniquity deserves. Let not us by inordinate Care and Labour make our Punishment heavier than God has made it, but rather study to lighten our Burthen, and wipe off our Sweat, by eying Providence in all, and expecting Rest shortly.

(2.) His Food shall from henceforth become (in comparison with what it had been) unpleasant to him. (1.) The Matter of his Food is changed; he must now eat the Herb of the Field, and must no longer be feasted with the Delicacies of the Garden of Eden: Having by Sin made himself like the Beasts that perish, he is justly turn'd to be a Fellow-Commoner with them, and to eat Grass as Oxen, till he knows that the Heavens do rule. (2.) There's a change in the manner of his eating it: *In Sorrow*, v. 17. and in the Sweat of his Face, v. 19. he must eat of it. Adam could not but eat in Sorrow, all the Days of his Life, remembering the forbidden Fruit he had eaten, and the Guilt and Shame he had contracted by it. Observe, 1. That Humane Life is expos'd to many Miseries and Calamities, which very much embitter the poor remains of its Pleasures and Delights; some never eat with pleasure, (Job 21. 25.) thro' Sickness or Melancholy; all, even the Best, have cause to eat with Sorrow for Sin, and all, even the Happiest in this World, have some Allays to their Joy; Troops of Diseases, Distasters and Deaths in various Shapes enter'd the World with Sin, and still ravage it. 2. That the Righteousness of God is to be acknowledged in all the sad Consequences of Sin, *Wherefore then should a living Man complain?* Yet in this part of the Sentence there is also a mixture of Mercy; he shall Sweat, but his Toil shall make his Rest the more welcome when he returns to his Earth, as to his Bed. He shall grieve, but he shall not starve, he shall have Sorrow, but in that Sorrow he shall eat Bread, which shall strengthen his Heart under his Sorrows. He is not Sentenc'd to eat Dust as the Serpent, only to eat the Herb of the Field.

3. His Life also is but short; considering how full of Trouble his Days are; 'tis in favour to him that they are few, yet Death being dreadful to Nature, (yea tho' Life be unpleasant) that concludes the Sentence. Thou shalt return to the Ground, out of which thou wast taken; thy Body, that part of thee which was taken out of the Ground, shall return to it again; for Dust thou art: That speaks, 1. The first Original of his Body, 'twas made of the Dust, nay, it was made Dust, and was still so, so that there needed no more but to recall the Grant of Immortality, and to withdraw the Power which was put forth to support it, and then he would of course return to Dust. Or, 2. The present Corruption and Degeneracy of his Mind, Dust thou art; that is, thy precious Soul is now lost and buried in the Dust of the Body, and the Mire of the Flesh; it was made Spiritual and Heavenly, but it is become Carnal and Earthy. His Doom is therefore read, *to Dust thou shalt return*. Thy Body shall be forsaken by thy Soul, and become it self a Lump of Dust, and then it shall be lodg'd in the Grave, the proper Place for it, and mingle it self with the Dust of the Earth, our Dust, Pl. 104. 29. *Earth to Earth, Dust to Dust*. Observe here, (1.) That Man is a mean frail Creature, little as Dust, the small Dust of the Ballance, light as Dust, altogether lighter than Vanity; weak as Dust, and of no consistency, our Strength not the Strength of Stones; he that made us, considers it, and remembers that we are Dust, Pl. 103. 13. Man is indeed the chief part of the Dust of the World, Prov. 8. 26. but still he is Dust. (2.) That he is a mortal dying Creature, and hast'ning to the Grave. Dust may be rais'd for a Time into a little Cloud, and may seem considerable while it is held up by the Wind that rais'd it, but when the

the force of that is spent, it falls again, and returns to the Earth out of which it was rais'd; such a thing is Man; a Great Man is but a Great Dust, and must return to his Earth. (3.) That Sin brought Death into the World: If Adam had not sinn'd he had not dy'd, Rom. 5. 12. God intrusted Adam with a Spark of Immortality, which he, by a patient continuance in well-doing, might have blown up into an everlasting Flame, but he foolishly blew it out by wilful Sin: And now Death is the Wage of Sin, and Sin the Sting of Death.

We must not go off from this Sentence upon our first Parents, which we are all so nearly concern'd in, and feel from to this Day, till we have consider'd two things.

1. How fitly the sad Consequences of the Sin upon the Soul of Adam and his sinful Race were represented and figur'd out by this Sentence, and perhaps were more intended in it than we are aware of. Tho' that Misery only is mention'd which affected the Body, yet that was a Pattern of Spiritual Miseries, the Curse that enter'd into the Soul. 1. The Pains of a Woman in travail represent the Terrors and Pangs of a guilty Conscience, awaken'd to a Sense of Sin: From the Conception of Lust these Sorrows are greatly multiplied, and sooner or later will come upon the Sinner like Pains upon a Woman in travail, which cannot be avoided. 2. The State of Subjection which the Woman was reduced to, represents that loss of spiritual Liberty and Freedom of Will, which is the Effect of Sin. The Dominion of Sin in the Soul is compar'd to that of a Husband, Rom. 7. 1-5. the Sinner's Desire is towards it, for he is fond of his Slavery, and it rules over him. 3. The Curse of Barrenness which was brought upon the Earth, and its produce of Briars and Thorns, is a fit Representation of the Barrenness of a corrupt and sinful Soul in that which is good, and its fruitfulness in evil. 'Tis all grown over with Thorns, and Nettles cover the face of it, and therefore tis nigh unto cursing. Heb. 6. 8. 4. The Toil and Sweat speak the Difficulty which thro' the infirmity of the Flesh Man labours under in the Service of God, and the Work of Religion, so hard is it now become to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. 5. The embittering of his Food to him, speaks his Soul's wants of the Comfort of God's Favour, which is Life and the Bread of Life. 6. The Soul, like the Body, returns to the Dust of this World, its tendency is that way; it has an earthy Taint, Job. 3. 31.

2. How admirably the Satisfaction our Lord Jesus made by his Death and Sufferings, answer'd the Sentence here past upon our first Parents. 1. Did travelling Pains come in with Sin? We read of the travel of Christ's Soul, Isa. 53. 11. and the Pains of Death he was held by, are call'd *Adam's* Acts 2. 24. the Pains of a Woman in travail. 2. Did Subjection come in with Sin? Christ was made under the Law, Gal. 4. 4. 3. Did the Curse come in with Sin? Christ was made a Curse for us, dy'd a cursed Death, Gal. 3. 13. 4. Did Thorns come in with Sin? He was crown'd with Thorns for us. 5. Did Sweat come in with Sin? He sweat for us as it had been great Drops of Blood. 6. Did Sorrow come in with Sin? He was a Man of Sorrows, his Soul was in his Agony exceeding sorrowful. 7. Did Death come in with Sin? He became obedient unto Death. Thus is the Plaster as wide as the Wound; blessed be God for Jesus Christ.

20. And Adam called his wives name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.

God having named the Man, and called him Adam, which signifies Red Earth, He in further token of Dominion named the Woman, and call'd her Eve, i. e. Life. Adam bears the Name of the dying Body, Eve of the living Soul. The Reason of the Name is here given, some think by Moses the Historian, others by Adam himself, because she was, i. e. was to be the Mother of all Living. He had call'd her Ishah, Woman, before, as a Wife, here he calls her Evah, Life, as a Mother. Now, 1. If this was done by Divine Direction, it was an instance of God's Favour, and like the new naming of Abraham, and Sarah, it was a Seal of the Covenant, and an Assurance to them that notwithstanding their Sin, and his Displeasure against them for it, he had not revers'd that Blessing wherewith he had blessed them, Be fruitful and multiply: It was likewise a Confirmation of the Promise now made, that the Seed of the Woman, of this Woman, should break the Serpent's Head. 2. If Adam did it of himself, it was an Instance of his Faith in the Word of God. Doubtless it was not done, as some have suspected, in Contempt or Defiance of the Curse, but rather, in an humble Confidence and Dependence upon the Blessing. 1. The Blessing of a Reprieve, admiring the Patience of God that he should spare such Sinners to be the Parents of all living, and that he did not immediately shut up those Fountains of the Human Life and Nature, because they could send forth no other but polluted poisoned Streams. 2. The Blessing of a Redeemer, the promised Seed, to whom Adam had an Eye, in calling his Wife Eve, Life, for he should be the Life of all the Living, and in him all the Families of the Earth should be blessed, in hope of which he thus Triumphs.

21 Unto Adam also and to his wife did the

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LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

We have here a further Instance of God's Care concerning our first Parents, notwithstanding their Sin. Tho' he correct his Disobedient Children, and put them under the Marks of his Displeasure, yet he doth not disinheret them, but like a tender Father provides the Herb of the Field for their Food, and Coats of Skins for their Cloathing; thus the Father provided for the returning Prodigal, Luke 15. 22, 23. If the Lord had been pleas'd to kill them, he would not have done this for them. Observe, 1. That Cloaths came in with Sin; we had no occasion for them either for Defence or Decency, if Sin had not made us naked to our Shame. Little reason therefore we have to be proud of our Cloaths, which are but the Badges of our Poverty and Infamy. 2. That when God made Cloaths for our first Parents he made them warm and strong, but coarse and very plain; not Robes of Scarlet, but Coats of Skin. Their Cloaths were made not of Silk and Sattin, but plain Skins, not trimm'd, not embroider'd, none of the Ornaments which the Daughters of Sion afterwards invented and prided themselves in. Let the Poor that are meanly clad learn from hence not to complain, having Food and a Covering, let them be content, they are as well done to as Adam and Eve were; and let the Rich that are finely clad learn hence not to make the putting on of Apparel their adorning, 1 Pet. 3. 3. 3. That God is to be acknowledg'd with thankfulness, not only in giving us Food, but in giving us Cloaths also, Gen. 28. 20. The Wool and the Flax is his, as well as the Corn and the Wine, Hof. 2. 9. 4. These Coats of Skin had a significancy. The Beasts whose Skins they were, must be slain, slain before their Eyes to shew them what Death is, (and as it is, Eccl. 3. 18.) that they might see that they themselves are Beasts, mortal and dying. 'Tis suppos'd they were not slain for Food, but for Sacrifice, to typify the great Sacrifice which in the latter end of the World should be offer'd once for all: Thus the first thing that died was a Sacrifice, or Christ in a Figure, who is therefore said to be the Lamb slain from the Foundation of the World. These Sacrifices were divided between God and Man, in token of Reconciliation; the Flesh was offer'd to God a whole Burnt-Offering, the Skins were given to Man for Cloathing, signifying that Jesus Christ having offer'd himself to God a Sacrifice of a sweet smelling Savor, we are to cloath ourselves with his Righteousness, as with a Garment, that the Shame of our Nakedness may not appear. Adam and Eve made for themselves Aprons of Fig-leaves, a Covering too narrow for them to wrap themselves in, Isa. 28. 20. Such are all the Rags of our own Righteousness. But God made them Coats of Skin, large and strong and durable, and fit for them, such is the Righteousness of Christ: Therefore put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.

22 And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil. And now left he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever; 23 Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground, from whence he was taken. 24 So he drove out the man: and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden, Cherubims, and a flaming sword, which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

Sentence being past upon the Offenders, we have here Execution in part done upon them immediately. Observe here,

1. How they were justly Disgrac'd and Shamed before God and the Holy Angels, by that ironical upbraiding them with the Issue of their Enterprize, Behold, the Man is become as one of us, to know Good and Evil. A goodly God he makes! Doth he not? See what he has got, what Preferments, what Advantages by eating Forbidden Fruit! This is said to awaken and humble them, and to bring them to a Sense of their Sin and Folly, and to Repentance for it, that seeing themselves thus wretchedly deceived by following the Devil's Counsel, they might henceforth pursue the Happiness God offers, in the Way he prescribes. God thus fills their Faces with Shame, that they may seek his Name, Psal. 83. 16. He puts them to this Confusion in order to their Conversion. True Penitents will thus upbraid themselves, What Fruit have I now by Sin? Rom. 6. 21. Have I gain'd what I foolishly promis'd my self in a sinful Way? No, no, it never prov'd what it pretended, but the contrary.

2. How they were justly discarded, and shut out of Paradise, which was a part of the Sentence implied in that, thou shalt eat the Herb of the Field. Here we have,

1. The Reason God gave why he shut him out of Paradise; not only because he had put forth his Hand, and taken of the Tree of Knowledge, which was his Sin, but lest he should again put forth his Hand, and take also of the Tree of Life, (which is now forbidden him by the Sentence, as before the Tree of Know-

ledge was forbidden him by the Law) and should dare to eat of that Tree, and so profane a Divine Sacrament, and defy a Divine Sentence, and yet flatter himself with a Conceit that thereby he should live for ever. *Observe*, 1. There is a foolish proneness in those that have render'd themselves unworthy of the Substance of Christian Privileges, to catch at the Signs and Shadows of them. Many that like not the Terms of the Covenant, yet for their Reputation sake are fond of the Seals of it. 2. It is not only Justice but Kindness to such to be deny'd them; for by usurping that which they have no Title to, they affront God, and make their Sin the more heinous; and by building their Hopes upon a wrong Foundation, they render their Conversion the more difficult, and their Ruin the more deplorable.

2. The Method God took in giving him this Bill of Divorce, and expelling and excluding him from this Garden of Pleasure. He turn'd him out, and kept him out.

1. He turn'd him out, from the Garden to the Common. This is twice mention'd, v. 23. he sent him forth, and then, v. 24. he drove him out. God bid him go out, told him that was no Place for him, he should no longer occupy and enjoy that Garden; but he lik'd the Place too well to be willing to part with it, and therefore God drove him out, made him go out whether he would or no. This signified the Exclusion of him and all his guilty Race from that Communion with God which was the Bliss and Glory of Paradise: The Tokens of God's Favour to him, and his Delight in the Sons of Men which he had in his Innocent Estate, were now suspended: The Communications of his Grace were withheld, and Adam became weak and like other Men, as Samson, when the Spirit of the Lord was departed from him: His Acquaintance with God was lessen'd and lost, and that Correspondence which had been settled between Man and his Maker, was interrupted and broken off. He was driven out as one unworthy of this Honour, and incapable of this Service. Thus he and all Mankind by the Fall forfeited and lost Communion with God.

But whither did he send him when he turn'd him out of Eden? He might justly have chased him out of the World, Job 18. but he only chased him out of the Garden: He might justly have cast him down to Hell, as the Angels that sinn'd were, when they were shut out from the heavenly Paradise, 2 Pet. 2. 4. But Man was only sent to Till the Ground out of which he was taken. He was only sent to a Place of Toil, not to a Place of Torment. He was sent to the Ground, not to the Grave; to the Work-House, not to the Dungeon, not to the Prison-House; to hold the Plough, not to drag the Chain. His Tilling the Ground would be recompenc'd by his eating its Fruits; and his Converse with the Earth whence he was taken, was improvable to good Purposes, to keep him humble, and to mind him of his latter end. *Observe* then, That tho' our first Parents were excluded from the Privileges of their State of Innocency, yet they were not abandon'd to Despair: God's Thoughts of Love designing them for a second State of Probation upon new Terms.

2. He kept him out, and forbid him all Hopes of a Re-entry, for he placed at the East of the Garden of Eden, a Detachment of Cherubims, God's Hosts, arm'd with a dreadful and irresistible Power, represented by flaming Swords which turn'd every Way, on that side the Garden which lay next to the Place whither Adam was sent, to keep the Way that led to the Tree of Life; so that he could not either steal, or force an Entry; for who can make a Pass against an Angel on his Guard, or gain a Pass made good by such a Force? Now this intimated to Adam, 1. That God was displeased with him: Tho' he had Mercy in store for him, yet at present he was angry with him, was turned to be his Enemy, and fought against him, for here was a Sword drawn, Num. 27. 23. and that he was to him a consuming Fire, for it was a flaming Sword. 2. That the Angels were at War with him: No Peace with the heavenly Hosts while he was in Rebellion against their Lord and ours. 3. That the Way to the Tree of Life was shut up, viz. that Way which he at first was put into, the Way of spotless Innocency. It is not said, that the Cherubims were set to keep him and his for ever from the Tree of Life: Thanks be to God there is a Paradise set before us, and a Tree of Life in the midst of it, which we rejoice in the Hopes of: But they were set to keep that Way of the Tree of Life; which hitherto they had been in; That is, It was henceforward in vain for him and his to expect Righteousness, Life and Happiness, by virtue of the first Covenant, for it was irreparably broken, and could never be pleaded, nor any Benefit taken by it. The Command of that Covenant being broken, the Curse of it is in full force, it leaves no room for Repentance, but we are all undone if we be judged by that Covenant; God revealed this to Adam, not to drive him to Despair, but to oblige and quicken him to look for Life and Happiness in the Promised Seed; by whom the flaming Sword is remov'd, God and his Angels reconcil'd to us, and a new and living Way into the Holiest consecrated, and laid open for us.

CHAP. IV.

In this Chapter we have both the World and the Church in a Family, in a little Family, in Adam's Family, and a Specimen given of

the Character and State of both in after Ages, nay, in all Ages to the End of Time. As all Mankind were represented in Adam, so that great Distinction of Mankind into Saints and Sinners, Godly and Wicked; the Children of God, and the Children of the wicked One, was here represented in Cain and Abel, and an early Instance of the Enmity, which was lately put between the Seed of the Woman and the Seed of the Serpent. We have here, 1. The Birth, Names, and Callings of Cain and Abel, v. 1, 2. 2. The Religion, and different Success in it, v. 3, 4. and part of v. 5. 3. Cain's Anger at God, and the Reproof of him for that Anger, v. 5, 6, 7. 4. Cain's Murder of his Brother, and the Process against him for that Murder. The Murder committed, v. 8. The Proceedings against him. (1.) His Arraignment, v. 9. former part: (2.) His Plea, v. 9. latter part: (3.) His Conviction, v. 10. (4.) The Sentence pass upon him, v. 11, 12. (5.) His Complaint against the Sentence, v. 13. 14. (6.) The Ratification of the Sentence, v. 15. (7.) The Execution of the Sentence, v. 15, 16. 5. The Family and Posterity of Cain, v. 17-24. 6. The Birth of another Son and Grandson of Adam, v. 25, 26.

AND Adam knew Eve his wife: and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD. 2 And she again bare his brother Abel: And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

Adam and Eve had many Sons and Daughters, Ch. 5. 4. But Cain and Abel seem to have been the two eldest, and somethink they were Twins, and as Esau and Jacob, the Elder hated, and the Younger loved. Tho' God had cast them out of Paradise, he did not write them Childless, but to shew that he had other Blessings in store for them, he preserv'd to them the Benefit of that first Blessing of Increase. Tho' they were Sinners, nay, tho' they were Penitents, they did not write themselves Comfortless, having the Promise of a Saviour to support themselves with. We have here, (1.) The Names of their two Sons. (1.) Cain signifies Possession, for Eve when she bare him, said with Joy and Thankfulness, and great Expectation, I have gotten a Man from the Lord. *Observe*, That Children are God's Gifts, and he must be acknowledg'd in the building up of our Families. It doubles and sanctifies our Comfort in them when we see them coming to us from the Hand of God, who will not forsake the Works and Gifts of his own Hand. Tho' Eve bare him with the Sorrows that were the Consequence of Sin, yet she did not lose the Sense of the Mercy in her Pains. Comforts tho' alloy'd are more than we deserve, and therefore our Complaints must not drown our Thankgivings. Many suppose that Eve had a Conceit that this Son was the Promised Seed, and therefore she thus triumph'd in him; and it may be read, I have gotten a Man the Lord. God-Man. If so, she was wretchedly mistaken, as Samuel when he said, Surely the Lord's Anointed is before me, 1 Sam. 16. 6. When Children are born, who can foresee what they will prove? He that was thought to be a Man the Lord, or at least a Man for the Lord, and for his Service, as Priest of the Family, became an Enemy to the Lord. The less we expect from Creatures, the more tolerable will Disappointments be. (2.) Abel signifies Vanity. When she thought she had obtained the Promised Seed in Cain, she was so taken up with that Possession, that another Son was as Vanity to her. To those who have an Interest in Christ, and make him their All, other things are as nothing at all. It intimates likewise that the longer we live in this World, the more we may fee of the Vanity of it; what at first we are fond of as a Possession, afterwards we see cause to be dead to, as a Trifle. The Name given to this Son is put upon the whole Race, Psal. 39. 5. Every Man is at his best Estate, Abel, Vanity. Let us labour to see both our selves and others so. Childhood and Youth are Vanity. 2. The Employments of Cain and Abel. *Observe*, 1. They both had a Calling. Tho' they were Heirs apparent to the World, their Birth Noble, and their Possessions large; yet they were not brought up in Idleness. God gave their Father a Calling even in Innocency, and he gave them one. Note, It is the Will of God we should every one of us have something to do in this World. Parents ought to bring up their Children to Business: Give them a Bible and a Calling (said good Mr. Dod) and God be with them. 2. Their Employments were different, that they might Trade and Exchange with one another, as there was occasion. The Members of the Body Politick have need one of another, and mutual Love is helped by mutual Commerce. 3. Their Employments belong'd to the Husbandman's Calling, their Father's Profession, a needful Calling, for the King himself is served of the Field, but a laborious Calling, which requir'd constant Care and Attendance: 'Tis now look'd upon as a mean Calling, the Poor of the Land serve for Vine-dressers and Husbandmen, Jer. 52. 16. But the Calling was far from being a Dishonour to them, rather, they were an Honour to it. 4. It should seem by the Order of the Story, that Abel, tho' the younger Brother, yet enter'd first into his Calling, and probably his Example

Example drew in Cain. 5. Abel chose that Employment which did most befriended Contemplation and Devotion, for that hath been looked upon as the Advantage of a Pastoral Life. Moses and David kept Sheep, and in their Solitudes convers'd with God. Note, That Calling and Condition of Life is best for us, and to be chosen by us, which is best for our Souls; that which least exposeth us to Sin, and gives us most Opportunity of serving and enjoying God.

3 And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. 4 And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel, and to his offering: 5 But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

Here's 1. The Devotion of Cain and Abel. In process of time, when they had made some Improvement in their respective Callings, Heb. At the end of Days, either at the End of the Year when they kept their Feast of In-gathering, or perhaps an Annual Fast in remembrance of the Fall; or at the End of the Days of the Week, the Seventh Day, which was the Sabbath: At some set Time Cain and Abel brought to Adam, as the Priest of the Family, each of them an Offering to the Lord; for the doing of which we have reason to think there was a Divine Appointment given to Adam as a Token of God's Favour to him, and his Thoughts of Love towards him and his, notwithstanding their Apostasy. God would thus try Adam's Faith in the Promise, and his Obedience to the Remedial Law: He would thus settle a Correspondence again between Heaven and Earth, and give Shadows of good Things to come. Observe here, 1. That the Religious Worship of God is no Novel Invention, but an Ancient Institution. 'Tis that which was from the beginning, 1 Joh. 1. 1. 'tis the good old way, Jer. 6. 16. The City of our God is indeed that joyous City whose Antiquity is of ancient Days all. Isa. 23. 7. Truth got the start of Error, and Piety of Profaneness. 2. That it is a good thing for Children to be well taught when they are Young, and train'd up betimes in Religious Services, that when they come to be capable of acting for themselves, they may of their own accord bring an Offering to God. In this Nurture of the Lord Parents must bring up their Children, Eph. 6. 4. Gen. 18. 19. 3. That we should every one of us honour God with what we have, according as he hath prospered us. According as their Employments and Possessions were, so they brought their Offering. See 1 Cor. 16. 1, 2. Our Merchandise and our Hire, whatever it is, must be Holiness to the Lord, Isa. 23. 18. He must have his Dues of it in Works of Piety and Charity, the Support of Religion, and the Relief of the Poor: Thus we must now bring our Offering, with an upright Heart, and with such Sacrifices God is well pleased. 4. That Hypocrites and Evil Doers may be found going as far as the best of God's People in the external Services of Religion. Cain brought an Offering with Abel, nay, Cain's Offering is mention'd first, as if he were the more forward of the Two. An Hypocrite may possibly hear as many Sermons, say as many Prayers, and give as much Alms as a good Christian, and yet for want of Sincerity come short of Acceptance with God. The Pharisees and Publican went to the Temple to Pray, Luke 18. 10.

2. The different Success of their Devotions. That which is to be aim'd at in all Acts of Religion is God's Acceptance; we speed well if we attain that, but in vain do we Worship if we miss of that, 2 Cor. 5. 9. Perhaps to a stander by, the Sacrifices of Cain and Abel would have seem'd both alike Good: Adam accepted them both, but God did not, who sees not as Man sees. God had respect to Abel and to his Offering, and shew'd his Acceptance of it, probably by Fire from Heaven; but to Cain and to his Offering he had not respect. We are sure there was a good Reason for this Difference; The Governour of the World, tho' an absolute Sovereign, doth not act arbitrarily in dispensing his Smiles and Frowns. 1. There was a difference in the Characters of the Persons offering: Cain was a wicked Man, led an ill Life, under the reigning Power of the World and the Flesh, and therefore his Sacrifice was an Abomination to the Lord, Prov. 15. 8. a vain Oblation, Isa. 1. 13. God had no respect to Cain himself, and therefore no respect to his Offering, as the manner of the Expression intimates. But Abel was a righteous Man, he is called righteous Abel, Mat. 23. 35. his Heart was upright, and his Life was pious; he was one of those whom God's Countenance beholds, Psal. 11. 7. and whose Prayer is therefore his Delight, Prov. 15. 8. God had respect to him as a Holy Man, and therefore to his Offering as a Holy Offering. The Tree must be good, else the Fruit cannot be pleasing to the Heart-searching God. 2. There was a difference in the Offerings they brought. 'Tis expressly said, Heb. 11. 4. Abel's was a more excellent Sacrifice than Cain's: Either, (1.) in the Nature of it. Cain's was only a Sacrifice of Acknowledgment offer'd to the Creator, the Meat-Of-

ferings of the Fruit of the Ground were no more, and for ought I know might have been offer'd in Innocency: But Abel brought a Sacrifice of Attonement, the Blood whereof was shed in order to Remission, thereby owning himself a Sinner, deprecating God's Wrath, and imploring his Favour in a Mediator. Or, (2.) in the Qualities of the Offering. Cain brought of the Fruit of the Ground, any thing that came next hand, what he had not occasion for himself, or was not marketable, but Abel was curious in the Choice of his Offering, not the Lame, or the Lean, or the Refuse, but the Firstlings of the Flock, the best he had, and the Fat thereof, the Best of those Best. Hence the Hebrew Doctors give it for a general Rule, That every thing that is for the Name of the Good God, must be the Goodliest and Best. 'Tis fit that he who is the First and Best, should have the First and Best of our Time, Strength, and Service. 3. The great Difference was this, that Abel offer'd in Faith, and Cain did not. There was a Difference in the Principle upon which they went. Abel offer'd with an Eye to God's Will as his Rule, and God's Glory as his End, and in dependance upon the Promise of a Redeemer; but Cain did what he did only for Company, or to save his Credit, not in Faith, and so it turn'd into Sin to him. Abel was a Penitent Believer, like the Publican that went away justified. Cain was unhumbl'd, and his Confidence was in himself like the Pharisee who glorified himself, but was not so much as justified before God.

3. Cain's Displeasure at the Difference God made between his Sacrifice and Abel's. Cain was very wroth, which presently appeared in his very Look, for his Countenance fell: which speaks not so much his Grief and Discontent, as his Malice and Rage. His sullen churlish Countenance, and a Down-look, betray'd his passionate Resentments: He carried Ill-Nature in his Face, and the shew of his Countenance witness'd against him. This Anger speaks, 1. His Enmity to God, and the Indignation he had conceiv'd against him for making such a Difference between his Offering and his Brother's. He should have been angry at himself for his own Infidelity and Hypocrisy by which he had forfeited God's Acceptance, and his Countenance should have fallen in Repentance and holy Shame, as the Publican's, who would not lift up so much as his Eyes to Heaven, Luke 18. 13. But instead of that he flies out against God, as if he were partial and unfair in dispensing his Smiles and Frowns, and as if he had done him a deal of Wrong. Note, 'Tis a certain Sign of an unhumbl'd Heart to quarrel with those Rebukes, which we have by our own Sin brought upon our selves. The Foolishness of Man perverts his Way, and then to make Ill worse, his Heart frets against the Lord, Prov. 19. 3. 2. His Envy of his Brother who had the Honour to be publicly own'd. Tho' his Brother had no thought of having any Slur put upon him, nor did now insult over him to provoke him, yet he conceived a Hatred of him as an Enemy, or which is equivalent, a Rival. Note, 1. It is common for those who have render'd themselves unworthy of God's Favour by their presumptuous Sins, to have Indignation against those who are dignified and distinguished by it. The Pharisees walk'd in this Way of Cain, when they neither enter'd into the Kingdom of God themselves, nor suffer'd those that were entering to go in, Luke 11. 52. Their Eye is Evil because their Master's Eye and the Eye of their Fellow-Servants is Good. 2. Envy is a Sin that commonly carries with it both its own Discovery in the Paleness of the Looks, and its own Punishment in the rottenness of the Bones.

6 And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? 7 If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

God is here reasoning with Cain to convince him of the Sin and Folly of his Anger and Discontent, and to bring him into a good Temper again, that further Mischief might be prevented. 'Tis an Instance of God's Patience and condescending Goodness, that he would deal thus tenderly with so ill a Man, in so ill a Thing: He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to Repentance. Thus the Father of the Prodigal argued the Case with the elder Son, Luke 15. 28, &c. And God with those Israelites who said, The Way of the Lord is not equal, Ezek. 18. 25. God puts Cain himself upon enquiring into the Cause of his Discontent, and considering whether it were indeed a just Cause, Why is thy Countenance fallen? Observe, 1. That God takes notice of all our sinful Passions and Discontents. There is not an angry Look, an envious Look, a fretful Look that escapes his observing Eye. 2. That most of our sinful Heats and Disquietments would soon vanish before a strict and impartial Enquiry into the Cause of them. Why am I Wroth? Is there a real Cause, a just Cause, a proportionable Cause for it? Why am I so soon angry? Why so very angry, and so implacable? To reduce Cain to his right Mind again, 'tis here made evident to him, 1. That he had no reason to be angry at God, for he had proceed- ed according to the settled and invariable Rules of Government, suited

suit to a State of Probation. He sets before Men Life and Death, the Blessing and the Curse, and then renders to them according to their Works, and differenceth them according as they difference themselves, so shall their Doom be. The Rules are just, and therefore his Ways according to those Rules must needs be equal, and he will be justified when he speaks.

1. God sets before Cain Life and a Blessing. *If thou dost well, shalt thou not be accepted?* No doubt thou shalt, nay, thou knowest thou shalt, either, 1. *If thou hadst done well as thy Brother did, thou shouldst have been accepted as he was.* God is no respecter of Persons, hates nothing that he has made, denies his Favour to none but those that have forfeited it, is an Enemy to none but those who by Sin have made him their Enemy. So that if we come short of Acceptance with him, we must thank our selves, the Fault is wholly our own; if we had done our Duty, we had not mis'd of his Mercy. This will justify God in the Destruction of Sinners, and will aggravate their Ruine; There's not a damned Sinner in Hell but *if he had done well*, as he might have done, had been a glorified Saint in Heaven. Every Mouth will shortly be stop't with this. Or, 2. *If now thou do well; if thou repent of thy Sin, reform thy Heart and Life, and bring thy Sacrifice in a better manner; if thou not only do that which is Good, but do it well, thou shalt yet be accepted;* thy Sin shall be pardon'd, thy Comfort and Honour restor'd, and all shall be well. See here the Effect of a Mediator's Interposel between God and Man; we do not stand upon the Foot of the First Covenant, which left no room for Repentance, but God is come upon new Terms with us. Tho' we have offended, if we repent and return, we shall find Mercy. See how early the Gospel was preached, and the Benefit of it here offer'd even to one of the Chief Sinners.

2. He sets before him Death and a Curse; But *if not well, seeing thou dost not do well, not offer in Faith, and in a right manner, Sin lies at the Door, i. e.* Sin was imputed to thee, and thou wast thrown'd upon and rejected as a Sinner. So high a Charge had not been laid at thy Door, if thou hadst not brought it upon thy self, by *not doing well*. Or, as it is commonly taken, *if now thou dost not do well, if thou persist in this Wrath, and instead of humbling thy self before God, harden thy self against him, Sin lies at the Door; that is, 1. Further Sin.* Now Anger is in thy Heart, Murder is at the Door. The Way of Sin is downhill, and Men go from bad to worse. They who *do not Sacrifice well*, but are careless and remiss in their Devotion to God, expose themselves to the worst Temptations, and perhaps the most scandalous *Sin lies at the Door*. They who do not keep God's Ordinances are in danger of committing all Abominations, Lev. 18. 30.

Or, 2. The Punishment of Sin: So near akin are Sin and Punishment, that the same Word in Hebrew signifies both. If Sin be harbour'd in the House, the Curse waits at the Door, like a Bailiff ready to arrest the Sinner when-ever he looks out. *It lies; as if it slept, but it lies at the Door where it will soon be awak'd, and then 'twill appear that the Damnation slumber'd not.* Sin will find thee out, Num. 32. 23. Yet some choose to understand this also as an Intimation of Mercy. If thou do not well, Sin, i. e. the Sin-offering lies at the Door, and thou mayst take the Benefit of it. The same Word signifies Sin, and a Sacrifice for Sin. Tho' thou hast not done well, yet do not Despair, the Remedy is at Hand: The Propitiation is not far to seek, lay hold on it, and the Iniquity of thy Holy Things shall be forgiven thee. Christ the great Sin-offering is said to stand at the Door, Rev. 3. 20. And those well deserve to perish in their Sins that will not go to the Door for an Interest in the Sin-offering. All this consider'd, Cain had no reason to be angry at God, but at himself only. 2. He shews him that he had no reason to be angry at his Brother, *unto thee shall be his Desire; he shall continue his Respect to thee as an Elder-Brother, and thou, as the First-born, shalt rule over him as much as ever.* God's Acceptance of Abel's Offering did not transfer the Birth-right to him (which Cain was jealous of) nor put upon him that excellency of Dignity, and excellency of Power which is said to belong to it, Gen. 49. 3. God did not so intend it, Abel did not so interpret it, there was no danger of its being improv'd to Cain's Prejudice, why then should he be so much exasperated? Observe here, 1. That the Difference which God's Grace makes, doth not alter the Distinctions which God's Providence makes, but preserves them, and obliges us to do the Duty which results from them: Believing Servants must be obedient to unbelieving Masters. Dominion is not founded in Grace, nor will Religion warrant Disloyalty or Disrespect in any Relation. 2. That the Jealousies which Civil Powers have sometimes conceived of the true Worshipers of God as dangerous to their Government, Enemies to Caesar, and hurtful to Kings and Provinces, (on which Suspicion, Persecutors have grounded their Rage against them) are very unjust and unreasonable. Whatever Pretenders are, 'tis certain good Christians are the best Subjects, and the Quiet in the Land; their Desire is towards their Governours, and they shall rule over them.

8. And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

We have here the Progress of Cain's Anger, and the Issue of it in Abel's Murder; which may be consider'd two Ways.

1. As Cain's Sin, and a scarlet Crimson it was, a Sin of the first Magnitude, a Sin against the Light and Law of Nature, and which the Consciences even of bad Men have startled at; See in it, 1. The sad Effects of Sin's entrance into the World, and into the Hearts of Men: See what a Root of Bitterness the corrupt Nature is, which bears this Gall and Wormwood. Adam's eating forbidden Fruit seem'd but a little Sin, but it opened the Door to the greatest. 2. A Fruit of the Enmity which is in the Seed of the Serpent against the Seed of the Woman. As Abel leads the Van in the Noble Army of Martyrs, Mat. 23. 35. so Cain stands in the Front of the ignoble Army of Persecutors, Jude 11. So early did he that *was after the Flesh persecute him that was after the Spirit, and so it is now*, more or less, Gal. 4. 24. and so it will be till the War shall end in the eternal Salvation of all the Saints, and the eternal Perdition of all that hate them. 3. See also what comes of Envy, Hatred, Malice, and all Uncharitableness, if they be indulg'd and cherish'd in the Soul, they are in danger of involving Men in the horrid Guilt of Murder it self. Rath Anger is Heart-Murder, Mat. 5. 21. 22. much more is Malice to; He that hates his Brother is already a Murderer before God, and if God leaves him to himself, he wants nothing but an Opportunity of being a Murderer before the World.

Many were the Aggravations of Cain's Sin. 1. It was his Brother, his own Brother that he murdered; his *one Mother's Son*, Psa. 50. 20. whom he ought to have lov'd; his younger Brother, whom he ought to have protect'd. 2. He was a good Brother, one that had never done him any Wrong, nor given him the least Provocation in Word or Deed; but one whose Desire had been always towards him, and who had been in all Instances dutiful and respectful to him. 3. He had fair Warning given him before of this; God himself had told him what would come of it, yet he persisted in his barbarous Design. 4. It should seem that he cover'd it with a shew of Friendship and Kindness. *He talk'd with Abel his Brother, freely and familiarly, left he should suspect Danger, and keep out of his reach.* Thus Jacob kiss'd Abner, and then kill'd him; Absalom feasted Amnon, and then killed him. The Septuagint tell us, he said to Abel, *Let us go into the Field;* so, we are sure Abel did not understand it (according to the modern Sense) as a Challenge, else he would not have accepted it, but as a brotherly Invitation to go to their Work. The Chaldees Paraphrast adds, that Cain when they were in Discourse in the Field maintained that there was no Judgment to come, no Future State, no Rewards and Punishment in the other World; and that when Abel spoke in defence of the Truth, Cain took that Occasion to fall upon him. However, 5. That which the Scripture tells us was the Reason wherefore he slew him, was a sufficient Aggravation of the Murder, *'twas because his own Works were Evil, and his Brother's Righteous, so that herein he shewed himself to be of that wicked One,* 1 Joh. 3. 12. a Child of the Devil, as being an Enemy to all Righteousness, even in his own Brother; and in this employ'd immediately by the Destroyer. Nay, 6. In killing his Brother, he directly struck at God himself, for God's Accepting Abel was the Provocation pretended, and for that very reason he hated Abel, because God lov'd him. 7. The Murder of Abel was the more inhumane, because there now so few Men in the World to replenish it. The Life of a Man is precious at any time; but 'twas in a special manner precious now, and could ill be spared.

2. As Abel's suffering. Death reigned ever since Adam sinn'd, but we read not of any taken Captive by him till now; And now, 1. The first that dyes is a Saint, one that was accepted and beloved of God, to shew that tho' the promised Seed was so far to destroy him that had the Power of Death, as to save Believers from its Sting, yet that still they should be exposed to its Stroke. The first that went to the Grave, went to Heaven; God would secure to himself the First-Fruits, the First-born to the Dead, that first opened the Womb into another World. Let this take off the Terror of Death, that was betimes the Lot of God's chosen, which alters the Property of it. Nay, 2. The first that dyes is a Martyr, and dyes for his Religion; and of such it may more truly be said than of Soldiers, that they die in the Bed of Honour: Abel's Death has not only no Curse in it, but it has a Crown in it; so admirably well is the Property of Death alter'd, that it is not only become innocent and inoffensive to those that Dye in Christ, but honourable and glorious to those that Dye for him. Let us not think it strange concerning the fiery Trial, nor shrink if we be called to resist unto Blood, for we know there is a Crown of Life for all that are faithful unto Death.

9. And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? and he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper? 10. And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. 11. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her

her mouth to receive thy brothers blood from thy hand. 12 When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength. A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.

We have here a full Account of the Trial and Condemnation of the first Murderer; Civil Courts of Judicature not being yet erected for this purpose, as they were after, *Gen. 9. 6.* God himself sits Judge, for he is *the God to whom Vengeance belongs*, and who will be sure to make *Inquisition for Blood*, especially the Blood of Saints.

Observe, (1.) The Arraignment of Cain: *The Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy Brother?* Some think Cain was thus examin'd the next Sabbath after the Murder committed, when the Sons of God came as usual, to present themselves before the Lord, in a religious Assembly, and Abel was missing, whose Place did not use to be empty; for the God of Heaven takes notice who is present at, and who is absent from Publick Ordinances. Cain is asked not only because there was just Cause to suspect him, he having discover'd a Malice against Abel, and having been left with him, but because God knew him to be guilty; yet he asks him, that he might draw from him a Confession of his Crime, for those who would be justified before God, must *accuse themselves*, and the Penitent will do so.

(2.) Cain's Plea; He pleads Not Guilty, and adds *Rebellion to his Sin*. For, 1. He endeavours to cover a deliberate Murder with a deliberate Lie; *I know not*. He knew well enough what was become of Abel, and yet had the Impudence to deny it. Thus in Cain the Devil was both a Murderer, and a Liar from the beginning. See how Sinners Minds are blinded, and their Hearts hardened by the Deceitfulness of Sin: Those are strangely blind that think it possible to conceal their Sins from a God that sees all; and those are strangely hard that think it desirable to conceal them from a God who pardons those only that confess. 2. He impudently charges his Judge with Folly and Injustice in putting this Question to him, *Am I my Brother's Keeper?* He should have humbled himself, and have said, *Am not I my Brother's Murderer?* But he lies in the Face of God himself, as if he had ask'd him an impertinent Question which he was no way obliged to give an Answer to, *Am I my Brother's Keeper?* Sure he is old enough to take care of himself, nor did I ever take any Charge of him. Some think he reflects on God and his Providence, *q. d.* Art not thou his Keeper? If he be missing, on Thee bethe Blame, and not on me, who never undertook to keep him. Note, That a charitable Concern for our Brethren as their Keepers, is a great Duty which is strictly requir'd of us, but is generally neglected by us. They who are unconcern'd in the Concernments of their Brethren, and take no care when they have Opportunity to prevent their Hurt in their Bodies, Goods, or Good Name, especially in their Souls, do in effect speak Cain's Language. See *Lev. 19. 17. Phil. 2. 4.* (3.) The Conviction of Cain, *v. 10.* God gave no direct Answer to his Question, but rejects his Plea as false and frivolous; *What hast thou done?* Thou makest a light Matter of it, but hast thou consider'd what an evil thing it is? How deep the Stain, how heavy the Burthen of this Guilt is? Thou thinkest to conceal it, but 'tis to no purpose, the Evidence against thee is clear and uncontestable, *The Voice of thy Brother's Blood cries*: He speaks as if the Blood itself were both Witness and Prosecutor, because God's own Knowledge testified against him, and God's own Justice demanded Satisfaction. *Observe here*, 1. That Murder is a Crying Sin, none more so. Blood calls for Blood, the Blood of the Murderer for the Blood of the Murderer: It cries in the dying Words of *Zachariah, 2 Chr. 24. 22.* *The Lord look upon it, and require it*; or those of the Souls under the Altar, *Rev. 6. 10.* *How long, Lord, holy and true?* The patient Sufferers cry'd for Pardon, *Father, forgive them*, but their Blood cries for Vengeance. Tho' they hold their Peace, their Blood has a loud and constant Cry, which the Ear of the righteous God is always open to. 2. The Blood is said to cry from the Ground; the Earth which is said, *v. 11.* to open her Mouth to receive his Brother's Blood from his Hand. The Earth did as it were blush to see her own Face stain'd with such Blood, and therefore open'd her Mouth to hide that which she could not hinder. When the Heaven revealed his Iniquity, the Earth also rose up against him, (*Job 20. 27.*) and groaned for being thus made subject to Vanity, *Rom. 8. 20, 22.* Cain 'tis likely buried the Blood, and the Body, to conceal his Crime, but Murder will out. He did not bury them so deep but the Cry of 'em reached Heaven. 3. In the Original the Word is Plural, *thy Brother's Bloods*, not only his Blood, but the Blood of all those that might have descended from him. Or, the Blood of all the Seed of the Woman, who should in like manner seal the Truth with their Blood; Christ puts all on one Score, *Mat. 23. 35.* Or, because Account was kept of every Drop of Blood shed. How well is it for us that the Blood of Christ speaks better things than that of Abel, *Heb. 12. 24.* Abel's Blood cried for Vengeance, Christ's Blood cries for Pardon.

(4.) The Sentence pass'd upon Cain, *And now art thou cursed from the Earth, v. 11.* Observe here, 1. He is cursed, separated

to all Evil, laid under the Wrath of God, as it is revealed from Heaven against all Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men, *Rom.*

1. 18. who knows the Extent and Weight of a Divine Curse; how far it reaches, how deep it pierces; God's pronouncing a Man cursed, makes him so, for those whom he curses they are cursed indeed. The Curse for Adam's Disobedience terminated on the Ground, *Cursed is the Ground for thy sake*; but that for Cain's Rebellion fell immediately upon himself, *thou art cursed*, for God had Mercy in store for Adam, but none for Cain. We have all deserved this Curse, and 'tis only in Christ that Believers are saved from it and inherit the Blessing, *Gal. 3. 10, 13.* 2. He is cursed from the Earth. Thence the Cry came up to God, thence the Curse came up to Cain. God could have taken Vengeance by an immediate Stroke from Heaven, by the Sword of an Angel, or by a Thunderbolt, but he chose to make the Earth the Avenger of Blood; to continue him upon the Earth, and not presently to cut him off, and yet to make even that his Curse. The Earth is always near us, we cannot fly from it, so that if that be the Executioner of Divine Wrath, 'tis unavoidable; 'tis Sin, that is, the Punishment of Sin, lying at the Door. Cain found his Punishment there where he chose his Portion, and set his Heart.

Two things we expect from the Earth, and by this Curse both are deny'd to Cain, and taken from him; *Sustenance and Settlement.*

1. *Sustenance out of the Earth* is here with-held from him. 'Tis a Curse upon him in his Enjoyments, and particularly in his Calling, *when thou tillest the Ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her Strength.* Note, Every Creature is to us what God makes it, a Comfort or a Cross; a Blessing or a Curse. If the Earth yield not her Strength to us, we must therein acknowledge God's Righteousness, for we have not yielded our Strength to him. The Ground was cursed before to Adam, but it was now doubly curs'd to Cain. That part of it which fell to his Share, and which he had the occupation of, was made Unfruitful and Uncomfortable to him, by the Blood of Abel. Note, The Wickedness of the Wicked brings a Curse upon all they do, and all they have, *Deut. 28. 15, &c.* And that Curse embitters all they have, and disappoints them in all they do.

2. *Settlement on the Earth* is here denied him. A Fugitive and a Vagabond shalt thou be in the Earth. By this he was condemn'd 1. To perpetual Disgrace and Reproach among Men. It should be ever look'd upon as a scandalous Thing to harbour him, converse with him, or shew him any Countenance. And justly was a Man that had divested himself of all Humanity, abhorred and abandoned by all Mankind, and made infamous.

2. To perpetual Disquietment and Horror in his own Mind. His own guilty Conscience should haunt him where-ever he went, and make him *Magor-missabib*, a Terror round about. What Rest can those find, what Settlement that carry their own Disturbance with them in their Bosoms where-ever they go. They must needs be Fugitives that are thus tossed. There is not a more restless Fugitive upon Earth than he that is continually pursued by his own Guilt, nor a viler Vagabond than he that is at the beck of his own Lusts.

This was the Sentence pass'd upon Cain: And even in this there was Mercy mixt, that he was not immediately cut off, but had Space given him to repent, for God is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish.

13 And Cain said unto the LORD, My punishment is greater than I can bear. 14 Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth: and from thy face shall I be hid, and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth, and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me. 15 And the LORD said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him seven-fold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.

We have here a further Account of the Proceedings against Cain. 1. Here's Cain's Complaint of the Sentence pass'd upon him as hard and severe. Some make him to speak the Language of Despair, and read it, *My Iniquity is greater than that it may be forgiven*; and so what he saith is a Reproach and Affront to the Mercy of God, which those only shall have the Benefit of that Hope in it. There is forgiveness with the God of Pardons for the greatest Sins and Sinners, but they forfeit it who despair of it. Just now Cain made nothing of his Sin, but now he is in the other Extreme; Satan drives his Vassals from Presumption to Despair. We cannot think too bad of Sin, provided we do not think it unpardonable. But Cain seems rather to speak the Language of Indignation; *My Punishment is greater than I can bear*, and so what he saith is a Reproach and Affront to the

the Justice of God, and a Complaint not of the Greatness of his Sin, but the Extremity of his Punishment, at if that were disproportionate to his Merits. Instead of justifying God in the Sentence, he condemns him, not accepting the Punishment of his Iniquity, but quarreling with it. *Note*, Impenitent, unhumiliated Hearts, are therefore not reclaimed by God's Rebukes, because they think themselves wronged by them; and it is an Evidence of great Hardness to be more concern'd about our Sufferings than about our Sins. *Pharaoh's* Care was concerning *this Death only*, not this Sin, *Exod. 10. 17.* so was *Cain's* here. He is a living Man, and yet complains of the Punishment of his Sin, *Lam. 3. 29.* He thinks himself rigorously dealt with, when really he is favourably treated, and cries out of *Wrong*, when he has more Reason to admire that he is out of Hell. *Wo unto him that thus strives with his Maker*, and enters into Judgment with his Judge.

Now to justify this Complaint, observe his Descants upon the Sentence. 1. He fees himself excluded by it from the Favour of his God; and concludes, That being *curst*, he was *hid from God's Face*, and that is indeed the true Nature of God's Curse; damned Sinners find it so, to whom it is said, *Depart from me, ye curst*. Those are *curst* indeed that are for ever shut out from God's Love and Care, and from all Hopes of his Grace. 2. He fees himself expelled from all the Comforts of this Life; and concludes, That being a Fugitive, he was in effect driven out *this Day from the Face of the Earth*. As good have no Place on Earth as not have a settled Place. Better rest in the Grave than not rest at all. 3. He fees himself excommunicated by it, and cut off from the Church, and forbidden to attend on publick Ordinances. His Hands being full of Blood, he must bring no more vain Oblations, *Isa. 1. 13, 15.* Perhaps this he means when he complains that he was driven out from the Face of the Earth, (for being shut out of the Church which none had yet deserted, he was in effect chased out of the World) and that he was hid from God's Face, being not admitted to come with the Sons of God to present himself before the Lord. 4. He fees himself exposed by it to the Hatred and Ill-Will of all Mankind. *It shall come to pass that every one that finds me shall slay me*. Where-ever he wanders he goes in peril of his Life, at least he thinks so; and like a Man in Debt, thinks every one he meets a Bailiff. There were none alive but his near Relations, yet even of them he is justly afraid who had himself been so barbarous to his own Brother. Some read it, *whosoever finds me shall slay me*; not only whosoever among Men, but whosoever among all the Creatures: Seeing himself thrown out of God's Protection, he fees the whole Creation armed against him. *Note*, Unpardoned Guilt fills Men with continual Terrours, *Prov. 28. 1.* *Job 15. 20, 21.* *Psa. 53. 5.* It is better fear and not Sin, than Sin and then fear. *Dr. Lightfoot* thinks this Word of Cain should be read as a Wish: *Now therefore let it be that any that finds me may kill me*. Being bitter in Soul, he longs for Death, but it comes not, *Job 3. 20, 21, 22.* As those under spiritual Torments do, *Rev. 9. 5, 6.*

2. Here's God's Confirmation of the Sentence, for when he judges he will overcome, *v. 15.* Observe,

1. How Cain is protected in Wrath, by this Declaration notified, we may suppose, to all that little World which was then in being, *Whosoever slayeth Cain, Vengeance shall be taken on him seven-fold*, because thereby the Sentence he was under, that he should be a Fugitive and a Vagabond, would be defeated. Condemned Prisoners are under the special Protection of the Law; They that are appointed Sacrifices to publick Justice, must not be sacrificed to private Revenge. God having said in Cain's Case, *Vengeance is mine, I will repay*, it had been a daring Ulurpation for any Man to take the Sword out of God's Hand, a Contempt put upon an exprefs Declaration of God's Mind, and therefore avenged seven-fold. *Note*, God has wife and holy Ends in protecting and prolonging the Lives even of very wicked Men. God deals with some according to that Prayer, *Psal. 59. 11.* *Slay them not, lest my People forget, scatter them by thy Power*. Had Cain been slain presently, he had been forgotten, *Eccl. 8. 10.* but now he lives a more fearful and lasting Monument of God's Justice, hang'd in Chains as it were.

2. How he is marked in Wrath. The Lord set a Mark upon Cain, to distinguish him from the rest of Mankind, and to notify that this is the Man that murdered his Brother whom no Body must hurt, but every Body must boot at. God stigmatiz'd him as some Malefactors are burnt in the Cheek, and put upon him such a visible and indelible Mark of Infamy and Disgrace as would make all wise People shun him, so that he could not be otherwise but a Fugitive and a Vagabond, and the off-scouring of all things.

16 And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden. 17 And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son Enoch. 18 And unto Enoch was born Irad: and Irad begot Mehujael: and Mehujael begat Methusael: and Methusael begat Lamech.

We have here a further Account of Cain, and what became of him after he was rejected of God.

1. He tamely submitted to that part of his Sentence by which he was hid from God's Face. For *v. 16.* he went out from the presence of the Lord, i. e. He willingly renounced God and Religion, and was content to disclaim his Privileges, so that he might not be under its Precepts. He forsook Adam's Family; and Altar, and cast off all Pretensions to the Fear of God, and never came among good People, nor attended on God's Ordinances any more. *Note*, Hypocritical Professors that have dissembled and trifled with God Almighty, are justly left to themselves to do something that is grossly scandalous, and so to throw off that Form of Godliness which they have been a Reproach to, and under colour of which they have deny'd the Power of it. Cain went out now from the Presence of the Lord, and we never find that he came into it again to his Comfort. Hell is Destruction from the Presence of the Lord, 2. *Thef. 1. 9.* 'Tis a perpetual Banishment from the Fountain of all Good. This is Sinners Choice, and so shall their Doom be, to their eternal Confusion.

2. He endeavoured to confront that part of the Sentence by which he was made a Fugitive and Vagabond; for, 1. He chose his Land. He went and dwelt on the East of Eden, somewhere distant from the Place where Adam and his religious Family resided, distinguishing himself and his accursed Generation from the Holy Seed; his Camp from the Camp of the Saints, and the beloved City, *Rev. 20. 9.* on the East of Eden, the Cherubim was with the flaming Sword, *Chap. 3. 6.* there he chose his Lot, as it were to defy the Terrors of the Lord. But his attempt to settle was in vain, for the Land he dwelt in was to him the Land of Nod, i. e. of shaking, or trembling, because of the continual restlessness and uneasiness of his own Spirit. *Note*, Those that depart from God cannot find Rest any where else. When Cain went out from the Presence of the Lord, he never rested after. Those that shut themselves out of Heaven abandon themselves to a perpetual Trembling. *Return therefore to thy Rest, O my Soul*, to thy Rest in God, else thou art for ever restless. 2. He built him a City for an Habitation, *v. 17.* He was building a City, so some read it, ever building it, but a Curse being upon him and the Work of his Hands, he could not finish it. Or as we read it, he builded a City in token of a fixed settled Separation from the Church of God, to which he had no Thoughts of ever returning. This City was to be the head Quarters of the Apostacy. Observe here, 1. Cain's Defiances of the Divine Sentence. God said he should be a Fugitive and a Vagabond; had he repented and humbled himself, that Curse might have been turn'd into a Blessing, as that of the Tribe of Levi was, that they should be divided in Jacob and scatter'd in Israel; But his impenitent unhumiliated Heart walking contrary to God, and resolving to fix, in spite of Heaven, that which might have been a Blessing, turned into a Curse. 2. See what was Cain's Choice after he had forsaken God, he pitch'd upon a Settlement in this World, as his rest for ever. They who look'd for the Heavenly City, on Earth chose to dwell in Tabernacles, but Cain as one that minded not that City, built him one on Earth. They that are curst of God, are apt to seek their Settlement and Satisfaction here below, *Psal. 17. 14.* 3. See what Method Cain took to defend himself against the Terrors with which he was perpetually haunted. He undertook this Building to divert his Thoughts from the Consideration of his own Misery, and to drown the Clamours of a guilty Conscience with the Noise of Axes and Hammers. Thus many baffle their Conventions by thrusting themselves into a hurry of worldly Business. 4. See how wicked People often get the start of God's People, and out-go them in outward Prosperity. Cain and his curst Race dwell in a City, while Adam and his blessed Family dwell in Tents; we cannot judge of Love or Hatred, by all that is before us, *Eccl. 9. 1, 2.*

3. His Family also was built up. Here's an Account of his Posterity, at least the Heirs of his Family for seven Generations. His Son was Enoch of the same Name, but not of the same Character with that holy Man that walked with God, *Ch. 5. 22.* Good Men and Bad may bear the same Names, but God can distinguish between Judas Iscariot, and Judas not Iscariot, *Joh. 14. 22.* The Names of more of his Posterity are mentioned, and but just mentioned, not as those of the Holy Seed, *Chap. 5.* where we have three Verses concerning each, whereas here we have three or four in one Verse. They are numbred in haste, as not valued or delighted in, in comparison with God's Chosen.

19 And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah. 20 And Adah bare Jabal: he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle. 21 And his brothers name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ. 22 And Zillah, she also bare Tubal-Cain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron, and the sister of Tubal-Cain was Naamah.

We have here some Particulars concerning Lamech, the seventh from Adam in the Line of Cain. Observe,

1. His

1. His marrying of two Wives. 'Twas one of the degenerate Race of *Cain* who first transgress'd that Original Law of Marriage, that *two only* should be *one Flesh*. Hitherto one Man had but one Wife at a time, but *Lamech* took *two*. From the beginning it was not so, *Mal. 2. 15. Mar. 19. 5.* See here, 1. That those who desert God's Church and Ordinance, lay themselves open to all manner of Temptation. 2. That when an ill Custom is begun by ill Men, sometimes Men of better Characters are through unwariness drawn in to follow them: *Jacob, David*, and many others, who were otherwise good Men, were afterwards ensnar'd in this Sin which *Lamech* began.

2. His Happiness in his Children notwithstanding this. Tho' he sinned in marrying two Wives, yet he was blessed with Children by both, and those such as lived to be famous in their Generation, not for their Piety, no mention is made of that, for ought appears they were the *Heathen* of that Age; but for their Ingenuity. They were not only themselves Men of Business, but Men that were serviceable to the World, and eminent for the Invention, or at least the Improvement of some useful Arts.

1. *Jabal* was a famous Shepherd; he delighted much himself in *keeping Cattle*, and was so happy in devising Methods of doing it to the best Advantage, and instructing others in them, that the Shepherds of those Times, nay, the Shepherds of after Times, called him *Father*: Or perhaps his Children after him, being brought up to the same Employment, the Family was a Family of Shepherds.

2. *Jubal* was a famous Musician, and particularly an Organist, and the first that gave Rules for that Noble Art or Science of Musick. When *Jabal* had set them in a way to be rich, *Jubal* put them in a way to be merry. Those that *spend their Days in Wealth*, will not be without the *Timbrel and Harp*, *Job 21. 12.*

13. From his Name *Jubal* probably the *Jubilee* Trumpet was so called; for the best Musick was that which proclaim'd Liberty and Redemption. *Jabal* was their *Pan*, and *Jubal* their *Apollon*.

3. *Tubal-Cain* was a famous Smith, who greatly improv'd the Art of working in *Brass and Iron*, for the Service both of War and Husbandry. He was their *Vulcan*. See here, 1. That worldly things are the only things that carnal wicked People set their Hearts upon, and are most ingenious and industrious about. So it was with this impious Race of cursed *Cain*. Here was a Father of Shepherds, and a Father of Musicians, but not a Father of the Faithful: Here's one to teach in *Brass and Iron*, but none the good Knowledge of the Lord. Here are Devices how to be Rich, and how to be Mighty, and how to be Merry, but nothing of God, or of his Fear and Service among them. Present Things fill the Heads of most People. 2. That even those who are destitute of the Knowledge and Grace of God, yet may be endued with many excellent useful Accomplishments, which may make them famous and serviceable in their Generation. Common Gifts are given to bad Men, while God chuseth to himself the *foolish things of the World*.

23 And *Lamech* said unto his wives, *Adah and Zillah*, Hear my voice, ye wives of *Lamech*, hearken unto my speech: for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt. 24 If *Cain* shall be avenged seven-fold, truly *Lamech* seventy and seven-fold.

By this Speech of *Lamech*, which is here recorded, and probably was much talk'd of in those times, he farther appears to have been an ill Man, as *Cain's* accursed Race generally were.

Observe, 1. How haughtily and imperiously he speaks to his Wives, as one that expected a mighty Regard and Obedience. *Hear my Voice, ye Wives of Lamech*. He that had broke the Law of Marriage in taking two Wives, no marvel if he broke another Law of that Relation, which oblig'd him to be kind and tender to those he had taken; and to *give Honour to the Wife, as to the weaker Vessel*. Those are not always the most careful to do their own Duty, that are most high in their Demands of Respect from others, and most frequent in calling upon their Relations, to know their Places and do their Duty.

2. How bloody and barbarous he was to all about him. *I have slain*, (or as it is in the Margin) *I would slay a Man in my Wound, and a young Man in my Hurt*. He owes himself a Man of a fierce and cruel Disposition, that would lay about him without Mercy, and kill and slay all that stood in his way: Be it a *Man*, or a *Young Man*, nay, tho' he himself were in danger to be wounded and hurt in the Fray. Some think because *v. 24.* he compares himself with *Cain*, that he had murder'd some of the Holy Seed, the true Worshipers of God, and this he acknowledges to be the Wounding of his Conscience, and the Hurt of his Soul, and yet like *Cain* he continues impenitent, trembling, and yet unhumbled. Or, his Wives knowing what manner of Spirit he was of, how apt both to give and to resent Provocation, were afraid lest some body or other would be the death of him: Never fear, saith he, I defy any Man to set upon me; whoever doth, let me alone to make my Part good with him;

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I'll slay him, be he a *Man*, or a *Young Man*. Note, It is a common thing for fierce and bloody Men to glory in their Shame, *Phil. 3. 19.* as if it were both their Safety and their Honour that they care not how many Lives are sacrificed to their angry Resentments, nor how much they are hated, provided they may be fear'd. *Oderint dum metuant*.

3. How impiously he presumes even upon God's Protection in his wicked Way, *v. 24.* He had heard that *Cain* should be avenged seven-fold, *v. 15. i. e.* that if any Man should dare to kill *Cain*, he should be severely reckoned with and punished for so doing, tho' *Cain* deserved to die a thousand Deaths, for the Murder of his Brother; and from hence he infers, that if any one should kill him for the Murders he had committed, God would much more avenge his Death. As if the special Care God took to prolong and secure the Life of *Cain*; (for special Reasons peculiar to his Case, and indeed, for his sorer Punishment, as the Beings of the Damned are continued) were designed for a Protection to all Murderers. Thus *Lamech* perversely argues, if God provided for the Safety of *Cain*, much more for mine; who, tho' I have slain many, yet never slew my own Brother, and upon no Provocation, as he did. Note, The Reprieve of some Sinners, and the Patience God exerciseth towards them is often abused to the hardening of others in the like sinful Ways, *Ecc. 8. 11.* But tho' Justice strikes some slowly, others cannot therefore be sure but that they may be taken away with a swift Destruction. Or if God should bear long with those who thus presume upon his Forbearance, they do but hereby treasure up unto themselves Wrath against the Day of Wrath. Now this is all we have upon record in Scripture concerning the Family and Posterity of cursed *Cain*, till we find them all cut off and perishing in the Universal Deluge.

25 And Adam knew his wife again, and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed in stead of Abel, whom Cain slew. 26 And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD

This is the first mention of *Adam* in the Story of this Chapter. No Question the Murder of *Abel*, and the Impenitency and Apostasy of *Cain* were a very great Grief to him and *Eve*, and the more because their own Wickedness did now correct them, and their Backslidings did reprove them. Their Folly had given Sin and Death entrance into the World, and now they smarted by it, being by means thereof deprived of both their Sons in one Day, *Gen. 27. 45.* when Parents are grieved by their Children's Wickedness, they should take occasion from thence to lament that Corruption of Nature which was deriv'd from them, and which is the Root of Bitterness. But here we have that which was a Relief to our first Parents in their Affliction.

1. God gave them to see the rebuilding of their Family which was sorely shaken and weakened by that sad Event. For, (1.) they saw their Seed, another Seed instead of *Abel*, *v. 25.* Observe God's Kindness and Tenderness towards his People, in his Providential Dealings with them, when he takes away one Comfort from them, he gives them another instead of it, which may prove a greater Blessing to them than that was, in which they thought their Lives were bound up. This other Seed was he in whom the Church was to be built up and perpetuated: And he comes instead of *Abel*; for the Succession of Professors is the Revival of the Martyrs, and, as it were, the Resurrection of God's slain Witnesses: Thus we are baptized for the Dead, *1 Cor. 15. 29. i. e.* we are by Baptism admitted into the Church, for or instead of those who by Death, especially by Martyrdom, are removed out of it, and we fill up their room. They who slay God's Servants, hope by that means to wear out the Saints of the most High, but they will be deceived, Christ shall still see his Seed, God can out of Stones raise up Children for him, and make the Blood of the Martyrs the Seed of the Church, whose Lands we are sure shall never be lost for want of Heirs. This Son by a Prophectic Spirit they call *Seth*, *i. e. Set, settled or placed*, because in his Seed Mankind should continue to the End of Time, and from him the *Messiah* should descend, while *Cain* the Head of the Apostasy is made a Wanderer. *Seth* from whom the true Church was to come is one fixed. In Christ and his Church is the only true Settlement. (2.) They saw their Seeds Seed, *v. 26: so Seth was born a Son called Enos*, which is that general Name for all Men which speaks the Weakness, Frailty, and Misery of Man's State. The best Men are most sensible of that both in themselves and their Children. We are never so settled, but we must mind our selves that we are frail.

2. God gave them to see the reviving of Religion, in their Family, *v. 26. then began Men to call upon the Name of the Lord*. 'Tis small Comfort to a good Man to see his Childrens Children, if he do not withal see Peace upon *Israel*, and those that come of him walking in the Truth. Doubtless God's Name was called upon

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before, but now, 1. The Worshippers of God began to *stir up themselves* to do more in Religion than they had done, perhaps not more than had been done at first, but more than had been done of late since the Defection of *Cain*. Now Men began to worship God, not only in their Closets and Families, but in publick and solemn Assemblies. Or, Now there was so great a Reformation in Religion, that it was, as it were, a new beginning of it. Then may refer not to the Birth of *Enos*, but to the whole foregoing Story: Then, when Men saw in *Cain* and *Lamech* the sad Effects of Sin, by the workings of natural Conscience; then, when they saw God's Judgments upon Sin and Sinners, then they were so much the more lively and resolute in Religion. The worse others are, the better we should be, and the more zealous.

2. The Worshippers of God began to *Distinguish themselves*; so the Margin reads it, *Then began Men to be called by the Name of the Lord*, or, to call themselves by it. Now *Cain*, and those that had deserted Religion, had built a City, and begun to declare for Impiety and Irreligion, and called themselves the *Sons of Men*; those that adher'd to God, began to declare for Him and his Worship, and called themselves the *Sons of God*. Now began the Distinction between *Professors and Profane*, which has been kept up ever since, and will be while the World stands.

CHAP. V.

This Chapter is the only Authentick History extant of the first Age of the World from the Creation to the Flood, containing (according to the Verity of the Hebrew Text) 1656 Years, as may easily be computed by the Ages of the Patriarchs, before they begat that Son thro' whom the Line went down to Noah. This is none of those which the Apostle calls Endless Genealogies, 1 Tim. 1.

4. For Christ who was the End of the Old Testament Law, was also the End of the Old Testament Genealogies, towards him they looked, and in him they centred. The Genealogy here recorded is inserted briefly in the Pedigree of our Saviour, Luke 3. 36, 37. and is of great use to shew that Christ was the Seed of the Woman, that was promised. We have here an Account, 1. Concerning Adam, v. 1-5. 2. Seth, v. 6-8. 3. Enos, v. 9-12. 4. Cainan, v. 12-14. 5. Mahalaleel, v. 15-17. 6. Jared, v. 18-20. 7. Enoch, v. 21-24. 8. Methuselah, v. 25-27. 9. Lamech and his Son Noah, v. 28. ad fin. All Scripture being given by Inspiration of God is profitable, tho' not all alike profitable.

1 *This is the book of the generations of Adam:* In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him: 2 Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created. 3 And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth. 4 And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years; and he begat sons and daughters. 5 And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died.

The first Words of the Chapter are the Title or Argument of the Whole Chapter; it is *the Book of the Generations of Adam*; it is the List or Catalogue of the Posterity of Adam, not of all, but only of the holy Seed which were the Substance thereof, Isa. 6. 13. and of whom, as concerning the Flesh, Christ came, Rom. 9. 5. The Names, Ages and Deaths of those that were the Successors of the first Adam in the Custody of the Promise, and the Ancestors of the Second Adam. The Genealogy begins with Adam himself.

Here's, 1. His Creation, v. 1, 2. where we have a brief Rehearsal of what was before at large related concerning the Creation of Man. This is what we have need frequently to hear of, and carefully to acquaint our selves with. Observe here, (1.) that God created Man. Man is not his own Maker, therefore he must not be his own Master, but the Author of his Being must be the Director of his Motions, and the Centre of them. (2.) That there was a Day in which God created Man, he was not from Eternity, but of Yesterday: He was not the First-born, but the Junior of the Creation. (3.) That God made him in his own Likeness, Righteous and Holy, and therefore undoubtedly Happy. Man's Nature resembled the Divine Nature more than that of any of the Creatures of this lower World. (4.) That God created them Male and Female, v. 2. for their mutual Comfort, as well as for the Preservation and Increase of their Kind. Adam and Eve were both made immediately by the Hand of God, both made in God's Likeness, and therefore between the Sexes there is not that great Distance and Inequality which some imagine. (5.) That God blessed them; 'tis usual for Parents to bless their Children, so God the common Father blessed his; but earthly Parents can only beg a Blessing, 'tis God's Prerogative to command it. It refers chiefly to the Blessing of Increase, not excluding other Blessings. (6.)

That he called their Name Adam. Adam signifies Earth, Red Earth. Now, 1. God gave him this Name: Adam had himself nam'd the rest of the Creatures, but he must not chuse his own Name, lest he should assume some glorious pompous Title. But God gave him a Name which would be a continual Memorandum to him of the meanness of his Original, and oblige him to look unto the Rock from whence he was hewn, and the Hole of the Pit whence he was digg'd, Isa. 51. 1. Those have little reason to be proud, who are so near a-kin to Dust. 2. He gave this Name both to the Man and to the Woman: Being at first one by Nature, and afterwards one by Marriage, 'twas fit they should both have the same Name, in token of their Union. The Woman is of the Earth earthy as well as the Man.

2. The Birth of his Son Seth, v. 3. He was born in the 130th Year of Adam's Life, and probably the Murder of Abel was not long before. Many other Sons and Daughters were born to Adam besides Cain and Abel before this, but no notice is taken of them, because an honourable Mention must be made of his Name only, in whose Loyns Christ and the Church were. But that which is most observable here concerning Seth, is, that Adam begat him in his own Likeness, after his image: Adam was made in the Image of God, but when he was fallen and corrupt, he begat a Son in his own Image, sinful and defiled, frail and mortal, and miserable like himself; not only a Man like himself, consisting of Body and Soul, but a Sinner like himself, guilty and obnoxious, degenerate and corrupt. Even the Man after God's own Heart, owns himself conceived and born in sin, Ps. 51. 5. This was Adam's own Likeness, the Reverse of that Divine Likeness in which Adam was made; but having lost it himself, he could not convey it to his Seed. Note, That Grace doth not run in the Blood, but Corruption doth. A Sinner begets a Sinner, but a Saint doth not beget a Saint.

3. His Age and Death. He lived in all 930 Years, and then he died, according to the Sentence past upon him, *Dust thou shalt return*. Tho' he did not dye in the Day he eat forbidden Fruit, yet in that very Day he became mortal, then he began to die, his whole Life after was but a Reprieve; a forfeited condemned Life, nay, it was a wasting dying Life: He was not only like a Criminal sentenced, but as one already crucified, that dyes slowly and by degrees.

6 And Seth lived an hundred and five years, and begat Enos. 7 And Seth lived after he begat Enos eight hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters. 8 And all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years: and he died. 9 And Enos lived ninety years, and begat Cainan. 10 And Enos lived after he begat Cainan eight hundred and fifteen years, and begat sons and daughters. 11 And all the days of Enos were nine hundred and five years: and he died. 12 And Cainan lived seventy years, and begat Mahalaleel. 13 And Cainan lived after he begat Mahalaleel eight hundred and forty years: and begat sons and daughters. 14 And all the days of Cainan were nine hundred and ten years: and he died. 15 And Mahalaleel lived sixty and five years, and begat Jared. 16 And Mahalaleel lived after he begat Jared eight hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters. 17 And all the days of Mahalaleel were eight hundred ninety and five years: and he died. 18 And Jared lived an hundred sixty and two years, and he begat Enoch. 19 And Jared lived after he begat Enoch eight hundred years, and begat sons and daughters. 20 And all the days of Jared were nine hundred sixty and two years: and he died.

We have here all that the Holy Ghost thought fit to leave upon record concerning five of the Patriarchs before the Flood, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel and Jared. There is nothing observable concerning any of these particularly, tho' we have reason to think they were Men of Eminency both for Prudence and Piety in their Day: But in general, 1. Observe how largely and expressly their Generations are recorded. This Matter, one would think, might have been deliver'd in fewer Words; but it is certain, there is never an idle Word in God's Books, whatever there are in Mens: 'Tis thus plainly set down, (1.) To make it easy and intelligible to the meanest Capacity; when we are told how old they were when they begat such a Son, and how many Years they lived after, a very little Skill in Arithmetick will enable a Man to tell how long they lived in all.

all, yet the Holy Ghost sets down the Sum total for the sake of those that have not even so much Skill as that. (2.) To shew the Pleasure God takes in the Names of his People; we found Cain's Generation numbred in haste, Chap. 4. 18. but this Account of the Holy Seed is enlarged upon, and given in Words at length, and not in Figures; we are told how long they lived that lived in God's Fear, and when they died that died in his Favour; but as for others it is no matter; *The Memory of the Just is blessed, but the Name of the Wicked shall rot.*

2. Their Life is reckoned by Days, v. 8. *All the Days of Seth, and so of the rest; which intimates the shortness of the Life of Man, when it is at the longest, and the quick Revolution of our Times on Earth: If they reckoned by Days, sure we must reckon by Hours, or rather make that our frequent Prayer, Ps. 90. 12. So teach us to number our Days.*

3. Concerning each of them (except Enoch) it is said, *And he died*: 'Tis implied in the numbring of the Years of their Life, that their Life when those Years were numbered and finished, came to an End, and yet 'tis still repeated, *And he died*, to shew that Death passed upon all Men, without exception; and that it is good for us particularly to observe and improve the Deaths of others for our own Edification. Such a one was a Strong Healthful Man, but he died; such a one was a Great and Rich Man, but he died; such a one was a Wise Politick Man, but he died; such a one was a very Good Man, perhaps a very Useful Man, but he died, &c.

4. That which is especially observable, is, that they all lived very long; not one of them died till he had seen the Revolutions of almost Eight Hundred Years, and some of them much longer; a great while for an immortal Soul to be imprisoned in a House of Clay. The present Life surely was not to them such a Burthen as commonly it is now, else they would have been weary of it; nor was the future Life so clearly revealed then as it is now under the Gospel, else they would have been impatient to remove to it: Long Life to the pious Patriarchs was a Blessing, and made them Blessings. 1. Some natural Causes may be assigned for their long Life in those first Ages of the World. 'Tis very probable, that the Earth was more fruitful, the Products of it more strengthening, the Air more healthful, and the Influences of the Heavenly Bodies more benign before the Flood than they were after. Though Man was driven out of Paradise, yet the Earth it self was then *Paradisical*; a Garden in comparison with its present Wilderness State: And some think, that their great Knowledge of the Creatures, and their Usefulness both for Food and Medicine, together with their Sobriety and Temperance, contributed much to it, yet we do not find that those who were Intemperate, as many were, Luke 17. 27. were as short-liv'd as Intemperate Men generally are now. 2. It must chiefly be resolv'd into the Power and Providence of God: he prolonged their Lives both for the more speedy replenishing of the Earth, and for the more effectual preservation of the Knowledge of God and Religion, than when there was no written Word, but Tradition was the Channel of its Conveyance: All the Patriarchs here (except Noah) were born before Adam died, so that from him they might receive a full and satisfactory Account of the Creation: Paradise, the Fall, the Promise, and those Divine Precepts which concern'd Religious Worship, and a Religious Life: And if any mistake arose, they might have recourse to him while he lived, as to an Oracle for the rectifying of it, and after his Death to Methuselah, and others that had conversed with him: So great was the Care of Almighty God to preserve in his Church the Knowledge of his Will, and the Purity of his Worship.

21 And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah. 22 And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters. 23 And all the days of Enoch, were three hundred and sixty five years. 24 And Enoch walked with God, and he was not: for God took him.

The Accounts here run on for several Generations without any thing Remarkable, or any Variation but of the Names and Numbers; but at length there comes in one that must not be pass'd over so, of whom special notice must be taken, and that is Enoch the seventh from Adam; the rest we may suppose did *virtuously*, but he excelled them all, and was the brightest Star of the Patriarchal Age. 'Tis but little that is recorded concerning him, but that little is enough to make his Name great, greater than that of Enoch's that had a City called by his Name. Here are two Things concerning him. (1.) His Gracious Conversation in this World, which is twice spoken of, v. 22. Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah; and again, v. 24. Enoch walked with God. Observe, 1. The Nature of his Religion, and the Scope and Tenor of his Conversation, *he walked with God*, which notes, 1. True Religion; what is Godliness but walking with God? The Ungodly and Prophanes are without God

in the World; they walk contrary to him, but the Godly walk with God; which presupposes Reconciliation to God, for two cannot walk together except they be agreed, Amos. 3. 3. and includes all the Parts and Instances of a godly, righteous, and sober Life: To walk with God, is to set God always before us, and to act as those that are always under his Eye. It is to live a Life of Communion with God, both in Ordinances and Providences; it is to make God's Word our Rule, and his Glory our End in all our Actions; it is to make it our constant Care and Endeavour, in every thing to please God, and in nothing to offend him; it is to comply with his Will, to concur with his Designs, and to be Workers together with him; 'tis to be Followers of him as dear Children. 2. Eminent Religion. He was entirely dead to this World, and did not only walk after God, as all good Men do, but he walked with God, as if he were in Heaven already: He liv'd above the rate, not only of other Men, but of other Saints; not only good in bad Times, but the best in good Times. 3. Activity in promoting Religion among others; executing the Priest's Office, is call'd walking before God, 1 Sam. 2. 30, 35. and see Zech. 3. 7. Enoch it should seem was a Priest of the most High God, and as Noah, who is likewise said to walk with God, he was a Preacher of Righteousness, and prophesied of Christ's second coming, Jude 14. Behold the Lord comes with his holy Myriads.

Now the Holy Spirit, instead of saying, Enoch liv'd, saith, Enoch walked with God, for it is the Life of a good Man to walk with God. This was (1.) the Business of Enoch's Life, his constant Care and Work; while others liv'd to themselves and the World, he liv'd to God. (2.) It was the Joy and Support of his Life; Communion with God was to him better than Life it self; so me to live is Christ, Phil. 1. 21.

2. The Date of his Religion. 'Tis said, v. 21. he liv'd 65 Years, and begat Methuselah, but v. 22. he walked with God after he begat Methuselah, which intimates, that he did not begin to be eminent for Piety till about that Time; at first he walked but as other Men. Great Saints arrive to their Eminency by degrees.

3. The continuance of his Religion; he walked with God 300 Years, as long as he continued in this World: The Hypocrite will not pray always, but the real Saint that acts from a Principle, and makes Religion his Choice, will persevere to the End, and walk with God while he lives, as one that hopes to live for ever with him, Psal. 104. 33.

2. His glorious removal to a better World: As he did not live like the rest, so he did not dye like the rest, v. 24. He was not, for God took him; that is, as it is explain'd, Heb. 11. 5. He was translated that he should not see Death, and was not found, because God had translated him. Observe, (1.) When he was thus translated. (1.) What time of his Life 'twas when he had liv'd but 365 Years (a Year of Years) which, as Men's Ages went then, was in the midst of his Days; for there was none of the Patriarchs before the Flood that did not more than double that Age: But why did God take him so soon? Surely because the World, which was now grown Corrupt, was not worthy of him: or because he was so much above the World, and so weary of it as to desire a speedy removal out of it; or, because his Work was done, and done the sooner for his minding it so closely. Note, God often takes them soonest whom he loves best; and the time they lose on Earth is gain'd in Heaven, to their unspeakable Advantage. (2.) What time of the World: 'Twas when all the Patriarchs mention'd in this Chapter were living, except Adam, who dy'd 57 Years before, and Noah, who was born 69 Years after; they two had sensible Confirmations to their Faith other ways, but to all the rest who were or might have been Witnesses of Enoch's Translation, that was a sensible Encouragement to their Faith and Hope, concerning a future State. (2.) How his removal is express'd, He was not, for God took him. 1. He was not any longer in this World; 'twas not the Period of his Being, but of his being here: He was not found, so the Apostle explains it from the 70. not found by his Friends, who sought him as the Sons of the Prophets sought Elijah, 2 Kings 2. 17. not found by his Enemies, who, some think, were in quest of him to put him to Death in their Rage against him for his eminent Piety; it appears by his Prophecy, that there were then many ungodly Sinners, who spoke hard Speeches, and probably did hard Things too against God's People, Jude 15. but God hid Enoch from them, not under Heaven, but in Heaven. 2. God took him Body and Soul to himself in the heavenly Paradise, by the Ministry of Angels, as afterwards he took Elijah. He was changed as those Saints shall be that will be found alive at Christ's second coming. Whenever a good Man dyes, God takes him, fetches him hence, and receives him to himself. The Apostle adds concerning Enoch, that before his Translation he had this Testimony, that he pleased God, and this was the good Report he obtained. Note, 1. Walking with God pleased God. 2. We cannot walk with God so as to please him but by Faith. 3. God himself will put an Honour upon those that by Faith walk with him, so as to please him. He will own them now, and witness for them before Angels and Men at the great Day: They that have not this Testimony before the Translation, yet shall have it after. 4. Those whose Conversation in the World is

truly Holy, shall find their removal out of it truly Happy: *Enoch's* Translation was not only an *Evidence to Faith* of the reality of a Future State, and of the possibility of the Body's existing in Glory in that State, but it was an Encouragement to the Hope of all that walk with God, that they shall be for ever with him; signal Piety shall be crown'd with signal Honours.

25 And Methuselah lived an hundred eighty and seven years, and begat Lamech. 26 And Methuselah lived after he begat Lamech seven hundred eighty and two years, and begat sons and daughters. 27 And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years: and he died.

Concerning *Methuselah* observe, 1. The Signification of his Name, which some think was Prophetic, his Father *Enoch* being a Prophet; *Methuselah* signifies, *He dies, there is a Dart, or, a sending forth, viz.* of the Deluge, which came the very Year that *Methuselah* dy'd. If indeed his Name was so intended, and so explain'd, 'twas fair Warning to a careless World, a long time before the Judgment came. However, this is observable; that the longest liver that ever was, carried Death in his Name, that he might be minded of its coming surely, tho' it came slowly. 2. His Age; he liv'd 969 Years, the longest we read of that ever any Man liv'd on Earth, and yet he dy'd; the longest liver must dye at last. Neither Youth nor Age will discharge from that War, for that is the End of all Men: None can challenge Life by long Prescription, nor make that a Plea against the Arrests of Death. 'Tis commonly suppos'd, that *Methuselah* dy'd a little before the Flood, the Jewish Writers say, *seven Days* before, referring to Chap. 7. 10. and that he was taken away from the Evil to come; which goes upon this Presumption which is generally receiv'd, that all these Patriarchs in this Chapter were Holy Good Men; I am loath to offer any Surmise to the contrary, and yet I see not that *that* can be any more infer'd from their Enrollment here among the Ancestors of Christ, than that all those Kings of *Judah* were so whose Names are recorded in his Genealogy, many of whom we are sure were much otherwise: And if this be question'd, it may be suggested as probable, that *Methuselah* was himself drown'd with the rest of the World, for 'tis certain he dy'd that Year.

28 And Lamech lived an hundred eighty and two years, and begat a son. 29 And he called his Name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD hath cursed. 30 And Lamech lived after he begat Noah five hundred ninety and five years, and begat sons and daughters. 31 And all the days of Lamech were seven hundred seventy and seven years: and he died. 32 And Noah was five hundred years old: and Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Here we have the first mention of *Noah*, of whom we shall read much in the following Chapters: Here's,

1. His Name, with the reason of it; *Noah* signifies *Rest*, his Parents gave him that Name with a prospect of his being a more than ordinary Blessing to his Generation. *This same shall comfort us concerning our Work and Toil of our Hands, because of the Ground which the Lord hath cursed.* Here's, 1. His Complaint of the calamitous State of Humane Life; by the entrance of Sin, and the entail of the Curse for Sin, 'tis become very Miserable: Our whole Life is spent in Labour, and our Time fill'd up with continual Toil. God having *cursed the Ground*, 'tis as much as we can do with the utmost Care and Pains to fetch a sorry Livelyhood out of it. He speaks as one fatigu'd with the Business of this Life, and grudging that so many of our Thoughts and precious Minutes, which otherwise might have been much better employ'd, are unavoidably spent for the support of the Body.

2. His comfortable Hopes of some Relief by the Birth of this Son; *this same shall comfort us*: Which speaks not only that Desire and Expectation which Parents generally have concerning their Children, that when they grow up they will be Comforts to them, and Helpers in their Business, tho' they often prove otherwise; but an Apprehension and Prospect of something more; very probably there were some Prophecies that went before of him, as a Person that should be wonderfully serviceable to his Generation, which they so understood as to conclude, that he was the *promised Seed*, the *Messiah* that should come: And then it intimates, that a Covenant Interest in Christ as ours, and the believing Expectation of his coming, furnisheth us with the best and su-

rest Comforts, both in reference to the Wrath and Curse of God, which we have deserved, and to the Toils and Troubles of this present time, which we are oft complaining of: Is Christ ours? Is Heaven ours? This same shall comfort us.

(2.) His Children, *Shem, Ham, and Japhet*. These *Noah* begat, (the eldest of these) when he was 500 Years old. It should seem that *Japhet* was the eldest (Chap. 10. 21.) but *Shem* is put first, because on him the Covenant was entail'd, as appears by Gen. 9. 26. where God is called the Lord God of *Shem*, to him 'tis probable the Birth-right was given, and from him 'tis certain both Christ the Head, and the Church the Body were to descend, therefore he is call'd *Shem*, which signifies a Name, because in his Posterity the Name of God should always remain, till He should come out of his Loins, whose Name is above every Name; so that in putting *Shem* first, Christ was in effect put first, who in all things must have the Pre-eminence.

CHAP. VI.

The most remarkable Thing we have upon Record concerning the Old World, is the Destruction of it by the universal Deluge, which this Chapter begins the Story of; wherein we have, 1. The abounding Iniquity of that wicked World, v. 1-5, and v. 11, 12. 2. The righteous God's just Resentment of that abounding Iniquity, and his holy Resolution to punish it, v. 6, 7. 3. The special Favour of God to his Servant *Noah*. 1. In the Character given of him, v. 8, 9, 10. 2. In the Communication of God's Purpose to him, v. 13, 17. 3. In the Directions he gave him to make an Ark for his own safety, v. 14, 15, 16. 4. In the employing of him for the Preservation of the rest of the Creatures, v. 18, 19, 20, 21. Lastly, *Noah's* Obedience to the Instructions given him, v. 22. And this concerning the Old World is written for our Admonition, upon whom the Ends of the New World are come.

1 AND it came to pass when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, 2 That the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.

For the Glory of God's Justice, and for Warning to a wicked World before the History of the Ruin of the Old World, we have a full Account of its Degeneracy, its Apostacy from God, and Rebellion against him. The destroying of it was an act not of absolute Sovereignty, but of necessary Justice for the maintaining of the Honour of God's Government. Now here we have an Account of two Things which occasion'd the Wickedness of the Old World.

1. The Increase of Mankind. Men began to multiply upon the Face of the Earth. This was the Effect of the Blessing, Gen. 1. 28. and yet Man's Corruption so abus'd and perverted this Blessing that it turn'd into a Curse. Thus Sin takes occasion by the Mercies of God to be the more exceeding sinful. Pr. 29. 16. When the Wicked are multiplied, Transgression increaseth. The more Sinners the more Sin; and the multitude of Offenders emboldens Men: Infectious Diseases are most destructive in populous Cities, and Sin is a spreading Leprosy. Thus in the New Testament Church, when the Number of the Disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring, Acts. 6. 1. and we read of a Nation that was multiplied, not to the increase of their Joy, Isa. 9. 3: Numerous Families have need to be well-govern'd, lest they become wicked Families.

2. Mixt Marriages, v. 2. The Sons of God, i. e. the Professors of Religion, who were call'd by the Name of the Lord, and call'd upon that Name, married the Daughters of Men, i. e. those that were profane, and strangers to God and Godliness. The Posterity of *Seth* did not keep by themselves as they ought to have done, both for the Preservation of their own Purity, and in Detestation of the Apostacy, but intermingled themselves with the excommunicated Race of *Cain*, they took them wives of all that they chose. But what was amiss in these Marriages? 1. They chose only by the Eye: They saw that they were fair, which was all they look'd at. 2. They follow'd the Choice which their own corrupt Affections made, they took all that they chose, without Advice and Consideration. But 3. That which prov'd of such ill Consequence to them was that they married strange Wives, were unequally yoked with Unbelievers, 1 Cor. 6. 14. This was forbidden to Israel, Deut. 7. 3, 4. 'twas the unhappy occasion of *Solomon's* Apostacy, 1 Kings 11. 1, 4. and was of ill Consequence to the Jews after their return out of *Babylon*, Ezr. 9. 1, 2. Note, Professors of Religion in Marrying both themselves and their Children, should make Conscience of keeping within the Bounds of Profession. The Bad will sooner debauch the Good, than the Good reform the Bad. Those that profess themselves the Children of God, must not Marry without his Consent, which they have not, if they joyn in Affinity with his Enemies.

3 And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his

his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.

This comes in here, 1. As a Token of God's Displeasure at those who married strange Wives; he threatens to withdraw his Spirit from them, whom they had griev'd by such Marriages, contrary to their Convictions. Fleahy Lusts are oft punish'd with spiritual Judgments, the forest of all other. Or, 2. as another Occasion of the great Wickedness of the Old World; the Spirit of the Lord being provok'd by their Resistance of his Motions, ceased to strive with them, and then all Religion was soon lost among them. This he warns them of before, that they might not further vex his holy Spirit, but by their Prayers might stay him with them. Observe in this Verse,

1. God's Resolution not always to strive with Man by his Spirit. The Spirit then strove by Noah's Preaching, 1 Pet. 3. 19. and by inward Checks, but 'twas in vain with the most of Men, therefore, saith God, he shall not always strive. Note, 1. The Blessed Spirit strives with Sinners by the Convictions and Admonitions of Conscience to turn them from Sin to God. 2. If the Spirit be resisted, quench'd and striven against, tho' he strive long, he will not strive always, Hof. 4. 17-3. Those are ripening apace for Ruin, whom the Spirit of Grace has left off striving with.

2. The Reason of that Resolution: For that he also is Flesh, i.e. incurably Corrupt, and Carnal and Sensual, so that 'tis labour lost to strive with him; Can the Ethiopian change his Skin? He also, i.e. All, one as well as another, they are all sunk into the Mire of Flesh. Note, 1. 'Tis the corrupt Nature, and the Inclination of the Soul towards the Flesh, that opposeth the Spirit's Strivings, and renders them ineffectual. 2. When a Sinner has long adher'd to that Interest, and sided with the Flesh against the Spirit, the Spirit justly withdraws his Agency, and strives no more. None lose the Spirit's Strivings but those that have first forfeited them.

3. A Reprieve granted notwithstanding: Yet his Days shall be 120 Years; so long I will defer the Judgment they deserve, and give them Space to prevent it by their Repentance and Reformation: Justice said, Cut them down, but Mercy interceded, Lord, let them alone this Year also; and so far Mercy prevail'd, that a Reprieve was obtain'd for six-score Years. Note, The Time of God's Patience and Forbearance towards provoking Sinners is sometimes long, but always limited: Reprieves are not Pardons; tho' God bear a great while, he will not bear always.

4. There were giants in the earth in those days: and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them: the same became mighty men, which were of old, men of renown. 5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

We have here a further Account of the Corruption of the Old World, when the Sons of God had match'd with the Daughters of Men, tho' it was very displeasing to God, yet he did not presently cut them off, but waited to see what the Product of these Marriages would be, and which Side the Children would take after, and it prov'd (as usually it doth) that they took after the worse Side.

Here's 1. The Temptation they were under to Oppress and do Violence; they were Giants, and they were Men of Renown: they became too hard for all about them, and carried all before them, (1.) with their Great Bulk, as the Sons of Anak, Num. 13. 33. and (2.) with their Great Name, as the King of Assyria, Isa. 37. 11. these made them the Terror of the Mighty in the Land of the Living; and thus arm'd, they daringly insulted the Rights of all their Neighbours, and trampled upon all that's Just and Sacred. Note, Those that have so much Power over others, as to be able to Oppress them, have seldom so much Power over themselves as not to Oppress; great Might is a very great Snare to many. This degenerate Race slighted the Honour their Ancestors had obtain'd by Virtue and Religion, and made themselves a Great Name by that which was the perpetual Ruin of their Good Name.

2. The Charge exhibited and prov'd against them, v. 5. The Evidence produced was uncontestable, God saw it, and that's instead of a thousand Witnesses. God sees all the Wickedness that is among the Children of Men; it cannot be concealed from him now, and if it be not repented of, it shall not be concealed by him shortly. Now, what did God take notice of? 1. He observ'd all the Streams of Sin, that flow'd along in Men's Lives, and the breadth and depth of those Streams: He saw that the Wickedness of Man was great in the Earth. Observe the connection of this with what goes before; the Oppressors were mighty Men; and Men of Renown, and then God saw that the Wickedness of Man was great. Note, The Wickedness of a People is great indeed, when the most notorious Sinners are Men of Renown among them. Things are bad when ill Men are not only Honoured, notwithstanding their Wickedness, but Honoured for their Wickedness, and the vilest Men exalted. Wickedness is then great,

when great Men are wicked. Their Wickedness was great, i.e. abundance of Sin was committed in all Places, by all sorts of People: And those Sins in their own nature most gross and heinous, and provoking: And committed daringly, and with a defiance of Heaven; and no Care taken by those that had Power in their Hands to restrain and punish it. This God saw. Note, All the Sins of Sinners are known to God the Judge: Those that are most conversant in the World, tho' they see much Wickedness in it, yet they see but little of that which is, but God sees all, and judges aright concerning it, how great it is, nor can he be deceiv'd in his Judgment. 2. He observ'd the Fountain of Sin that was in Men's Hearts: Any one might see that the Wickedness of Man was great, for they declar'd their Sin as Sodom, but God's Eye went further, He saw that every Imagination of the Thoughts of his Heart was only evil continually. A sad Sight, and very offensive to God's holy Eye! This was the bitter Root, the corrupt Spring: All the Violence and Oppression, all the Luxury and Wantonness that was in the World proceeded from the Corruption of Nature; Lust conceives them, Jam. 1. 15. see Mat. 15. 19. 1. The Heart was naught; that was deceitful and desperately Wicked; the Principles were corrupt, and the Habits and Dispositions evil. 2. The Thoughts of the Heart were so. Thought is sometimes taken for the settled Judgment or Opinion, and that was brib'd and byas'd and mis-led; sometimes for the workings of the Fancy, and those were always either vain or vile, either weaving the Spider's Web, or hatching the Cockatrice's Egg. 3. The Imagination of the Thought of the Heart was so, i.e. their Designs and Devices were wicked. They did not do Evil only thro' Carelessness as those that walk at all Adventures, not heeding what they do, but they did Evil deliberately, and designedly contriving how to do Mischief. 'Twas bad indeed, for it was only Evil, continually Evil, and every Imagination was so. There was no Good to be found among them, no not at any time. The Stream of Sin was full and strong, and constant, and God saw it, see Psal. 14. 1, 2, 3.

6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. 7 And the LORD said, I will destroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air: for it repenteth me that I have made them.

Here's, 1. God's Repentment of Man's Wickedness. He did not see it as an unconcern'd Spectator, but as one injur'd and affronted by it; he saw it as a tender Father sees the Folly and Stubbornness of a rebellious and disobedient Child, which not only angers him but grieves him, and makes him with he had been written Childless. The Expressions here us'd are very strange, It repented the Lord that he had made Man upon the Earth; that he had made a Creature of such noble Powers and Faculties, and had put him on this Earth, which he built and furnish'd on purpose to be a convenient, and comfortable Habitation for him; and it grieved him at his heart. These are Expressions after the manner of Men, and must be understood so as not to reflect upon the Honour of God's Immutability or his Felicity.

1. It doth not speak any Passion or Uneasiness in God, nothing can create Disturbance to the eternal Mind, but it speaks his just and holy Displeasure against Sin and Sinners; against Sin as odious to his Holiness, and against Sinners as obnoxious to his Justice. He is press'd by the Sins of his Creatures, Amos 2. 13. wearied, Isa. 43. 24. broken, Ezek. 6. 9. grieved, Psal. 95. 10. and here grieved to the Heart, as Men are when they are wronged and abused by those they have been very kind to, and therefore repent of their Kindness, and wish they had never foster'd that Snake in their Bosom which now hisses in their Face, and stings them to the Heart. Doth God thus hate Sin? and shall not we hate it? Hath our Sin grieved him to the Heart? And shall not we be grieved and pricked to the Heart for it? O that this Consideration might humble us, and shame us, and that we may look on him whom we have thus grieved, and mourn, Zach. 12. 10.

2. It doth not speak any change of God's Mind, for he is in one Mind, and who can turn him? with him there is no variableness, but it speaks a change of his Way: When God had made Man upright, he rested and was refreshed, Exod. 31. 17. and his Way towards him was such as shew'd him pleas'd with the Work of his own Hands; but now Man was Apostatiz'd, he could not do otherwise but shew himself displeas'd; so that the Change was in Man, not in God. God repented that he had made Man, but we never find him repenting that he redeemed Man, tho' that was a Work of much greater Expence, because special and effectual Grace is given to secure the great Ends of Redemption; so that those Gifts and Callings are without Repentance, Rom. 11. 29.

2. God's Resolution to destroy Man for his Wickedness, v. 7. Observe, 1. When God repented that he had made Man, he resolv'd to destroy Man. Thus they that truly repent of Sin, will resolve

resolve in the strength of God's Grace, to mortify Sin, and to destroy it, and so to *undo* what they have *done amiss*; we do but mock God in saying we are sorry for our Sin, and it grieves us to the Heart, if we continue to indulge it: In vain do we pretend a change of our Mind, if we do not evidence it by a change of our Way. 2. He resolves to *destroy Man*: The Original Word is very significant, *I will wipe off Man from the Earth*; so some, as Dirt or Filth is wiped off from a Place which should be clean, and is thrown to the Dunghil, the proper place for it, see 2 Kings, 21. 13. Those that are the Spots of the Places they live in, are justly wiped away by the Judgments of God. *I will blot out Man from the Earth*, to others; as those Lines are blotted out of a Book, which displease the Author; or, as the Name of a Citizen is blotted out of the Rolls of the Freemen when he is Dead or Disfranchis'd. 3. He speaks of Man as his own Creature then when he resolves upon his Ruin, *Man whom I have created*; *tho' I have created him, that shall not excuse him*, Isa. 27. 11. *He that made him will not save him*; he that is our Creator if he shall not be our Ruler, will be our Destroyer. Or, *Because I have created him, and he hath been so undutiful and ungrateful to his Creator, therefore I will destroy him*: Those forfeit their Lives that do not answer the End of their Living. 4. Even the brute Creatures were to be involv'd in this Destruction, *Beasts, and creeping Things, and the Fowl of the Air*. These were made for Man, and therefore must be destroy'd with Man; for it follows, *It repenteth me that I have made them*, for the End of their Creation also was frustrated; they were made, that Man might Serve and Honour God with them, and therefore were destroy'd, because he had serv'd his Lusts with them, and made them subject to *Vanity*. 5. God took up this Resolution concerning Man, after his Spirit had been long striving with them in vain. None are ruin'd by the Justice of God but those that hate to be reform'd by the Grace of God.

8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. 9 These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God. 10 And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

We have here Noah distinguish'd from the rest of the World, and a peculiar Mark of Honour put upon him.

1. When God was displeas'd with the rest of the World, he favour'd Noah, v. 8. But Noah found Grace in the Eyes of the Lord. This vindicates God's Justice in his Displeasure against the World, and shews that he had strictly examin'd the Character of every Person in it, before he pronounc'd it universally Corrupt; for there being one good Man, he found him out and smiled upon him. It also magnifies his Grace towards Noah, that he was made a *Vessel of God's Mercy*, when all Mankind besides were become the *Generation of his Wrath*. Distinguishing Favours are very obliging: Probably Noah did not find Favour in the Eyes of Men, they hated and persecuted him, because both by his Life and Preaching he condemn'd the World, but he found Grace in the Eyes of the Lord, and that was Honour and Comfort enough. God made more Account of Noah than of all the World besides; and this made him Greater, and more truly Honourable than all the Giants that were in those Days, who became *mighty Men, and Men of Renown*. Let this be the top of our Ambition, to find Grace in the Eyes of the Lord, herein let us Labour, that present or absent we may be accepted of him, 2 Cor. 5. 9. Those are highly-favoured whom God favours.

2. When the rest of the World was Corrupt and Wicked, Noah kept his Integrity, v. 9. These are the Generations of Noah. This is the Account we have to give of him, *Noah was a Just Man*. This Character of Noah comes in here either, 1. As the Reason of God's Favour to him; his singular Piety qualified him for singular Tokens of God's loving Kindness. Those that would find Grace in the Eyes of the Lord, must be as Noah was, and do as Noah did. God loves those that love him: Or, 2. As the Effect of God's Favour to him; 'twas God's good Will to him that produc'd this good Work in him; He was a very good Man, but he was no better than the Grace of God made him, 1 Cor. 15. 10. Now observe his Character, 1. He was a *Just Man*, i. e. justified before God by Faith in the promised Seed; for he was an *Heir of the Righteousness which is by Faith*, Heb. 11. 7. He was *sanctified*, and had right Principles and Dispositions emplant'd in him: And he was *righteous* in his Conversation, one that made Conscience of rendering to all their due, to God his due, and to Men theirs. Note, None but a down-right honest Man can find Favour with God: That Conversation which will be pleasing to God, must be govern'd by *Simplicity and godly Sincerity*, not by *fleshy Wisdom*, 2 Cor. 1. 12. God hath sometimes chosen the *foolish Things* of the World, but he never chose the *knaveish Things* of it. 2. He was *perfect*, not with a sinless Perfection, but a Perfection of Sincerity, and it is well for us that by virtue of the Covenant of Grace, upon the score of Christ's Righteousness, Sincerity is accepted as our

Gospel Perfection. 3. He walked with God as Enoch had done before him: He was not only Honest but Devout: He walked, i. e. he acted with God, as one always under his Eye; He lived a Life of Communion with God: 'Twas his constant Care to conform himself to the Will of God, to please him, and approve himself to him. Note, God looks down upon those with an Eye of Favour who sincerely look up to him with an Eye of Faith. But, 4. That which crowns his Character is, that thus he was, and thus he did in his Generation, in that corrupt degenerate Age, in which his Lot was cast. 'Tis easy to be religious when Religion is in fashion, but it is an Evidence of strong Faith and Resolution to swim against a Stream to Heaven, and to appear for God, when no one else appears for him: So Noah did, and it is upon record to his immortal Honour.

11 The earth also was corrupt before God: and the earth was filled with violence. 12 And God looked upon the earth, and behold, it was corrupt: for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.

The Wickedness of that Generation is here again spoken of, (1.) as a Foil to Noah's Piety; he was Just and Perfect when all the Earth was Corrupt. Or, (2.) as a further Justification of God's Resolution to destroy the World, which he was now about to communicate to his Servant Noah.

1. All kind of Sin was found among them; for, v. 11. 'tis said that the Earth was, (1.) *corrupt before God*, i. e. in the Matters of God's Worship; either they had other Gods before him, or worshipp'd him by Images: Or, they were Corrupt and Wicked in Despight and Contempt of God, daring him and defying him to his Face. (2.) *The Earth was also filled with Violence*, and Injustice towards Men; there was no Order, nor regular Government; no Man was safe in the Possession of that which he had the most clear and uncontestable Right to, no not the most innocent Life, nothing but Murders, Rapes and Rapines. Note, Wickedness, as it is the Shame of the Humane Nature, so it is the Ruin of Humane Society; take away Conscience and the Fear of God, and Men become Beasts and Devils to one another, like the *Fishes of the Sea*, where the greater devour the lesser. Sin fills the Earth with Violence, and so turns the World into a Wilderness, into a Cock-Pit.

2. The Proof and Evidence of it was undeniable, for God looked upon the Earth, and was himself an Eye-witness of the Corruption that was in it, of which before, v. 5. The righteous Judge in all his Judgments proceeds upon the infallible Certainty of his own Omniscience, Ps. 33. 13.

3. That which most aggravated the matter was the universal spreading of the Contagion, *All Flesh had corrupted his Way*. 'Twas not some particular Nations or Cities that were thus Wicked, but the whole World of Mankind was so, there was none that did good, no not one, beside Noah. Note, When Wickedness is become general and universal, Ruin is not far off, while there is a Remnant of praying People in a Nation, to empty the Measure as it fills, Judgments may be kept off a great while, but when all Hands are at work to pull down the Fences by Sin, and none stand in the Gap to make up the Breach, what can be expected but an Inundation of Wrath?

13 And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them: and behold, I will destroy them with the earth. 14 Make thee an ark of gopher-wood: rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. 15 And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. 16 A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof: with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it. 17 And behold, I, even I do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven: and every thing that is in the earth shall die. 18 But with thee will I establish my covenant: and thou shalt come into the ark; thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons wives with thee. 19 And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee: they shall be male and female. 20

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Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind: two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive. 21 And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them.

Here it appears indeed that Noah found Grace in the Eyes of the Lord; God's Favour to him was plainly intimated in what he said of him, v. 8, 9, 10. where his Name is mention'd five times in five Lines, when once might have serv'd to make the Sense clear, as if the Holy Ghost took a pleasure in perpetuating his Memory. But it appears much more in what he saith to him in these Verses, the Informations and Instructions here given him.

1. God here makes Noah the Man of his Council, communicating to him his Purpose to destroy this wicked World by Water: As afterwards he told Abraham his Resolution concerning Sodom, Ch. 18. 17. *Shall I hide from Abraham?* so here, *Shall I hide from Noah the thing that I do*, seeing that he shall become a great Nation? Note, The Secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, Psal. 25. 14. 'twas with his Servants the Prophets, (Amos 3. 7.) by a Spirit of Revelation, informing them particularly of his Purposes; 'tis with all Believers, by a Spirit of Wisdom and Faith, enabling them to understand and apply the general Declarations of the written Word, and the Warnings there given.

Now, 1. God told Noah in general, that he would destroy the World, v. 13. *The End of all Flesh is come before me; I will destroy them.* i. e. The Ruin of this wicked World is decreed and determin'd; it is come; i. e. it will come surely, and come quickly. Noah, 'tis likely in Preaching to his Neighbours, had warn'd them in general of the Wrath of God that they would bring upon themselves by their Wickedness, and now God seconds it by a particular Denunciation of Wrath, that Noah might try if that would work upon them; whence observe, (1.) That God confirmeth the Words of his Messengers, Isa. 44. 26. (2.) That to him that has, and useth what he has for the good of others, more shall be given, more full Instructions.

2. He told him particularly, that he would destroy the World by a Flood of Waters, v. 17. *And behold I, even I, do bring a Flood of Waters upon the Earth.* God could have destroy'd all Mankind by the Sword of an Angel, a flaming Sword turning every way, as he destroy'd all the first-born of the Egyptians, and the Camp of the Assyrians, and then there needed no more but to set a Mark upon Noah and his Family for their Preservation, but God chose to do it by a Flood of Waters, which should drown the World. The Reasons we may be sure were wise and just, but to us unknown. God has many Arrows in his Quiver, and he may use which he pleases: As he chuseth the Rod with which he will correct his Children, so he chuseth the Sword with which he will cut off his Enemies.

Observe the manner of Expression, *I, even I, do bring a Flood*; I that am infinite in Power, and therefore can do it, infinite in Justice, and therefore will do it. (1.) It speaks the certainty of the Judgment; *I, even I, will do it*; that cannot but be done effectually, which God himself undertakes the doing of; see Job 11. 10. (2.) It speaks the tendency of it to God's Glory, and the Honour of his Justice: Thus he will be magnified, and exalted in the Earth, and all the World shall be made to know that he is the God to whom Vengeance belongs; methinks the Expression here is somewhat like that, Isa. 1. 24. *Ah, I will ease me of mine Adversaries.*

2. God here makes Noah the Man of his Covenant, another Hebrew Periphrasis of a Friend, v. 18. *But with thee will I establish my Covenant.* (1.) The Covenant of Providence, that the Course of Nature shall be continued to the End of Time, notwithstanding the Interruption which the Flood would give to it: This Promise was immediately made to Noah and his Sons, Gen. 9. 8, &c. They were as Trustees for all this Part of the Creation, and a great Honour was thereby put upon him and his. (2.) The Covenant of Grace, that God would be to him a God, and that out of his Seed God would take to himself a People. Note, 1. When God makes a Covenant, he establisheth it; he makes it sure, he makes it good; his are everlasting Covenants. 2. The Covenant of Grace has in it the Recompence of singular Services, and the Fountain and Foundation of all distinguishing Favours; we need desire no more either to make up our Losses for God, or to make up a Happiness for us in God, than to have his Covenant established with us.

3. God here makes Noah a Monument of sparing Mercy, by putting him in a way to secure himself in the approaching Deluge, that he might not perish with the rest of the World, *I will destroy them* (saith God) *with the Earth*, v. 13. but make thee an Ark, I will take care to preserve thee alive. Note, Singular Piety shall be recompensed with distinguishing Salvations, which are in a special manner obliging. This will add much to the Honour and Happiness of glorified Saints, that they shall be saved when the greatest Part of the World is left to perish.

Now, 1. God directs Noah to make an Ark, v. 14. 15, 16. This Ark was like the Hulk of a Ship, fitted not to sail upon the

Waters, there was no occasion for that when there should be no Shore to sail to, but to float upon the Waters, waiting for their fall. God could have secured Noah, by the Ministration of Angels, without putting him to any Care or Pains, or Trouble himself, but he chose to employ him in making that which was to be the Means of his Preservation, both for the trial of his Faith and Obedience, and to teach us that none shall be saved by Christ, but those only that work out their Salvation, we cannot do it without God, and he will not without us: Both the Providence of God, and the Grace of God own and crown the Endeavours of the Obedient and Diligent.

God gave him very particular Instructions concerning this Building, which could not but be admirably well fitted for the purpose, when infinite Wisdom it self was the Architect. 1. It must be made of Gopher-Wood: Noah, doubtless, knew what sort of Wood that was, tho' we now do not, whether Cedar or Cypress, or what other. 2. He must make it three Stories high within; And, 3. He must divide it into Cabbins, with Partitions, Places fitted for the several Creatures, so as to lose no room. 4. Exact Dimensions are given him, that he might make it proportionable, and might have room enough in it to answer the Intention, and no more. Note, (1.) Those that work for God, must take their Measures from him, and carefully observe them. (2.) 'Tis fit that he who appoints us our Habitation, should fix the Bounds and Limits of it. 5. He must pitch it within and without; without, to shed off the Rain, and to prevent the Water from soaking in; within, to take away the ill Smell of the Beasts when kept close. Observe, God doth not bid him paint it, but pitch it. If God give us Habitations that are safe and warm, and wholesome, we are bound to be thankful, tho' they are not magnificent or nice. 6. He must make a little Window towards the top to let in Light, and (some think) that thro' that Window he might behold the Desolations to be made in the Earth. 7. He must make a Door in the Side of it, by which to go in and out.

2. God promiseth Noah, that he and his should be preserved alive in the Ark, v. 18. *thou shalt come into the Ark.* Note, what we do in obedience to to God, we, our selves, are likely to have the Comfort and Benefit of, *If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thy self.* Nor was he himself only saved in the Ark, but his Wife, and his Sons, and his Son's Wives. Observe, 1. The Care of good Parents, they are solicitous not only for their own Salvation, but for the Salvation of their Families, and especially their Children. 2. The Happiness of those Children that have Godly Parents; their Parents Piety oft procures them temporal Salvation, as here; and it furthers them in the Way to eternal Salvation, if they improve the Benefit of it.

4. God here makes Noah a great Blessing to the World, and therein makes him an eminent Type of the Messiah, tho' not the Messiah himself, as his Parents expected, Ch. 5. 29.

1. God made him a Preacher to the Men of that Generation. As a Watchman, he received the Word from God's Mouth, that he might give them warning, Ezek. 3. 17. Thus while the long-suffering of God waited, by his Spirit in Noah, he preached to the Old World, who, when St. Peter wrote, were Spirits in Prison, 1 Pet. 3. 18, 19, 20. and herein he was a Type of Christ, who, in a Land and Age wherein all Flesh had corrupted their Way, went about Preaching Repentance, and warning Men of a Deluge of Wrath coming.

2. God made him a Saviour to the Inferior Creatures, to keep the several Species of them from perishing and being lost in the Deluge, v. 19, 20, 21. This was a great Honour put upon him, that not only in him the Race of Mankind should be kept up, and that from him should proceed a New World; the Church, the Soul of that World; and Messiah the Head of that Church; but that he should be instrumental to preserve the Inferior Creatures, and so Mankind should in him acquire a new Title to them and their Service. 1. He was to provide Shelter for them, that they might not be drown'd: Two of every sort, Male and Female, he must take with him into the Ark; and lest he should make any difficulty of gathering 'em together, and getting them in, God promises (v. 20.) that they should of their own accord come to him. He that makes the Ox to know his Owner, and his Crib, then made him know his Preserver and his Ark. 2. He was to provide Sustenance for them, that they might not be starved, v. 21. He must victual his Ship according to the Number of his Crew, that great Family which he had now the Charge of, and according to the Time appointed for his Confinement. Herein also he was a Type of Christ, to whom 'tis owing that the World stands, by whom all things consist, and who preserves Mankind from being totally cut off and ruined by Sin; in him the Holy Seed is saved alive, and the Creation rescued from the Vanity under which it groans. Noah saved those whom he was to rule, so doth Christ, Heb. 5. 9.

22 Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.

Noah's Care and Diligence in building the Ark may be consider'd,
1. As

1. As an Effect of his Faith in the Word of God. God had told him he would shortly drown the World, and he believ'd it, fear'd the threaten'd Deluge, and in that Fear prepared the Ark. *Note*, We ought to mix Faith with the Revelation God has made of his Wrath against all Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men; the Threatnings of the World are not Bug-bears. Much might have been objected against the Credibility of this Warning given to Noah: Who could believe that the wise God, who made the World, should so soon unmake it again; who had drawn the Waters off the Day-Land, *Gen.* 1. 9, 10. should cause them to cover it again? How would this be reconciled with the Mercy of God, which is over all his Works; especially that the innocent Creatures should dye for Man's Sin; whence would Water be had sufficient to Deluge the World? And if it must be so, why should Notice of it be given to Noah only? But Noah's Faith triumph'd over all these corrupt Reasonings.

2. As an Act of Obedience to the Command of God: Had he consulted with Flesh and Blood, many Objections would have been rais'd against it. To rear a Building, such a one as he never saw, so large, and of such exact Dimensions, would put him upon a great deal of Care and Labour and Expence: 'Twould be a Work of Time, the Vision was for a great while to come: His Neighbours would ridicule him for his Credulity, and he would be the Song of the Drunkards: His Building would be called Noah's Folly: If the worst came to the worst, (as we say) he should fare as well as his Neighbours. But these, and a thousand such Objections, Noah by Faith got over; his Obedience was ready and resolute. *Thus did Noah* willingly and cheerfully without murmuring and disputing. God faith, Do this, and he doth it: It was also punctual and persevering; he did all exactly according to the Instructions given him, and having begun to build, did not give off till he had finished it; *so did he*, and so must we do.

3. As an Instance of Wisdom for himself, thus to provide for his own safety: He feared the Deluge, and therefore prepared the Ark. *Note*, When God gives warning of approaching Judgments, it is our Wisdom and Duty to provide accordingly. See *Exod.* 9. 20, 21. *Ezek.* 3. 9. we must prepare to meet the Lord in his Judgments on Earth, flee to his Name as a strong Tower. *Pr.* 18. 20. enter into our Chambers, *Isa.* 26. 21, 22. especially prepare to meet him at Death, and in the Judgment of the Great Day, build upon Christ the Rock, *Mat.* 7. 24. Come into Christ the Ark.

4. As intended for Warning to a careless World; and it was fair Warning of the Deluge coming; every Blow of his Axes and Hammers was a Call to Repentance, a Call to them to prepare Arkstoo. But since by it he could not convince the World, by it he condemn'd the World, *Heb.* 11. 7.

C H A P. VII.

In this Chapter we have the Performance of what was foretold in the foregoing Chapter, both concerning the Destruction of the Old World, and the Salvation of Noah; for we may be sure that no Word of God shall fall to the Ground. There we left Noah busy about his Ark, and full of Care to get it finish'd in time, while the rest of his Neighbours were laughing at him for his Pains: Now here we see what was in the end thereof; of his Care and of their Carelessness. And this famous Period of the Old World, gives us some Idea of the State of Things when the World that now is, shall be destroy'd by Fire, as that was by Water. See *2 Pet.* 3. 6, 7. We have in this Chapter, 1. God's gracious Call to Noah to come into the Ark, *v.* 1. and to bring the Creatures that were to be preserv'd alive, along with him, *v.* 2, 3. in consideration of the Deluge at hand, *v.* 4. 2. Noah's Obedience to this heavenly Vision, *v.* 5. when he was 600 Years old, he came with his Family into the Ark, *v.* 6, 7. and brought the Creatures along with him, *v.* 8, 9. An account of which is repeated, *v.* 13, 14, 15, 16. to which is added God's tender Care to shut him in. 3. The coming of the threaten'd Deluge, *v.* 10. the Causes of it, *v.* 11, 12. the Prevalency of it, *v.* 17, 18, 19, 20. 4. The dreadful Desolations that were made by it, in the Death of every living Creature upon Earth, except what were in the Ark, *v.* 21, 22, 23. 5. The continuance of it in full Sea, before it began to ebb, 150 Days, *v.* 24.

1 AND the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou, and all thy house into the ark: for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation. 2 Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female. 3 Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth. 4 For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights: and every living substance that I have made, will I destroy from off the face of the earth.

Here's 1. A gracious Invitation of Noah and his Family into a Place of Safety, now the Flood of Waters was coming, *v.* 1.

(1.) The Call it self is very kind, like that of a tender Father to his Children to come in a Doors when he sees Night or a Storm coming, *Come thou, and all thy House*, that small Family that thou hast, into the Ark. Observe, 1. Noah did not go into the Ark till God bid him; tho' he knew it was designed for his Place of Refuge, yet he waited for a renewed Command, and had it. 'Tis very comfortable to follow the Calls of Providence, and to see God going before us in every Step we take. 2. God doth not bid him Go into the Ark, but Come into it; implying, that God would go with him, would lead him into it, accompany him in it, and in due time bring him safe out of it. *Note*, Where-ever we are, 'tis very desirable to have the Presence of God with us, for that's all in all to the Comfort of every Condition: This was it that made Noah's Ark, which was as a Prison, to be to him not only a Refuge, but a Palace. 3. Noah had taken a great deal of Pains to build the Ark, and now he was himself preserv'd alive in it. *Note*, what we do in Obedience to the Command of God, and in Faith, we our selves shall certainly have the Comfort of first or last. 4. Not he only, but his House also, his Wife and Children are called with him into the Ark. *Note*, It's good to belong to the Family of a Godly Man; 'tis safe and comfortable to dwell under such a Shadow. One of Noah's Sons was Ham, who proved afterwards but an ill Man, yet he was saved in the Ark; which intimates, (1.) That wicked Children often fare the better for the sake of their Godly Parents. (2.) That there is a mixture of Bad with Good in the best Societies on Earth, and we are not to think it strange; In Noah's Family there was a Ham, and in Christ's Family there was a Judas: There's no perfect Purity on this side Heaven. 5. This Call to Noah was a Type of the Call which the Gospel gives to poor Sinners: Christ is an Ark already prepared, in whom alone we can be safe when Death and Judgment come; now, the Burthen of the Song is, *Come, come*: The Word faith, Come, Ministers say, Come; the Spirit faith, Come, Come into the Ark.

(2.) The Reason for this Invitation, is a very honourable Testimony to Noah's Integrity, *For thee have I seen righteous before me in this Generation*. Observe, 1. Those are Righteous indeed that are Righteous before God, that have not only the Form of Godliness, by which they appear Righteous before Men, who may easily be imposed upon, but the Power of it, by which they approve themselves to God, who searcheth the Heart, and cannot be deceiv'd in Men's Character. 2. God takes notice of, and is pleas'd with those that are Righteous before him; *thee have I seen*: in a World of wicked People God could see one righteous Noah; that single Grain of Wheat could not be lost, no, not in so great a Heap of Chaff; *The Lord knows them that are his*. 3. God that is a Witness to, will shortly be a Witness for his People's Integrity: He that sees it will proclaim it before Angels and Men to their immortal Honour. They that obtain Mercy to be Righteous, shall obtain Witness that they are Righteous. 4. God is in a special manner pleas'd with those that are good in bad Times and Places. Noah was therefore illustriously Righteous, because he was so in that wicked and adulterous Generation. 5. Those that keep themselves pure in Times of common Iniquity, God will keep them safe in Times of common Calamity; those that partake not with others in their Sins, shall not partake with them in their Plagues: Those that are better than others, even in this Life, are safer than others, and 'tis better with them.

2. Here's necessary Orders given concerning the brute Creatures that were to be preserv'd alive with Noah in the Ark, *v.* 2, 3. They were not capable of receiving the Warning and Directions themselves, as Man was, who herein is taught more than the Beasts of the Earth, and made wiser than the Fowls of Heaven; that he is endued with a Power of Prospect, therefore Man is charged with the Care of them; being under his Dominion, they must be under his Protection: and tho' he could not secure every Individual, yet he must carefully preserve every Species, that no Tribe, no, not the least Considerable might entirely perish out of the Creation. Observe in this, 1. God's Care for Man, and for his Comfort and Benefit; we do not find that Noah was solicitous of himself about this Matter, but God consults our Happiness more than we do our selves. Tho' God saw that the Old World was very provoking, and foresaw that the New One would be little better, yet he would preserve the Brute Creatures for Man's Use: *Doth God take care for Oxen?* *1 Cor.* 9. 9. Or was it not rather for Man's sake that this Care was taken? 2. Even the unclean Beasts were preserv'd alive in the Ark, that were least Valuable, and least Profitable. For God's tender Mercies are over all his Works, and not only over those that are of most Eminency and Use. 3. Yet more of the Clean were preserv'd than of the Unclean. (1.) Because the Clean were most for the Service of Man, and therefore in favour to him, more of them were preserv'd, and are still propagated: Thanks be to God there are not Herds of Lions as there are of Oxen, nor Flocks of Tygers as there are of Sheep. (2.) Because the Clean were for Sacrifice to God, and therefore in Honour to him more of them were preserv'd, three Couple for Breed, and the odd seventh for Sacrifice, *Chap.* 8. 20. God gives us six for

one in earthly Things, (as in the distribution of the Days of the Week) that in spiritual Things we should be all for him: What is devoted to God's Honour and us'd in his Service, is particularly blessed and increas'd.

3. Here's Notice given of the now imminent approach of the Flood, v. 4. *Yet seven Days and I will cause it to Rain.*

(1.) It shall be seven Days yet, before I do it: After the 120 Years were expired, God grants them a Reprieve of seven Days longer, both to shew how slow he is to Anger, and that punishing Work is his strange Work, and also to give them some further Space for Repentance: But all in vain, these seven Days were trifled away after all the rest, they continued secure and sensual until the Day that the Flood came.

(2.) It shall be but seven Days: While Noah told them of the Judgment at a distance, they were tempted to put off their Repentance, because the Vision was for a great while to come, but now he is order'd to tell them that it is at the Door; that they have but one Week more to turn 'em in, but one Sabbath more to improve, to see if that will now at last awaken them to consider the things that belonged to their Peace, which otherwise would soon be hid from their Eyes. But it is common for those that have been careless of their Souls during the Years of their Health, when they have look'd upon Death at a distance, to be as careless during the Days, the seven Days of their Sickness, when they see it approaching, their Hearts being harden'd by the Deceitfulness of Sin.

5 And Noah did according to all that the LORD commanded him. 6 And Noah was fix hundred years old, when the flood of waters was upon the earth. 7 And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood. 8 Of clean beasts, and of beasts that are not clean, and of fowls, and of every thing that creepeth upon the earth. 9 There went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah. 10 And it came to pass after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth.

Here's Noah's ready Obedience to the Commands that God gave him. Observe, 1. He went into the Ark upon notice that the Flood would come after seven Days, tho' probably as yet there appeared no visible Sign of its approach, no Cloud arising that threaten'd it, nothing done towards it, but all, as yet, serene and clear; for as he prepar'd the Ark by Faith in the Warning given that the Flood would come, so he went into it by Faith, in this Warning, that it would come quickly, tho' he did not see that the second Cause had yet begun to work. He walked by Faith in every Step he took, and not by Sense. During these seven Days 'tis likely he was settling himself and his Family in the Ark, and distributing the Creatures into their several Apartments; which was the Conclusion of that visible Sermon he had long been Preaching to his careless Neighbours, and one would think might have awaken'd them, but not obtaining that desired End, it left their Blood upon their own Heads. 2. He took all his Family along with him, his Wife to be his Companion and Comfort, tho' it should seem that after this he had no Children by her: His Sons and his Sons Wives, that by them not only his Family, but the World of Mankind might be built up. Observe, Tho' Men were to be reduc'd to so small a Number, and it would be very desirable to have the World speedily re-peopled, yet Noah's Sons were to have but each of them one Wife, which strengthens the Argument against having many Wives, for from the beginning of this new World it was not so: As at first God made, so now he kept alive but one Woman for one Man. See Mar. 19. 4, 8. 3. The Brute Creatures readily went in with him: The same Hand that at first brought them to Adam to be nam'd, now brought them to Noah to be preserv'd. The Ox now knew his Owner, and the Ass his Protector's Crib; nay, even the wildest Creatures flocked to it, but Man was become more brutish than the Brutes themselves, and did not know, did not consider, Isa. 1. 3.

11 In the fix hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. 12 And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.

Here's, 1. The Date of this great Event; this is carefully recorded, for the greater Certainty of the Story, (1.) 'Twas in the six hundredth Year of Noah's Life, which by Computation appears to be 1656 Years from the Creation: The Years of the Old

World are reckon'd not by the Reigns of the Giants, but by the Lives of the Patriarchs: Saints are of more account with God than Princes: *The Righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance.* Noah was now a very old Man, even as Men's Years went then. Note, 1. The longer we live in this World, the more we see of the Miseries and Calamities of it: 'Tis therefore spoken of as the Privilege of those that dye Young, that their Eyes shall not see the Evil which is coming, 2 Kings 22. 20. 2. Sometime God exerciseth his old Servants with extraordinary Trials of obedient Patience. The oldest of Christ's Soldiers must not promise themselves a discharge from their Warfare till Death discharge them. Still they must gird on their Harness, and not boast as tho' they had put it off: And as the Year of the Deluge is recorded, so, (2.) we are told that it was in the 2d Month, the 17th Day of the Month, which is reckon'd to be about the beginning of November; so that Noah had had a Harvest just before, from which to victual his Ark. 2. The second Cause that concurred to this Deluge; In the self-same Day that Noah was fixed in the Ark the Inundation began. Note, 1. Desolating Judgments come not till God has provided for the security of his own People: See Gen. 19. 22. I can do nothing till thou be come thither; and we find, Rev. 7. 3. the Winds are held till the Servants of God are sealed. 2. When good Men are removed, Judgments are not far off, for they are taken away from the Evil to come, Isa. 57. 1. when they are called into their Chambers, hid in the Grave, hid in Heaven, then God is coming out of his place to punish, Isa. 26. 20, 21. Now see what was done on that Day, that fatal Day to the World of the Ungodly. 1. The Fountains of the great Deep were broken up. Perhaps there needed no new Creation of Waters, what were already made to be in the common Course of Providence Blessings to the Earth, were now by an extraordinary Act of Divine Power made the Ruin of it. God has laid up the Deep in Store-Houses, Ps. 33. 7. and now he broke up those Stores. As our Bodies have in themselves those Humours, which, when God pleases, become the Seeds and Springs of mortal Diseases; so the Earth had in its Bowels those Waters which at God's Command sprung up and flood'd it. God had, in the Creation, set Bars and Doors to the Waters of the Sea, that they might not return to cover the Earth, Ps. 104. 9. Job 38. 9, 10, 11. and now he only removed those ancient Land-Marks, Mounds, and Fences, and the Waters of the Sea returned to cover the Earth, as they had done at first, Gen. 1. 9. Note, All the Creatures are ready to fight against sinful Man, and any of 'em is able to be the Instrument of his Ruin if God do but take off the Restraints by which they are held in during the Day of God's Patience. 2. The Windows of Heaven were opened, and the Waters which were above the Firmaments, were pour'd out upon the World; those Treasures which God has reserved against the Time of Trouble, the Day of Battle and War, Job 38. 22, 23. The Rain which ordinarily descends in Drops, then came down in Streams or Spouts, as they call them in the Indies, where Clouds have been often known to burst, as they express it there, when the Rain descends in a much more violent Torrent than we have ever seen in the greatest Shower; we read, Job 26. 8. that God binds up the Waters in his thick Clouds, and the Cloud is not rent under them; but now the Bond was loosed, the Cloud was rent, and such Rains descended as were never known before or since, in such abundance, and of such continuance: The thick Cloud was not, as ordinarily it is, wearied with Watering, Job 37. 11. i. e. soon spent and exhausted; but still the Clouds returned after the Rain, and the Divine Power brought in fresh Recruits. It Rained without intermission or abatement, forty Days and forty Nights, v. 12. and that upon the whole Earth at once, not, as sometimes, upon one City, and not upon another. God made the World in six Days, but he was forty Days in destroying it, for he is slow to Anger; but tho' the Destruction came slowly and gradually, yet it came effectually. Now learn from this, 1. That all the Creatures are at God's dispose, and he makes what use he pleaseth of them; whether for Correction, or for his Land, or for Mercy, as Elisha speaks of the Rain, Job 37. 12, 13. 2. That God often makes that which should be for our welfare to become a Trap, Ps. 69. 22. That which uses to be a Comfort and Benefit to us, when God pleases, becomes a Scourge and Plague to us. Nothing more needful or useful than Waters, both the Springs of the Earth, and the Showers of Heaven, and yet now nothing more hurtful, nothing more destructive: Every Creature is to be what God makes it. That it is impossible to escape the righteous Judgments of God, when they come against Sinners with Commission; for God can arm both Heaven and Earth against them, see Job 20. 27. God can surround Men with the Messengers of his Wrath, so that if they look upward, 'tis with Horror and Amazement, if they look to the Earth, behold Trouble and Darkness, Isa. 8. 21, 22. who then is able to stand before God when he is angry? Lastly, In this Destruction of the Old World by Water, God gave a Specimen of the final Destruction of the World that now is by Fire; we find the Apostle setting the one of these over against the other, 2 Pet. 3. 6, 7. As there are Waters under the Earth, so Aetna, Vesuvius, and other Vulcano's proclaim to the World, that there are subterraneous Fires too, and Fire often falls from Heaven, many Desolations are made

by Lightning; so that when the Time prefix'd comes, between these two Fires, the Earth, and all the Works therein shall be burnt up, as the Flood was brought upon the Old World, out of the *Fountains of the great deep, and thro' the Windows of Heaven.*

13 In the self-same day entred Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark. 14 They, and every beast after his kind, and all the cattel after their kind, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind, and every fowl after his kind, every bird of every sort. 15 And they went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh, wherein is the breath of life. 16 And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him: and the LORD shut him in.

Here is repeated what was related before of Noah's entrance into the Ark, with his Family, and the Creatures that were marked for Preservation. Now, 1. 'Tis thus repeated for the Honour of Noah, whose Faith and Obedience herein shone so bright, by which he obtained a good Report; and who herein appeared to great a Favourite of Heaven, and so great a Blessing to this Earth. 2. Notice is here taken of the Beasts going in *after their Kind*, according to the Phrase used in the History of the Creation, *Ch. 1. 21, 24, 25.* to intimate, that just as many Species as were created at first, were saved now, and no more: And that this Preservation was as a New Creation; a Life remarkably protected, is, as it were, a new Life. 3. Though all Enmities and Hostilities between the Creatures ceased for the present, and ravenous Creatures were not only so mild and manageable as that the Wolf and the Lamb lay down together, but so strangely alter'd, as that the Lion did eat Straw like an Ox, *Isa. 11. 6, 7.* yet when this present Occasion was over, the Restraint was taken off, and they were still of the same Kind as ever; for the Ark did not alter their Constitution. Hypocrites in the Church, that externally conform to the Laws of that Ark, may yet be unchanged, and then it will appear, one time, or other, *what Kind they are after.* 4. That which is here remarkably added; is, *v. 16. that the Lord shut him in.* As Noah continued his Obedience to God, so God continued his Care of Noah; and here it appeared to be a very distinguishing Care, for the shutting of this Door set up a Partition Wall between him and all the World beside. God shut the Door, (1.) to secure him, and keep him safe in the Ark. The Door must be shut very close, lest the Waters should break in and sink the Ark, and very fast, lest any without should break it down. Thus God made up Noah, as he makes up his Jewels, *Mal. 3. 17.* (2.) To exclude all others, and keep them for ever out. Hitherto the Door of the Ark stood open, and if any, even during the last seven Days, had repented and believed; for ought I know, they might have been welcome into the Ark, but now the Door was shut, and they were cut off from all Hopes of Admittance; for God shutteth and none can open. (3.) There is much of our Gospel-Duty and Privilege to be seen in Noah's Preservation in the Ark. The Apostle makes it a Type of our Baptism, *i. e.* our Christianity, *1 Pet. 3. 20, 21.* Observe then,

1. It is our great Duty, in obedience to the Gospel-Call, by a lively Faith in Christ, to come into that Way of Salvation which God has provided for poor Sinners; when Noah came into the Ark, he quitted his own House and Lands, so must we quit our own Righteousness, and our worldly Possessions, whenever they come into Competition with Christ. Noah must for a while submit to the Confinements and Inconveniences of the Ark, in order to his Preservation for a new World; so those that come into Christ to be saved by him, must deny themselves both in Sufferings and Services.

2. Those that come into the Ark themselves should bring as many as they can in with them, by good Instructions, Persuasions, and a good Example, *What knowest thou, O Man, but thou may'st thus save thy Wife?* *1 Cor. 7. 16.* as Noah did his: There's room enough in Christ for all Comers.

3. Those that by Faith come into Christ the Ark, shall by the Power of God be shut in, and kept as in a strong Hold by the Power of God, *1 Pet. 1. 5.* God put Adam into Paradise, but he did not shut him in, and so he threw himself out: But when he put Noah into the Ark, and so when he brings a Soul to Christ, he ensures the Salvation: 'Tis not in our own keeping, but in the Mediator's Hand.

4. The Door of Mercy will shortly be shut against those that now make light of it. Now knock and it shall be opened; but the time will come when it shall not, *Luke 13. 25.*

17 And the flood was forty days upon the earth: and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth. 18 And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the

earth: and the ark went upon the face of the waters. 19 And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered. 20 Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered.

We are here told, (1.) How long the Flood was increasing; *forty Days, v. 17.* The prophane World, which believed not that it would come, probably when it came, flatter'd themselves with Hopes that it would soon abate, and never come to extremity, but still it increased, it prevailed.

Note, 1. When God judges he will overcome. If he begin he will make an end. His way is perfect, both in Judgment and Mercy. 2. The gradual Approaches and Advances of God's Judgments which are design'd to bring Sinners to Repentance, are often abused to the hard'ning of them in their Presumption. (2.) To what Degree they increased. They rose so high, that not only the low flat Countries were delug'd, but to make sure work, and that none might escape, the Tops of the highest Mountains were overflowed fifteen Cubits, *i. e.* Seven Yards and a half. So that in vain was Salvation hoped for, from Hills or Mountains, *Jer. 23.* None of God's Creatures are so high, but his Power can overtop 'em; and he will make them know that wherein they deal proudly, he is above them. Perhaps the Tops of the Mountains were washed down by the strength of the Waters, which helped much towards the prevailing of the Waters above them, for 'tis said, *Job 12. 15.* he sends out the Waters, and they not only overflow, but overturn the Earth. Thus the Refuge of Lies was swept away, and the Waters overflowed the Hiding-place of those Sinners, *Isa. 28. 17.* and in vain they fly to them for Safety, *Rev. 6. 16.* Now the Mountains departed, and the Hills were removed, and nothing stood a Man in stead but the Covenant of Peace, *Isa. 54. 10.* There's no Place on Earth so high as to set Men out of the Reach of God's Judgments, *Jer. 49. 16.* Obad. 3. 4. God's hand will find out all his Enemies, *Ps. 21. 8.* Observe how exactly they are fathomed, fifteen Cubits, not by Noah's Plummets, but his Knowledge who weigheth the Waters by Measure, *Job 28. 25.* (3.) What came of Noah's Ark, when the Waters thus increased; it was lift up above the Earth, *v. 17.* and went upon the face of the Waters, *v. 18.* when all other Buildings were demolished by the Waters, and buried under them, the Ark alone subsisted. Observe, 1. The Waters which broke down every thing else, bore up the Ark. That which to Unbelievers is a Savor of Death unto Death, is to the Faithful a Savor of Life unto Life. 2. The more the Waters increased, the higher the Ark was lifted up towards Heaven. Thus sanctified afflictions are spiritual Promotions; and as Troubles abound, Consolations much more abound.

21 And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man. 22 All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. 23 And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark. 24 And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days.

Here's, 1. The general Destruction of all Flesh by the Waters of the Flood. Come and see the Desolations which God makes in the Earth, *Psal. 46. 8.* and how he lays Heaps upon Heaps. Never did Death triumph so, from its first entrance, unto this Day, as it did then. Come and see Death upon his pale Horse, and Hell following with him, *Rev. 6. 7, 8.* 1. All the Cattle, Fowl, and creeping things died, except the few that were in the Ark. Observe how this is repeated, *all Flesh died, v. 21, all in whose Nostrils was the Breath of Life, of all that was on the Dry Land, v. 22. Every living Substance, v. 23.* And why so? Man only had done wickedly, and justly is God's Hand against him, but these Sheep what have they done? I answer, (1.) We are sure God did them no Wrong, he is the sovereign Lord of all Life, for he is the sole Fountain and Author of it. He that made them as he pleas'd, might unmake them when he pleas'd, and who shall say unto him, *What dost thou?* May he not do what he will with his own, which were created for his pleasure. (2.) God did admirably serve the Purposes of his own Glory by their Destruction, as well as by their Creation. Herein his Holiness and Justice were greatly magnified: By this it appears that he hates Sin, and is highly displeased with Sinners, when even the inferior Creatures, because they are the Servants of Man, and part of his Possession, and because they have been abused to be the Servants of Sin, are destroy'd with him. This makes the Judgment the more

more remarkable, the more dreadful, and consequently the more expressive of God's Wrath and Vengeance. The Destruction of the Creatures was their Deliverance from the Bondage of Corruption, which now the whole Creation groans after, *Rom. 8. 21, 22, 23.* It was likewise an Instance of God's Wisdom. As the Creatures were made for Man when he was made, so they were multiplied for him when he was multiplied; and therefore now Mankind was reduced to so small a Number, 'twas fit that the Beasts should proportionably be reduced, otherwise they would have had the Dominion, and would have replenished the Earth, and the Remnant of Mankind that was left, would have been overpowered by them. See how God consider'd this in another Case, *Exod. 23. 22.* *Left the Beast of the Field multiply against thee.* 2. All the Men, Women, and Children that were in the World, (except what were in the Ark) died. Every Man, *v. 21.* and *v. 23.* and perhaps they were as many as are now upon the Face of the Earth, if not more. Now, 1. We may easily imagine what Terror and Consternation seized on them when they saw themselves surrounded. Our Saviour tells us, that till the very Day that the Flood came they were eating and drinking, *Luke 17. 16.* they were drowned in Secularity and Sensuality, before they were drowned in those Waters; crying, *Peace, Peace* to themselves; deaf and blind to all Divine Warnings. In this posture Death surpriz'd them, as *1 Sam. 30. 16, 17.* But O what an Amazement were they in then! Now they see and feel that which they would not believe and fear, and are convinced of their Folly when it is too late; now they find no place for Repentance, tho' they seek it carefully with Tears. 2. We may suppose that they tried all Ways and Means possible for their Preservation, but all in vain. Some climb to the tops of Trees or Mountains, and spin out their Terrors there awhile; but the Flood reaches them at last, and they are forced to dye with the more deliberation. Some, 'tis likely, cling to the Ark, and now hope that that may be their Safety which they had so long made their Sport. Perhaps some get to the top of the Ark, and hope to shift for themselves there, but either they perish there for want of Food, or by a speedier Dilpatch, a Dash of Rain washes them off that Deck. Others, it may be, hope to prevail with Noah for admission into the Ark, and pleaded old Acquaintance, *Have we not eaten and drunk in thy presence?* Hast thou not taught in our Streets? Yea, might Noah say, that I have many a time to little purpose. *I called, but you refused; you set at nought all my Counsel, Prov. 1. 24, 25.* And now it is not in my Power to help you; God hath shut the Door, and I cannot open it. Thus it will be at the Great Day, *Mat. 7. 22.* climbing high in an outward Profession will not bring Men to Heaven, nor claiming Relation to good People, *Mat. 25. 8.* Those that are not found in Christ the Ark, are certainly undone, undone for ever: Salvation it self cannot save them. See *Isa. 10. 3. 3.* We may suppose that some of those that perish'd in the Deluge, had themselves afflicted Noah, or were employed by him in the Building of the Ark, and yet were not so wise as by Repentance to secure themselves a Place in it. Thus wicked Ministers, though they may have been Instrumental to help others to Heaven, will themselves be thrust down to Hell.

Let us now pause a while, and consider this tremendous Judgment: Let our Hearts meditate Terror, the Terror of this Destruction: Let us see and say, *It is a fearful thing to fall into the Hands of the living God! Who can stand before Him when he is angry?* Let us see and say, *It is an evil thing and a bitter to depart from God.* The Sin of Sinners will, without Repentance, be their Ruin first or last, if God be true it will. *Tho' Hand joyn in Hand, yet the Wicked shall not go unpunished.* The righteous God knows how to bring a Flood upon the World of the ungodly, *2 Pet. 2. 5.* *Eliphaz* appeals to this Story, as a standing Warning to a careless World, *Job 22. 15, 16.* *Hast thou marked the old Way, which wicked Men have trodden, which were cut down out of time, and sent into Eternity, whose Foundation was overflowed with a Flood?*

2. The special Preservation of Noah and his Family, *Verse 23.* *Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the Ark.* Observe, 1. Noah lives, when all about him, were Monuments of Justice, thousands falling on his right-hand, and ten thousands on his left, he was a Monument of Mercy, only with his Eyes might be behold and see the Reward of the Wicked, *Pl. 91. 7, 8.* *In the Floods of great Waters they did not come nigh him, Pl. 32. 6.* We have reason to think, that while the Long-suffering of God waited, Noah not only preached to, but prayed for that wicked World, and would have turned away the Wrath; but his Prayers return into his own Bosom, and are answered only in his own Escape; which is plainly refer'd to, *Ezek. xiv. 14.* *Noah, Daniel, and Job shall but deliver their own Souls.* A Mark of Honour shall be set on Intercessors. 2. He but lives. Noah remains alive, and that's all: He is in effect buried alive; coop'd up in a close Place, alarm'd with the Terrors of the descending Rain, and increasing Flood, and the Shrieks and Outcries of his perishing Neighbours, his Heart overwhelmed with melancholly Thoughts of the Desolations made: But he comforts himself with this, that he is in the way of Duty,

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and in the way of Deliverance. And we are taught, *Fer. 45. 4, 5.* That when desolating Judgments are abroad, we must not seek great or pleasant things to our selves, but reckon it an unspeakable favour, if we have our Lives given us for a Prey.

C H A P. VIII.

In the close of the foregoing Chapter we left the World in Ruins, and the Church in Straits, but in this Chapter we have the Repair of the One, and the Enlargement of the Other. Now the Scene alters, and another Face of Things begins to be presented to us, and the brighter Side of that Cloud which there appeared so black and dark; for tho' God contend long, he will not contend for ever, nor be always Wrath. We have here, 1. The Earth made anew, by the recess of the Waters, and the appearing of the Dry Land, now a second time, and both gradual. (1.) The Increase of the Waters is stay'd, *v. 1, 2.* (2.) They begin sensibly to abate, *v. 3.* (3.) After sixteen Days ebbing the Ark rests, *v. 4.* (4.) After sixty Days ebbing the tops of the Mountains appeared above Water, *v. 5.* (5.) After forty Days ebbing, and twenty Days before the Mountains appeared, Noah began to send out his Spies, a Raven and a Dove to gain Intelligence, *v. 6-12.* (6.) Two Months after the appearing of the Tops of the Mountains, the Waters were gone, and the Face of the Earth was dry, *v. 13.* tho' not dried so as to be fit for Man till almost two Months after, *v. 14.* 2. Man placed anew upon the Earth. In which, 1. Noah's Discharge and Departure out of the Ark, *v. 15-19.* 2. His Sacrifice of Praise which he offer'd to God upon his Enlargement, *v. 20.* 3. God's Acceptance of his Sacrifice; and the Promise he made thereupon not to drown the World again, *v. 21, 22.* And thus at length Mercy rejoiceth against Judgment.

1 AND God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters asswaged. 2 The fountains also of the deep, and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained. 3 And the waters returned from off the earth continually: and after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated.

Here's, 1. An Act of God's Grace. God remember'd Noah and every living thing. This is an Expression after the manner of Men, for not any of his Creatures (*Luke 12. 6.*) much less any of his People are forgotten of God, *Isa. 49. 15, 16.* But, (1.) The whole Race of Mankind, except Noah and his Family, was now extinguisht, and gone into the Land of Forgetfulness to be remembered no more; so that God's remembering Noah was the Return of his Mercy to Mankind, of whom he would not make a full end. 'Tis a strange Expression, *Ezek. 5. 13.* *When I have caused my Fury to rest upon them, I will be comforted;* the Demands of Divine Justice had been answer'd, by the Ruin of those Sinners he had eas'd him of his Adversaries, *Isa. 1. 24.* and now his Spirit was quieted, *Zech. 6. 8.* and he remembered Noah and every living thing. He remembered Mercy in Wrath, *Hab. 3. 2.* remembered the Days of old, *Isa. 63. 11.* remembered the Holy Seed, and then remembered Noah. (2.) Noah himself, tho' one that had found Grace in the Eyes of the Lord, yet seem'd to be forgotten in the Ark, and perhaps began to think himself so, for we do not find that God had told him how long he should be confined, and when he should be released. Very good Men have sometimes been ready to conclude themselves forgotten of God, especially when their Afflictions have been more than ordinary grievous and long. Noah, tho' a great Believer, yet when he found the Flood continuing so long after it might reasonably be presumed to have done its work; perhaps was tempted to fear lest he that shut him in would keep him in, and began to expostulate, *How long wilt thou forget me?* But at length God returned in Mercy to him, and that's express'd by his remembering him. Note, Those that remember God shall certainly be remembered by him, how desolate and disconsolate soever their Condition may be. He will appoint them a set time, and remember them, *Job 14. 13.* (3.) With Noah God remembered every living thing, for tho' his Delight be especially in the Sons of Men, yet ye rejoiceth in all his Works, and hateth nothing that he has made. He takes special Care not only of his People's Persons, but of their Possessions; of them and all that belongs to them. He consider'd the Cattle of Nineveh, *Jon. 4. 11.*

2. An Act of God's Power over Wind and Water, neither of which are under Man's controul, but both at his beck. Observe, 1. He commanded the Wind, and said to that, *Go, and it went,* in order to the carrying off of the Flood. God made a Wind to pass over the Earth. See here, 1. What was God's remembrance of Noah, 'twas his relieving him. Note, Those whom God remembers, he remembers effectually for good: He remembers us to save us, that we may remember to serve him,

him. 2. What a sovereign Dominion God has over the Winds. He hath them in his Fist, Prov. 30. 4. and brings them out of his Treasure, Pf. 135. 7. He sends them when and whither, and for what Purposes he pleaseth. Even stormy Winds fulfil his Word, Pf. 148. 8. It should seem while the Waters increased there was no Wind, for that would have added to the Toss of the Ark, but now God sent a Wind when it would not be to troublefome. Probably 'twas a North-Wind, for that drives away Rain. However 'twas a drying Wind, such a Wind as God sent to divide the Red-Sea before Israel, Exod. 14. 21.

2. He remanded the Waters, and said to them, Come, and they came. 1. He took away the Cause. He sealed up the Springs of those Waters, the Fountains of the great Deep, and the Windows of Heaven. Note, 1. As God has a Key to open, so he has a Key to shut up again, and to stay the Progress of Judgments by stopping the Causes of them. And the same Hand that brings the Delolation must bring the Deliverance: To that Hand therefore our Eye must ever be. He that Wounds is alone able to Heal. See Job 12. 14, 15. 2. When afflictions have done the Work for which they are sent, whether killing Work, or curing Work, they shall be removed. God's Word shall not return void, Isa. 55. 10, 11. 2. Then the Effect ceased, not all at once, but by Degrees. The Waters asswaged, v. 1. returned from off the Earth continually, v. 3. Heb. they were going and returning; which notes a gradual Departure. The Heat of the Sun exhaled much, and perhaps the subterraneous Caverns soaked in more. Note, As the Earth was not drowned in a Day, so it was not dry'd in a Day. In the Creation it was but one Day's Work to clear the Earth from the Waters that cover'd it, and to make it Dry Land, nay, it was but half a Day's Work, Gen. 1. 9, 10. But the Work of Creation being finished, this Work of Providence was effected by the concurring Influence of Second Causes, yet thus enforc'd by the Almighty Power of God. God usually Works Deliverance for his People gradually, that the Day of small things may not be despised, nor the Day of great things despair'd of, Zech. 4. 10. See Prov. 4. 18.

4. And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat. 5. And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month: in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen.

Here we have the Effects and Evidences of the Ebbing of the Waters. 1. The Ark rested. This was some Satisfaction to Noah, to feel the House he was in upon firm Ground, and no longer moveable. It rested upon a Mountain, whither it was directed, not by Noah's Prudence; he did not steer it, but by the wife and gracious Providence of God, that it might rest the sooner. Note, God has Times and Places of Rest for his People after their Tossings: And many a time he provides for their reasonable and comfortable Settlement without their own Contrivance, and quite beyond their own Fore-sight. The Ark of the Church, tho' sometimes tossed with Tempests, and not comforted, Isa. 54. 11. yet it has its Rests, Acts 9. 31.

2. The Tops of the Mountains were seen, like little Islands, appearing above the Water. We must suppose that they were seen to Noah and his Sons, for there were no other to see them: 'Tis likely they had looked through the Window of the Ark every Day, like the longing Mariners after a tedious Voyage, to see if they could discover Land, or as the Prophet's Servant, 1 Kings 18. 43. and at length they spy Ground, and enter the Day of the Discovery in their Journal. They felt Ground above Forty Days before they saw it, according to Dr. Lightfoot's Computation; whence he infers, that if the Waters decreased proportionably, the Ark drew eleven Cubits in Water.

6 And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made. 7 And he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth. 8 Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground. 9 But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark: for the waters were on the face of the whole earth. Then he put forth his hand and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark. 10 And he stayed yet other seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark. 11 And the dove came in to him in the evening, and in her mouth was an olive leaf pluckt off: So Noah knew that the waters were abated from off

the earth. 12 And he stayed yet other seven days, and sent forth the dove; which returned not again unto him any more.

We have here an account of the Spies which Noah sent forth to bring him Intelligence from abroad, a Raven and a Dove. Observe here, 1. That tho' God had told Noah particularly when the Flood would come, even to a Day, Chap. 7. 4. yet he did not give him a particular Account by Revelation, at what Times and by what Steps it should go away. (1.) Because the Knowledge of the former was necessary to his preparing the Ark, and settling himself in it; but the Knowledge of the latter would only serve to gratify his Curiosity, and the concealing of it from him would be the needful Exercise of his Faith and Patience. And, (2.) He could not foresee the Flood but by Revelation, but he might by ordinary Means discover the Decrease of it, and therefore God was pleased to leave him to the use of them.

2. That tho' Noah by Faith expected his Enlargement, and by Patience waited for it, yet he was inquisitive concerning it, as one that thought it long to be thus confined. Note, Desires of Release out of Trouble; earnest Expectations of it, and Enquiries concerning its Advances towards us, will very well consist with the Sincerity of Faith and Patience. He that believes doth not make haste to run before God, but he doth make haste to go forth to meet him, Isa. 28. 16. Particularly, 1. Noah sent forth a Raven thro' the Window of the Ark, which went forth, as the Hebrew Phrase is, going forth and returning, i. e. flying about, and feeding on the Carcasses that floated, but returning to the Ark for Rest; Probably not in it, but upon it. This gave Noah little Satisfaction therefore. 2. He sent forth a Dove, which return'd the first time with no good News, but probably wet and dirty: But the second time she brought an Olive-Leaf in her Bill, which appear'd to be first plucked off; a plain Indication, that now the Trees, the Fruit-Trees began to appear above Water. Note here, 1. That Noah sent forth the Dove, the second time, seven Days after the first time, and the third time was after seven Days too; and probably the first sending of her out was seven Days after the sending forth of the Raven, which intimates that it was done on the Sabbath-Day, which it should seem Noah religiously observed in the Ark. Having kept the Sabbath in a solemn Assembly of his little Church, he then expected special Blessings from Heaven, and enquired concerning them. Having directed his Prayer, he looked up, Pf. 5. 3. 2. The Dove is an Emblem of a Gracious Soul, that finding no Rest for its Foot, no solid Peace or Satisfaction in this World, this delug'd, defiling World, returns to Christ as to its Ark, as to its Noah. The Carnal Heart like the Raven takes up with the World, and feeds on the Carrions it finds there, but return thou to thy Rest, O my Soul; to thy Noah, so the Word is, Pf. 116. 7. O that I had Wings like a Dove to flee to him, Pf. 55. 6. And as Noah put forth his Hand, and took the Dove and pulled her into him, into the Ark, so Christ will graciously preserve and help, and welcome those that fly to him for rest. 3. The Olive-Branch, which was an Emblem of Peace, was brought not by the Raven a Bird of Prey, nor by a gay and proud Peacock, but by a mild, patient, humble Dove. 'Tis a Dove-like Disposition that brings in to the Soul Earnests of Rest and Joy. 4. Some make these things an Allegory. The Law was first sent forth like the Raven, but brought no Tidings of the Asswaging of the Water's of God's Wrath with which the World of Mankind was deluged, therefore in the fulness of Time God sent forth his Gospel, as the Dove, in the likeness of which the Holy Spirit descended, and this presents us with an Olive-Branch, and brings in a better Hope.

13 And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and behold, the face of the ground was dry. 14 And in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dried.

Here's 1. The Ground dry, v. 14. i. e. all the Water carried off it, which upon the first Day of the first Month, (a joyful New-Years-Day it was) Noah was himself an Eye-witness of. He removed the covering of the Ark, not the whole Covering, but so much as would suffice to give him a Prospect of the Earth about it, and a most comfortable Prospect he had. For behold, Behold and wonder, the Face of the Ground was dry. Note, (1.) It is a great Mercy to see dry Ground about us. Noah was more sensible of it than we are, for Mercies restored are much more affecting than Mercies continued. (2.) The Divine Power which now renewed the Face of the Earth, can renew the Face of an afflicted, troubled Soul, and of a distressed persecuted Church. He can make dry Ground to appear there where it seemed to have been lost and forgotten, Pf. 18. 16.

2. The

2. The Ground dried, v. 14. so as to be a fit Habitation for Noah. Observe, Tho' Noah saw the Ground dry the first Day of the first Month, yet God would not suffer him to go out of the Ark till the twenty-seventh Day of the second Month. Perhaps Noah being somewhat weary of his Restraint, would have quitted the Ark at first, but God in Kindness to him order'd him to stay so much longer. *Note*, God consults our Benefit, rather than our Desires: For he knows what is good for us better than we do for ourselves, and how long it is fit our Restraints should continue, and desired Mercies should be delay'd. We would go out of the Ark before the Ground is dried; and perhaps if the Door be shut, are ready to remove the Covering, and to climb up some other Way; but we should be satisfied that God's Time of shewing Mercy is certainly the best Time, when the Mercy is ripe for us, and we are ready for it.

15 And God spake unto Noah, saying, 16 Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons wives with thee. 17 Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee, of all flesh, both of fowl and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth. 18 And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons wives with him: 19 Every beast, every creeping thing, and every fowl, and whatsoever creepeth upon the earth, after their kinds, went forth out of the ark.

Here's, 1. Noah's Dismissal out of the Ark, v. 15, 16, 17. Observe, (1.) Noah did not stir till God bid him. As he had a Command to go into the Ark, Ch. 7. 1. so (how tedious soever his confinement there was) he would wait for a Command to go out of it again. *Note*, We must in all our Ways acknowledge God, and set him before us in all our Removes. Those only go under God's Protection that follow God's Conduct, and submit to his Government. Those that steadily adhere to God's Word as their Rule, and are guided by his Grace as their Principle, and take Hints from his Providence to assist them in their Application of General Directions to Particular Cases, may in Faith see him guiding their Motions in their March thro' this Wilderness. (2.) Tho' God detained him long, yet at last he gave him his Discharge, for the Vision is for an appointed Time, and at the end it shall speak, it shall speak Truth, Hab. 2. 3. it shall not lie. (3.) God had said, Come into the Ark, which intimated that God went in with him; and here not come forth, but go forth, which intimates that God who went in with him, staid with him all the while, till he sent him out safe; for he hath said, I will not leave thee. (4.) Some observe that when they were order'd into the Ark, the Men and the Women were mention'd separately, Chap. 6. 18. Thou, and thy Sons, and thy Wife, and thy Sons Wives; whence they infer, that during that time of Mourning they were apart, and their Wives apart, Zech. xii. 12. But now God did, as it were, new Marry them, sending out Noah and his Wife together, and his Sons and their Wives together, that they might be fruitful and multiply. (5.) Noah is order'd to bring the Creatures out with him; that having taken the Care of feeding them so long, and been at so much Pains about them, he might have the Honour of leading them forth by their Armies, and receiving their Homage.

2. Noah's Departure when he had his Dismissal. As he would not go out without leave, so he would not out of Fear, or Humour stay in when he had leave, but was in all Points observant of the heavenly Vision. Tho' he had been now a full Year and ten Days a Prisoner in the Ark, yet when he found himself preferred there, not only for a New Life, but for a New World, he saw no Reason to complain of his long Confinement. Now Observe, 1. Noah and his Family came out alive, tho' one of them was a wicked Ham, whom, tho' he escaped the Flood, God's Justice could have taken away by some other Stroke. But they are all alive. *Note*, When Families have been long continued together, and no Breaches made upon them, it must be look'd upon as a distinguishing Favour, and attributed to the Lord's Mercies. 2. Noah brought out all the Creatures that went in with him, except the Raven and the Dove, who probably were ready to meet their Mates, at their coming out. Noah was able to give a very good Account of his Charge, for of all that were given him he had lost none, but was faithful to him that appointed him, *pro hac vice*, High-Steward of his Household.

20 And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar. 21 And the LORD smelled a sweet savour, and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the

ground any more for mans sake; for the imagination of mans heart is evil from his youth: neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. 22 While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.

Here's 1. Noah's thankful Acknowledgment of God's Favour to him, in completing the Mercy of his Deliverance, v. 20.

1. He built an Altar. Hitherto he had done nothing without particular Instructions and Commands from God. He had a particular Call into the Ark, and another out of it, but Altars and Sacrifices being already of Divine Institution for Religious Worship, he did not stay for a particular Command thus to express his Thankfulness. Those that have received Mercy from God should be forward in returning Thanks; and do it not of constraint, but willingly. God is pleased with Free-will Offerings, and Praises that wait for him. Noah was now turned out into a cold and desolate World, where one would have thought his first Care would have been to build a House for himself; but behold he begins with an Altar for God: God that is the first, must be first served, and he begins well that begins with God.

2. He offered a Sacrifice upon his Altar, of every clean Beast, and of every clean Fowl one, the odd Seventh that we read of, Ch. 7. 2, 3.

Here observe, 1. He offered only those that were clean; for it is not enough that we Sacrifice, but we must Sacrifice that which God appoints, according to the Law of Sacrifice, and not a corrupt thing. 2. Tho' his Stock of Cattle was so small, and that rescued from Ruin at so great an Expence of Care and Pains, yet he did not grudge to give God his Dues out of it. He might have said, Have I but seven Sheep to begin the World with, and must one of those Seven be killed and burned for Sacrifice; were it not better to defer it, till we have more plenty? No, to prove the Sincerity of his Love and Gratitude, he cheerfully gives the Seventh to his God, as an Acknowledgment that all was his, and owing to him. Serving God with our little, is the way to make it more. And we must never think that wasted with which God is honoured. 3. See here the Antiquity of Religion; The first thing we find done in the New World was an Act of Worship, Jer. 6. 16. We are not now to express our thankfulness by burnt-offerings, but by the Sacrifices of Praise, and the Sacrifices of Righteousness, pious Devotions, and a pious Conversation.

2. God's gracious Acceptance of Noah's Thankfulness. 'Twas a settled Rule in the Patriarchal Age; if thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? Noah was so. For, 1. God was well-pleased with the Performance, v. 21. He smelled a sweet Savour, or a Savour of Rest from it; as 'tis in the Hebrew. As when he had made the World at first in the Seventh-Day, he rested and was refreshed, so now he had new-made it, in the Sacrifice of the Seventh he rested. He was well-pleased with Noah's pious Zeal, and these hopeful Beginnings of the New World, as Men are with fragrant and agreeable Smells; tho' his Offering was small, 'twas according to his Ability, and God accepted it. Having caused his Anger to rest upon the World of Sinners, he here causeth his Love to rest upon this little Remnant of Believers. 2. Hereupon he took up a Resolution never to drown the World again. Herein he had an Eye not so much to Noah's Sacrifice, as to Christ's Sacrifice of himself, which was typified and represented by it, and which was indeed an Offering of a sweet-smelling Savor, Eph. 5. 2. Good Security is here given, and that which may be relied upon. 1. That this Judgment should never be repeated. Noah might think, to what purpose should the World be repaired, when in all probability, for the Wickedness of it, it will quickly be in like manner ruined again: No, saith God, it never shall. 'Twas said, Chap. vi. 6. It repented the Lord that he had made Man. Now here he speaks as if it repented him that he had destroy'd Man: Neither means a change of his Mind, but both a change of his Way. It repents him concerning his Servants, Deut. 32. 36. Two Ways this Resolve is expressed: (1.) I will not again curse the Ground, Heb. I will not add to curse the Ground any more. God had cursed the Ground upon the first entrance of Sin, Ch. 3. 17. when he drowned it he added to that Curse: But now he determines not to add to it any more. (2.) Neither will I again smite any more every living thing, i. e. 'Twas determin'd that whatever Ruin God might bring upon particular Persons, Families, or Countries, he would never again destroy the whole World till the Day shall come when Time shall be no more. But the Reason of this Resolve is very surprizing, for it seems the same in Effect with the reason given for the Destruction of the World, Chap. 6. 5. Because the Imagination of Man's Heart is evil from his Youth. But there is this Difference; There it is said, the Imagination of Man's Heart is evil continually, i. e. His actual Transgressions continually cry against him: Here 'tis said, that it is Evil from his Youth or Childhood. It is bred in the Bone, he brought it into the World with him; he was shapen and conceived in it. Now one would think it should follow, therefore that guilty Race shall be wholly extinguished, and I will make a full end: No, therefore I will no more

more take this severe Method, for (1.) He is rather to be pitied, for 'tis all the Effect of Sin dwelling in him. And 'tis but what might be expected from such a degenerate Race: He is called a *Transgressor from the Womb*, and therefore it is not strange he deals so very treacherously, Isa. 48. 8. Thus God remembers that he is *Flesh*, corrupt and sinful, Ps. 78. 39. (2.) He will be utterly ruin'd; for if he be dealt with according to his Deserts, one Flood must succeed another till all be destroy'd. See here, 1. That outward judgments, tho' they may terrify and restrain Men, yet cannot of themselves sanctify and renew them, without the Grace of God working with them. Man's Nature was as sinful after the Deluge as it had been before. 2. That God's Goodness takes occasion from Man's Badness to magnify it self the more: His Reasons of Mercy are all drawn from himself, not from any thing in us. 3. That the *Course of Nature* should never be discontinued, v. 22. *while the Earth remaineth*, and Man upon it, there shall be *Summer and Winter*; not all Winter as had been this last Year, *Day and Night*; not all Night, as probably it was while the Rain was descending. Here, 1. 'Tis plainly intimated that this *Earth* is not to remain always; It, and all the Works in it must shortly be burnt up, and we look for *new Heavens and a new Earth*, when all these things must be dissolved. But, (2.) As long as it doth remain, God's Providence will carefully preserve the regular Succession of Times and Seasons, and cause each to know their Place. To this we owe it, that the World stands, and the Wheel of Nature keeps its Track. See here how changeable the Times are, and yet how unchangeable. 1. The *Course of Nature* always changing. As it is with the Times, so it is with the Events of Time, they are subject to Vicissitudes, *Day and Night*, *Summer and Winter* counter-charged. In Heaven and Hell it is not so, but on Earth God hath set the one over against the other. 2. Yet never changed: 'Tis constant in this Inconstancy: These Seasons have never ceased, nor shall cease while the Sun continues such a steady Measurer of Time, and the Moon such a faithful Witness in Heaven. This is God's *Covenant of the Day and of the Night*, the Stability of which is mention'd for the confirming of our Faith in the Covenant of Grace, which is no less inviolable, Jer. 33. 20. We see God's Promises to the Creatures made good, and thence may infer that his Promises to all Believers shall be so.

CHAP. IX.

Both the World and the Church were now again reduced to a Family, the Family of Noah, of the Affairs of which this Chapter gives us an Account, which we are the more concerned to take cognizance of, because from this Family we all are Descendants. Here's, 1. The *Covenant of Providence* settled with Noah and his Sons, v. 1-11. In this Covenant, 1. God promiseth them to take care of their Lives, so that (1.) They should replenish the Earth, v. 1, 7. (2.) They should be safe from the Insults of the brute Creatures, which should stand in awe of them, v. 2. (3.) They should be allowed to eat *Flesh* for the support of their Lives, only they must not eat Blood, v. 3, 4. (4.) The World should never be drowned again, v. 8-11. 2. God requires of them to take care of one another's Lives, and of their own, v. 5, 6. 2. The *Seal of that Covenant*, viz. the Rainbow, v. 12-17. 3. A particular Passage of Story concerning Noah and his Sons, which occasioned some Prophecies that related to After-times. 1. Noah's Sin and Shame, v. 20, 21. 2. Ham's Impudence and Impiety, v. 22. 3. The pious Modesty of Shem and Japhat, v. 23. 4. The Curse of Canaan, and the Blessing of Shem and Japhat, v. 24-27. 5. The Age and Death of Noah, v. 28, 29.

1 AND God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth. 2 And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. 3 Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things: 4 But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall you not eat. 5 And surely your blood of your lives will I require: at the hand of every beast will I require it; and at the hand of man, at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. 6 Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man. 7 And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply, bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein.

We read in the close of the foregoing Chapter the very kind

Things which God said in his Heart, concerning the Remnant of Mankind which was now left to be the Seed of a New World. Now here we have those kind things spoken to them: In general God blessed Noah and his Sons, v. 1. i. e. he assured them of his Good-will to them, and his gracious Intentions concerning them. This follows from what he said in his Heart. Note, All God's Promises of Good flow from his Purposes of Love, and the Counsels of his own Will. See Eph. 1. 11-3. 11. and compare Jer. 29. 11. *I know the Thoughts that I think towards you*. We read Ch. 8. 20. how Noah blessed God, by his Altar and Sacrifice. Now here we find God blessing Noah. Note, 1. God will graciously bless those, (i. e. do well for them) who sincerely bless him, (i. e. speak well of him.) 2. Those that are truly thankful for the Mercies they have received, take the readiest way to have them confirmed and continued to them.

Now here we have the *Magna Charta* of this New Kingdom of Nature, which was now to be erected, and incorporated, the former Charter having been forfeited and seized.

1. The Grants of this Charter are kind and gracious to Men. Here's, 1. A Grant of Lands of vast extent, and a Promise of a great Increase of Men to occupy and enjoy them. The first Blessing is here renewed, *Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the Earth*, v. 1. and repeated, v. 7. for the Race of Mankind was as it were to begin again. Now, 1. God sets the whole Earth before them, tells them it's all their own, *while it remains*, to them and their Heirs. Note, The Earth God has given to the Children of Men, for a Possession and Habitation, Ps. 115. 16. Tho' it be not a Paradise but a Wilderness rather, yet it's better than we deserve. Blessed be God it is not Hell! 2. He gives them a Blessing, by the Force and Virtue of which, Mankind should be both Multiplied and Perpetuated upon Earth; so that in a little time all the Habitable Parts of the Earth should be more or less Inhabited, and tho' one Generation should pass away, yet another Generation should come, while the World stands; so that the Stream of the Human Race should be supplied with a constant Succession, and run parallel with the Current of Time, till both being deliver'd up together into the Ocean of Eternity. Tho' Death should still reign, and the Lord would still be known by his Judgments, yet the Earth should never again be dispeopled, as now it was, but still replenished, Acts 17. 24.

2. A Grant of Power over the Inferiour Creatures, v. 2. He grants, (1.) A Title to them, *into your hands they are delivered*, for your use and benefit. (2.) A Dominion over them, without which the Title would avail little. The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every Beast. This revives a former Grant, Gen. 1. 28. only with this difference, that Men in Innocency rul'd by Love, Fallen Man rules by Fear. Now this Grant remains in force, and thus far we have still the Benefit of it. 1. That those Creatures which are any way useful to us, are reclaimed, and we use them either for Service, or Food, or both, as they are capable. The Horse and Ox patiently submit to the Bridle and Yoke; and the Sheep is Dumb both before the Shearer, and before the Butcher, for the Fear and Dread of Man are upon them. 2. Those Creatures that are any way hurtful to us are restrained; so that tho' now and then Man may be hurt by some of them, yet they do not combine together to rise up in Rebellion against Man, else God could by these destroy the World as effectually as he did by a Deluge; 'tis one of God's sore Judgments, Ezek. 14. 21. What is it that keeps Wolves out of our Towns, and Lions out of our Streets, and confines them to the Wilderness, but this Fear and Dread? Nay, some have been tamed, James 3. 7.

3. A Grant of Maintenance and Subsistence, v. 3. *Every moving thing that liveth shall be Meat for you*. Hitherto most think, Man had been confined to feed only upon the Products of the Earth, Fruits, Herbs and Roots, and all sorts of Corn and Milk, so was the first Grant, Gen. 1. 29. But the Flood having perhaps washed away much of the Virtue of the Earth, and so render'd its Fruits less pleasing and less nourishing, God now enlarged the Grant, and allowed Man to eat *Flesh*, which perhaps Man himself never thought of till now that God directed him to it, nor had any more desire to, than a Sheep hath to suck Blood like a Wolf. But now Man is allowed to feed upon *Flesh* as freely and safely as upon the Green Herb. Now here see, 1. That God is a good Master, and provides not only that we may live, but that we may live comfortably in his Service; not for Necessity only but for Delight. 2. That Every Creature of God is good, and nothing to be refus'd, 1 Tim. 4. 4. Afterwards some Meats that were proper enough for Food were prohibited by the Ceremonial Law, but from the Beginning it seems it was not so, and therefore is not so under the Gospel.

2. The Precepts and Proviso's of this Charter are no less kind and gracious, and Instances of God's Good-will to Man. The Jewish Doctors speak so often of the Seven Precepts of Noah, or of the Sons of Noah, which they say, were to be observ'd by all Nations, that it may not be amiss to set them down. The First against the Worship of Idols. The Second against Blasphemy, and requiring to bless the Name of God. The Third against Murder. The Fourth against Incest and all Uncleaness. The Fifth against Theft and Rapine. The Sixth requiring the Admini-

stration

stration of Justice. The Seventh against eating Flesh with the Life. These the *Genus* required the Observation of, from the *Profelytes of the Gate*. But the Precepts here given all concern the Life of Man; and Man must not prejudice his own Life by eating that Food which is unwholsome, and prejudicial to his Health, *v. 4. Flesh with the Life thereof which is the Blood thereof, I.e. raw Flesh shall you not eat, as the Beasts of Prey do.* It was necessary to add this Limitation to the Grant of Liberty to eat Flesh, lest instead of *nourishing* their Bodies by it they should *destroy* them. God would hereby shew, 1. That though they were Lords of the Creatures, yet they were Subjects to the Creator, and under the Restraints of his Law. 2. That they must not be greedy and hasty in taking their Food, but stay the preparing of it; not like *Saul's Soldiers*, *1 Sam. 14. 32. nor violent eaters of Flesh*, *Pr 23. 30. 31.* That they must not be Barbarous and Cruel to the inferior Creatures; they must be Lords, but not Tyrants; they might kill them for their Profit, but not torment them for their Pleasure; not tear away the Member of a Creature while it was yet alive; and eat that. 4. That during the continuance of the Law of Sacrifices, in which the Blood made atonement for the Soul, *Lev. 17. 11.* signifying that the Life of the Sacrifice was accepted for the Life of the Sinner. Blood must not be looked upon as a common Thing, but must be poured out before the Lord, *2 Sam. 23. 16.* either upon his Altar, or upon his Earth. But now the Great and true Sacrifice is offer'd, the Obligation of the Law ceaseth with the Reason of it.

2. Man must not take away his own Life, *v. 5. Your Blood of your Lives will I require.* Our Lives are not of our own as that we may quit them at our own pleasure, but they are God's, and we must resign them at his pleasure: If we any way hasten our own Deaths, we are accountable to God for it.

3. The Beasts must not be suffer'd to hurt the Life of Man; *At the Hand of every Beast will I require it.* To shew how tender God was of the Life of Man, (tho' he had lately made such Destruction of Lives) he will have the Beast put to Death that kills a Man. This was confirm'd by the Law of Moses, *7. Exod. 21. 28.* and I think it would not be unsafe to observe it still. Thus God shew'd his Hatred of the Sin of Murder, that Men might hate it the more, and not only punish but prevent it. And see *Job 5. 23.*

4. Wilful Murderers must be put to Death. This is the Sin which is here design'd to be restrain'd by the Terror of Punishment.

1. God will punish Murderers; *At the Hand of every Man's Brother will I require the Life of Man, 1. e. I will avenge the Blood of the Murder'd upon the Murderer, 2 Chr. 24. 22.* When God requires the Life of a Man at the Hand of him that took it away unjustly, he cannot render that, and therefore must render his own in lieu of it, which is the only way left of making Requisition. Note, The righteous God will certainly make Inquisition for Blood, tho' Men cannot, or do not. Overtime or other, in this World, or in the next he will both discover concealed Murders, which are hid from Man's Eye, and punish avow'd and justified Murthers, which are too great for Man's Hand.

2. The Magistrate must punish Murderers, *v. 6. Whoso sheddeth Man's Blood (whether upon a sudden Provocation, or premeditated, for rash Anger is Heart-murder as well as Malice pre-pense, Matt. 5. 21, 22.) by Man shall his Blood be shed, 1. e. by the Magistrate; or whoever is appointed or allowed to be the Avenger of Blood. There are those who are Ministers of God for this Purpose, to be a Protection to the Innocent, by being a Terror to the malicious and evil Doers, and must not bear the Sword in vain, Rom. 13. 4.* Before the Flood, as it should seem by the Story of Cain, God took the Punishment of Murder into his own Hands, but now he committed this Judgment to Men, to Masters of Families at first, and afterwards to the Heads of Countries, who ought to be faithful to the Trust reposed in them. Note, Wilful Murderer ought always to be punished with Death. 'Tis a Sin which the Lord would not pardon in a Prince, *2 Kings, 24. 3, 4.* and which therefore a Prince should not pardon in a Subject. To this Law there is a Reason annexed, *for in the Image of God made he Man at first; Man is a Creature dear to his Creator, and therefore ought to be so to us; God put Honour upon him, let not us then put contempt upon him.* Such Remains of God's Image are still even upon fallen Man, as that he who unjustly kills a Man defaceeth the Image of God, and doth Dishonour to him. When God allowed Men to kill their Beasts, yet he forbid them to kill their Slaves, for those are of a much more noble and excellent Nature, not only God's Creatures, but his Image, *Jam. 3. 9.* All Men have something of the Image of God upon them, but Magistrates have besides the Image of his Power, and Saints the Image of his Holiness, and therefore those who shed the Blood of Princes or Saints, incur a double Guilt.

8 And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, 9 And I, behold I, establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you: 10 And with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you, from all that go out of the ark, to

every beast of the earth. 11 And I will establish my covenant with you, neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood: neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.

Here's, 1. The general Establishment of God's Covenant with this new World, and the Extent of that Covenant, *v. 9, 10.* Where observe, (1.) That God is graciously pleas'd to deal with Man in the way of a Covenant, wherein God greatly magnifies his condescending Favour, and greatly encourages Man's Duty and Obedience, as a reasonable and gainful Service. (2.) That all God's Covenants with Man are of his own making, *1. behold I.* 'Tis thus express'd both to raise our Admiration. Behold and wonder, that tho' God be high, yet he has this respect to Man; and to confirm our Assurances of the Validity of the Covenant, Behold and see, I make it, I that am faithful, and able to make it good. (3.) That God's Covenants are established; firmer than the Pillars of Heaven, or the Foundations of the Earth, and cannot be dissolv'd. (4.) That God's Covenants are made with the Covenanters and with their Seed, the Promises to them and their Children. (5.) That those may be taken into Covenant with God, and receive the Benefits of it, who yet are not capable of stipulating, or giving their own Consent. For this Covenant is made with every living Creature, every Beast of the Earth.

2. The particular Intendment of this Covenant, it was design'd to secure the World from another Deluge, *v. 11. there shall not any more be a Flood.* God had drown'd the World once, and still it is as filthy and provoking as ever; and God foresaw the Wickedness of it, and yet promised he would never drown it any more, for he deals not with us according to our Sins. 'Tis owing to God's Goodness and Faithfulness, not to any Reformation of the World, that it has not oft been delug'd, and that it is not now so. As the old World was ruin'd to be a Monument of Justice, so this World remains to this Day a Monument of Mercy, according to the Oath of God, that the Waters of Noah should no more return to cover the Earth, *Isa. 54. 9.* This Promise of God keeps the Sea and Clouds in their decreed Place, and sets them Gates and Bars; *Hitherto they shall come, Job 38. 10, 11.* If the Sea should flow but for a few Days, as it doth twice every Day for a few Hours, what Desolations would it make? So would the Clouds, if such Showers as we have sometimes seen were continued long: But God by flowing Seas, and sweeping Rains, shews what he could do in Wrath, and yet by preserving the Earth from being delug'd between both, shews what he can do in Mercy, and will do in Truth. Let us give him the Glory of his Mercy in promising, and Truth in performing. This Promise doth not hinder, (1.) But that God may bring other wasting Judgments upon Mankind; for tho' he hath here bound himself not to use this Arrow any more, yet he hath other Arrows in his Quiver. (2.) Not but that he may destroy particular Places and Countries, by the Inundations of the Sea or Rivers. (3.) Nor will the Destruction of the World at the last Day by Fire be any Breach of his Promise. Sin that drown'd the old World will burn this.

12 And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me, and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: 13 I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. 14 And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: 15 And I will remember my covenant, which is between me, and you, and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. 16 And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth. 17 And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth.

Articles of Agreement among Men use to be sealed, that the Covenants may be the more solemn, and the Performances of the Covenant the more sure to mutual Satisfaction: God therefore being willing more abundantly to shew to the Heirs of Promise, the Immutability of his Councils, hath confirm'd his Covenant by a Seal, *Heb. 6. 17.* which make the Foundations we build on *stead fast*, *1 Tim. 2. 19.* the Seal of this Covenant of Nature was natural enough, it was the Rainbow, which 'tis likely was seen in the Clouds before, when second Causes concurr'd, but was never a Seal of the Covenant, till now that it was made so by a Divine Institution. Now concerning this Seal of the Covenant, Observe, 1. This Seal is affixed with repeated Assurances of the Truth of that Promise which it was design'd to be the Ratification of. *I do set my Bow*

in the Cloud, v. 13. it shall be seen in the Cloud, v. 14. that the Eye may affect the Heart, and confirm the Faith, and it shall be a Token of the Covenant, v. 12, 13. And I will remember my Covenant, that the Waters shall no more become a Flood, v. 15. Nay, as if the Eternal Mind needed a Memorandum, I will look upon it that I may remember the everlasting Covenant, v. 16. Thus here is Line upon Line, that we might have sure and strong Consolation, who have laid hold on his Hope. 2. The Rainbow appears then when the Clouds are most dispos'd to Wet, and return after the Rain: Then when we have most reason to fear the Rain prevailing, God shews this Seal of the Promise, that it shall not prevail. Thus God obviates our Fears with such Encouragements as are both suitable and seasonable. 3. The thicker the Cloud, the brighter the Bow in the Cloud. Thus as threatening Afflictions abound, encouraging Consolations much more abound, 2 Cor. 1. 5. 4. The Rainbow appears when one part of the Sky is clear, which intimates Mercy remembered in the midst of Wrath, and the Cloud hemm'd as it were with the Rainbow, that it may not overspread the Heavens, for the Bow is colour'd Rain, or the Edges of a Cloud gilded. 5. The Rainbow is the Reflexion of the Beams of the Sun, which intimates, That all the Glory and Significancy of the Seals of the Covenant is derived from Christ the Sun of Righteousness, who is also described with a Rainbow about his Throne, Rev. 4. 3. and a Rainbow upon his Head, Rev. 10. 1. which speaks not only his Majesty, but his Mediatorship. 6. The Rainbow hath fiery Colours in it, to signify that tho' God will not again drown the World, yet when the Mystery of God shall be finished, the World shall be consum'd with Fire. 7. A Bow speaks Terror, but it hath neither String nor Arrow, as the Bow ordained against the Persecutors has, Psal. 7. 12, 13. and a Bow alone will do little Execution: 'Tis a Bow, but it is directed upwards, not towards the Earth; for the Seals of the Covenant were intended to Comfort, not to Terrify. Lastly, As God looks upon the Bow that he may remember the Covenant, so should we, that we also may be ever mindful of the Covenant, with Faith and Thankfulness.

18 And the sons of Noah that went forth of the ark, were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth: and Ham is the father of Canaan. 19 These are the three sons of Noah: and of them was the whole earth overspread. 20 And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard. 21 And he drank of the wine, and was drunken, and he was uncovered within his tent. 22 And Ham the father of Canaan saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. 23 And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their fathers nakedness.

Here's 1. Noah's Family and Employment. The Names of his Sons are again mentioned, (v. 18, 19.) as those from whom the whole Earth was overspread. By which it appears, that Noah after the Flood had no more Children: All the World came from these Three. Note, God when he pleases, can make a little one to become a Thousand, and greatly increase the latter end of those whose beginning was small. Such is the Power and Efficacy of a Divine Blessing. The Business Noah applied himself to was that of a Husbandman, Heb. a Man of the Earth, i. e. a Man dealing in the Earth, that kept Ground in his Hand and occupied it. We are all naturally Men of the Earth, made of it, living on it, and hasting to it: Many are sinfully so, addicted to earthly things. Noah was by his Calling led to trade in the Fruits of the Earth. He began to be a Husbandman, i. e. Some time after his departure out of the Ark, he return'd to his old Employment, from which he had been diverted by the building of the Ark first, and probably after by the building a House on dry Land for himself and Family. For this good while he had been a Carpenter, but now he began again to be a Husbandman. Observe, Tho' Noah was a great Man, and a good Man, an old Man, and a rich Man, a Man greatly favoured by Heaven, and honoured on Earth, yet he would not live an idle Life, nor think the Husbandman's Calling below him. Note, Tho' God by his Providence may take us off from our Callings for a time, yet when the Occasion is over, we ought with Humility and Industry to apply our selves to them again; and in the Calling wherein we are called, therein faithfully abide with God, 1 Cor. 7. 24.

2. Noah's Sin and Shame. He planted a Vineyard, and when he had gather'd his Vintage, probably he appointed a Day of Mirth and Feasting, in his Family, and had his Sons and their Children about him, to rejoice with him, in the Increase of his House as well as in the Increase of his Vineyard, and we may

suppose he prefac'd his Feast with a Sacrifice to the Honour of God. If that was omitted, 'twas just with God to leave him to himself to end with the Beasts that did not begin with God: But we charitably hope he did. And perhaps he appointed this Feast with design in the close of it to bless his Sons, as Isaac, Gen. 27. 3, 4. That I may eat, and that my Soul may bless thee. At this Feast, he drank of the Wine; for who planteth a Vineyard, and eateth not of the Fruit of it? But he drank too liberally, more than his Head at this Age would bear, for he was drunk. We have reason to think he was never drunk before nor after; look how he came now to be overtaken in this fault. It was his Sin, and a great Sin, so much the worse for its being so soon after a great Deliverance: But God left him to himself, as he did Hezekiah, 2 Chr. 32. 31. and has left this Miscarriage of his upon Record to teach us, 1. That the fairest Copy that ever meer Man wrote since the Fall, had its Blots and false Strokes. 'Twas said of Noah, that he was perfect in his Generations, Ch. 6. 9. but this shews that it is meant of Sincerity, not a false Perfection. 2. That sometimes those that with Watchfulness and Resolution have by the Grace of God, kept their Integrity in the midst of Temptation, have thro' Security and Carelessness, and neglect of the Grace of God, been surprized into Sin when the Hour of Temptation hath been over. Noah that had kept sober in drunken Company, is now drunk in sober Company. Let him that thinks he stands safe heed. 3. That we have need to be very careful when we use God's good Creatures plentifully, lest we use them to excess. Christ's Disciples must take heed lest at any time their Hearts be overcharged, Luke 21. 34.

Now the consequent of Noah's Sin was Shame. He was uncovered in his Tent, made naked to his Shame, as Adam, when he had eaten forbidden Fruit: Yet Adam sought Concealment, Noah is so destitute of Thought and Reason, that he seeks no Covering. This was a Fruit of the Vine that Noah did not think of. Observe here the great Evil of the Sin of Drunkenness. (1.) It discovers Men; what Infirmitates they have they betray when they are drunk, and what Secrets they are intrusted with, are then easily got out of them. Drunken Porters keep open Gates. (2.) It disgraces Men, and exposes them to Contempt. As it shews them, so it shames them. Men say and do that when Drunk, which when they are sober they would blush at the thoughts of, Hab. 2. 15, 16.

3. Ham's Impudence and Impiety, v. 22. he saw the nakedness of his Father, and told his two Brethren. To see it accidentally and involuntarily would not have been a Crime; but, (1.) He pleased himself with the Sight, as the Edomites looked upon the Day of their Brother, Obad. 12. pleas'd and insulting. Perhaps Ham had sometimes been himself drunk, and reprov'd for it by his good Father, whom he was therefore pleas'd to see thus overcome. Note, It is common for those who walk in false Ways themselves, to rejoice in the false Steps which they sometime see others make. But Charity rejoiceth not in Iniquity; nor can true Penitents that are sorry for their own Sins, rejoice in the Sins of others. (2.) He told his two Brethren without; in the Street, as the Word is, in a scornful deriding manner, that his Father might seem vile unto them. It is a very ill thing, 1. To make a Jest of Sin, Pr. 14. 9. and to be puffed up with that for which we should rather mourn, 1 Cor. 5. 2. And, 2. To publish the Faults of any, especially of Parents, whom it is our Duty to honour. Noah was not only a good Man, but had been a good Father to him, and this was a most base disingenuous Requit to him for his Tenderness. Ham is here called the Father of Canaan, which intimates that he who was himself a Father, should have been more respectful to him that was his Father.

4. The pious Care of Shem and Japheth to cover their poor Father's Shame, v. 23. They not only would not see it themselves, but provide that no one else might see it: Herein setting us an Example of Charity with reference to other Men's Sin and Shame; we must not only not say a Confederacy with those that proclaim it, but we must be careful to conceal it, or however to make the best of it, so doing as we would be done by. (1.) There is a Mantle of Love to be thrown over the Faults of all. 1 Pet. 4. 8. (2.) Besides that, there is a Robe of Reverence to be thrown over the Faults of Parents and other Superiors.

24 And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. 25 And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. 26 And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. 27 God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.

Here, 1. Noah comes to himself, he awoke from his Wine: Sleep cur'd him, and we may suppose so cur'd him that he never relaps'd into that Sin after. Those that sleep as Noah did, should awake as he did, and not as that Drunkard, Prov. 23. 35. who saith when he awakes, I will seek it yet again.

2. The

2. The Spirit of Prophecy comes upon him, and like dying *Jacob*, he tells his Sons what should befall them, *Gen. 49. 1. (v. 25.)*

1. He pronounces a Curse on *Canaan* the Son of *Ham*, in whom *Ham* is himself cursed, either because this Son of his was now more guilty than the rest, or because the Posterity of this was afterwards to be rooted out of their Land to make room for *Israel*. And *Moses* here records it for the animating of *Israel* in the Wars of *Canaan*; though the *Canaanites* were a formidable People, yet they were of old an accursed People, and doomed to Ruine. The particular Curse is, a *Servant of Servants, i. e. the meanest and most despicable Servant shall be to him, even to his Brethren*. Those who by Birth were his Equals, shall by Conquest be his Lords. This certainly points at the Victories obtained by *Israel* over the *Canaanites*, by which they were all either put to the Sword, or put under Tribute, *Jos. 9. 23. Jud. 1. 28, 30, 33, 35.* which hapned not till about Eight hundred Years after this. Note, 1. God often visits the Iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children, especially when the Children inherit the Fathers wicked Dispositions, and imitate the Fathers wicked Practices, and do nothing to cut off the Entail of the Curse. 2. Disgrace is justly put upon those that put disgrace upon others, especially that dishonour and grieve their own Parents. An undutiful Child that mocks at his Parents, is no more worthy to be called a Son, but deserves to be made as a hired Servant, nay, as a *Servant of Servants* among his Brethren. 3. Though Divine Curses operate slowly, yet first or last they will take effect. The *Canaanites* were under a Curse of Slavery, and yet for a great while had the Dominion; for a Family, a People, a Person, may lie under the Curse of God, and yet may long prosper in the World, till the Measure of his Iniquity like that of the *Canaanites* be full. Many are marked for Ruine that are not yet ripe for Ruine. Therefore, *Let not thine Heart envy Sinners.*

2. He entails a Blessing upon *Shem* and *Japheth*.

1. He blebseth *Shem*, or rather, blebseth God for him, yet so that it entitles him to the greatest Honour and Happiness imaginable, *v. 26. Observe, 1. He calls the Lord, the God of Shem, and happy, thrice happy is that People whose God is the Lord, Psa. 144. 15.* All Blessings are included in this. This was the Blessing conferr'd on *Abraham* and his Seed, the God of Heaven was not ashamed to be called their God, *Heb. 11. 16.* *Shem* is sufficiently recompensed for his respect to his Father by this, that the Lord himself puts this Honour upon him to be his God, which is a sufficient Recompence for all our Services and all our Sufferings for his Name. 2. He gives to God the Glory of that Good Work which *Shem* had done, and instead of blessing and praising him that was the Instrument, he blebseth and praiseth God that was the Author. Note, The Glory of all that is at any time well done by ourselves or others must be humbly and thankfully transmitted to God who works all our Good Works in us and for us. When we see Men's Good Works, we should glorifie not them, but our Father, *Mat. 5. 16.* Thus *David* in effect blebseth *Abigail*, when he blebseth God that sent her, *1 Sam. 25. 32, 33.* for it is an Honour and Favour to be employed for God, and used by him in doing Good. 3. He foretells and foretells that God's gracious dealings with *Shem* and his Family would be such as would evidence to all the World, that he was the God of *Shem*, on which behalf Thanksgivings would by many be rendered to him, *Blessed be the Lord God of Shem.* 4. 'Tis intimated, that the Church should be built up and continued in the Posterity of *Shem*; for of him came the Jews, who were, for a great while, the only professing People God had in the World. 5. Some think reference is here had to Christ, who was the Lord God that in his Humane Nature should descend from the Loins of *Shem*, for of him as concerning the Flesh, Christ came. 6. *Canaan* is particularly enslaved to him, *He shall be his Servant.* Note, Those that have the Lord for their God, shall have as much of the Honour and Power of this World as he sees good for them.

2. He blebseth *Japheth*, and in him the Isles of the Gentiles that were Peopled by his Seed, *v. 27 God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the Tents of Shem.* Now, 1. Some make this wholly to belong to *Japheth*, and to speak either, (1.) his outward Prosperity, that his Seed should be so Numerous and so Victorious, that they should be Masters of the Tents of *Shem*, which was fulfilled when the People of the Jews, the most eminent of *Shem's* Race, were Tributaries to the Grecians first, and after to the Romans, both of *Japheth's* Seed. Note, Outward Prosperity is no infallible mark of the true Church: The Tents of *Shem* are not always the Tents of the Conqueror. Or, (2.) It speaks the Conversion of the Gentiles, and the bringing of them into the Church; and then we would read it, *God shall persuade Japheth* (for so the Word signifies) and then being persuaded, *he shall dwell in the Tents of Shem, i. e. Jews and Gentiles shall be united together in the Gospel-fold; after many of the Gentiles shall have been profelyted to the Jewish Religion, both shall be one in Christ, Eph. 2. 14, 15.* And the Christian Church, mostly made up of the Gentiles, shall succeed the Jews in the Privileges of Church-Membership; and they having first cast themselves out by their unbelief, the Gentiles shall

dwell in their Tents, *Rom. 11. 11, &c.* Note, 1. It is God only that can bring those again into the Church who have separated themselves from it. 'Tis the Power of God that makes the Gospel of Christ effectual to Salvation, *Rom. 1. 16.* 2. Souls are brought into the Church, not by force, but by persuasion, *Psal. 110. 3.* They are drawn by the Cords of a Man, and persuaded by Reason to be Religious. 2. Others divide this between *Japheth* and *Shem*, *Shem* having not been directly blessed, *v. 26.* 1. *Japheth* has the Blessing of Earth beneath; *God shall enlarge Japheth; enlarge his Seed, enlarge his Border; Japheth's* Posterity Peopled all Europe, a great part of Asia, and perhaps America. Note, 1. God is to be acknowledged in our Enlargements. 'Tis he that enlargeth the Coast, and enlargeth the Heart. 2. Many dwell in large Tents, that do not dwell in God's Tents, as *Japheth* did. 2. *Shem* hath the Blessing of Heaven above: *He shall, i. e. God shall dwell in the Tents of Shem, i. e. from his Loins Christ shall come, and in his Seed the Church shall be continued.* The Birthright was now to be divided between *Shem* and *Japheth*, *Ham* being utterly discarded; in the Principality they equally share, *Canaan* shall be Servant to both; the double Portion is given to *Japheth*, whom God shall enlarge. But the Priesthood was given to *Shem*, for *God shall dwell in the Tents of Shem*; and certainly we are more happy if we have God dwelling in our Tents, than if we had all the Silver and Gold in the World in our Tents; 'tis better dwell in Tents with God than in Palaces without him; in Salem, where is God's Tabernacle, there's more satisfaction than in all the Isles of the Gentiles. 3. They both have Dominion over *Canaan*; *Canaan shall be Servant to them*; so some read it: When *Japheth* joins with *Shem*, *Canaan* falls before them both: When Strangers become Friends, Enemies become Servants.

28 And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years. 29 And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years: and he died.

Here see, 1. How God prolong'd the Life of *Noah*, to a great old Age, 950 years, 20 more than *Adam's*, and but 19 less than *Methuselah's*: This long Life was a further Reward of his signal Piety, and a great Blessing to the World, to which, no doubt, he continued a Preacher of Righteousness, with this advantage, that now all he Preached to were his own Children. 2. How God put a period to his Life at last; tho' he lived long, yet he died, probably having first seen many that descended from him dead before him. *Noah* lived to see two Worlds, but being an Heir of the Righteousness which is by Faith, when he died, he went to see a better than either.

CHAP. X.

This Chapter shews more particularly what was said in general, Chap. 9. 19. concerning the three Sons of *Noah*, that of them was the whole Earth overspread; and of the Fruit of that Blessing, Chap. 9. 1, 7. replenish the Earth. 'Tis the only certain account extant of the Original of Nations, and yet perhaps there is no Nation but that of the Jews that can be confident from which of these 70 Fountains (for so many there are here) it derives its Streams. Through the want of early Records, the Mixtures of People, the Revolutions of Nations, and distance of Time, the Knowledge of the lineal Descent of the present Inhabitants of the Earth is lost; nor were any Genealogies preserved but those of the Jews for the sake of the Messiah, only in this Chapter we have a brief account, 1. Of the Posterity of *Japheth*, *v. 2—5.* 2. The Posterity of *Ham*, *v. 6—10.* and in that, particular notice taken of *Nimrod*, *v. 8, 9.* 3. The Posterity of *Shem*, *v. 23.* to the end.

1 NOW these are the generations of the sons of *Noah*; *Shem*, *Ham*, and *Japheth*: and unto them were sons born after the flood. 2 The sons of *Japheth*; *Gomer*, and *Magog*, and *Madai*, and *Javan*, and *Tubal*, and *Meshech*, and *Tiras*. 3 And the sons of *Gomer*; *Ashkenaz*, and *Riphat*, and *Togarmah*. 4 And the sons of *Javan*; *Elifhah*, and *Tarshish*, *Kitim*, and *Dodanim*. 5 By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations.

Moses begins with *Japheth's* Family, either because he was the eldest, or because that lay remotest from *Israel*, and had least concern with them, at that time when *Moses* wrote; and therefore he mentions that Race very briefly, hastening to

to give account of the Posterity of Ham who were Israel's Enemies, and of Shem, who were Israel's Ancestors: For 'tis the Church that the Scripture is designed to be the History of, and of the Nations of the World only as they were some way or other related to Israel, and interested in the Affairs of Israel. Observe, 1. Notice is taken that the Sons of Noah had Sons born to them *after the Flood*, to repair and rebuild the World of Mankind which the Flood had ruined. He that had killed, now makes alive. 2. The Posterity of Japheth were allotted to the *Isles of the Gentiles*, (v. 5.) which were solemnly by Lot, after a survey, divided among them, and probably this Island of ours among the rest; all Places *beyond the Sea*, from Judea, are called *Isles*, Jer. 25. 22. and this directs us to understand that Promise, Isa. 42. 4. *the Isles shall wait for his Law*, of the Conversion of the Gentiles to the Faith of Christ.

6. And the Sons of Ham; Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan. 7 And the sons of Cush; Seba, and Havilah, and Sabtah, and Raamah, and Sabtecha: and the sons of Raamah; Sheba, and Dedan. 8 And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. 9 He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD. 10 And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the Land of Shinar. 11 Out of that land went forth Ashur, and builded Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah, 12 And Refen between Nineveh and Calah: the same is a great city. 13 And Mizraim begat Ludim, and Ananim, and Lehabim, and Naphtuhim, 14 And Pathrusim, and Casluhim, (out of whom came Philistim) and Caphtorim.

That which is observable and improveable in these Verses is the account here given of Nimrod, v. 8, 9, 10, 11. He is here represented as a Great Man in his Day, *He began to be a mighty One in the Earth*, i. e. whereas those that went before him were content to stand upon the same level with their Neighbours, and though every Man bare Rule in his own House, yet no Man pretended any further; Nimrod's aspiring Mind could not rest in this parity, but he would top his Neighbours, and would not only be eminent among them, but Lord over them. The same Spirit that the Giants before the Flood were acted by, who became *mighty Men, and Men of Renown*, (Gen. 6. 4.) now revived in him; so soon was that tremendous Judgment, which the Pride and Tyranny of those mighty Men brought upon the World forgotten. Note, There are some in whom Ambition and Affectation of Dominion seems to be bred in the Bone, such there have been, and will be, notwithstanding the Wrath of God oft revealed from Heaven against them. Nothing on this side Hell will humble and break the proud Spirits of some Men, in this like Lucifer, Isa. 14. 14, 15. Now,

1. Nimrod was a great Hunter; this he began with, and for this became famous to a Proverb. Every great Hunter is in remembrance of him called a Nimrod. 1. Some think he did good with his Hunting, served his Country by ridding it of the Wild Beasts which did infect it, and so insinuated himself into the Affections of his Neighbours, and got to be their Prince: Those that Exercise Authority, either are, or at least would be called Benefactors, Luk. 22. 25. 2. Others think under pretence of Hunting he gathered Men under his Command in pursuit of another Game he had to play, which was, to make himself Master of the Country, and to bring them into Subjection. He was a mighty Hunter, i. e. he was a violent Invader of his Neighbour's Rights and Properties, and a Persecutor of Innocent Men, carrying all before him, and endeavouring to make all his own by Force and Violence. He thought himself a mighty Prince, but before the Lord, i. e. in God's account he was but a mighty Hunter. Note, Great Conquerors are but great Hunters; Alexander and Caesar would not make such a Figure in Scripture History as they do in Common History: The former is represented in Prophecy but as a He-Goat pushing, Dan. 8. 5. Nimrod was a mighty Hunter against the Lord, so the Seventy; that is, 1. He set up Idolatry, as Jeroboam did, for the confirming of his usurped Dominion. That he might set up a new Government, he set up a new Religion upon the Ruin of the primitive Constitution of both: Babel was the Mother of Harlots. Or, 2. He carried on his Oppressions and Violences in defiance of God himself; daring Heaven with his Impieties, as if he and his Huntsmen could out-brave the Almighty, and were a match for the Lord of Hosts and all his Armies: As if it were a small thing to weary Men, he thinks to weary my God also, Isa. 7. 13.

2. Nimrod was a great Ruler, v. 10. The beginning of his Kingdom was Babel. Some way, or rather by Arts or Arms, he got into Power: Either chosen to it, or forcing his way to it, and so laid the Foundation of a Monarchy, which was afterwards a Head of Gold, and the Terror of the mighty, and bid fair to be universal. It doth not appear that he had any Right to rule by Birth, but either his fitness for Government recommended him, as some think, to an Election, or by Power and Policy he gradually advanc'd, and perhaps insensibly, into the Throne: See the Antiquity of Civil Government, and particularly that Form of it which lodges the Sovereignty in a single Person. If Nimrod and his Neighbours began, other Nations soon learn'd to incorporate under one Head for their common Safety and Welfare, which however it began, proved so great a Blessing to the World, that things were reckoned to go ill indeed when there was no King in Israel.

3. Nimrod was a great Builder; probably he was Architect in the Building of Babel, and there he began his Kingdom; but when his Project to rule all the Sons of Noah was baffled by the Confusion of Tongues, out of that Land he went forth into Assyria (so the Margin reads it, v. 11.) and built Nineveh, &c. that having built these Cities he might Command them, and Rule over them. Observe in Nimrod the Nature of Ambition. 1. It is boundless, much would have more, and still cries, Give, give. 2. It is restless: Nimrod, when he had four Cities under his Command, could not be content, till he had four more. 3. It is expensive: Nimrod will rather be at the Charge of rearing Cities than not have the Honour of Ruling them. The Spirit of Building is the common effect of a Spirit of Pride. 4. It is daring, and will stick at nothing: Nimrod's Name signifies Rebellion, which (if indeed he did abuse his Power to the Oppression of his Neighbours) teaches us that Tyrants to Men are Rebels to God, and their Rebellion is as the Sin of Witchcraft.

15 And Caanan begat Sidon his first-born, and Heth, 16 And the Jebusite, and the Emorite, and the Girgashite, 17 And the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Sinite, 18 And the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite: and afterward were the families of the Canaanites spread abroad. 19 And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon, as thou comest to Gerar, unto Gaza; as thou goest unto Sodom and Gomorrah, and Admah, and Zeboim, even unto Lashah. 20 These are the sons of Ham, after their families, after their tongues, in their countries, and in their nations.

Observe here, 1. That the account of the Posterity of Canaan, the Families and Nations that descended from him, and the Land they possessed is more particular than of any other in this Chapter, because these were the Nations that were to be subdued before Israel, and their Land was in process of time to become the Holy Land, Immanuel's Land; and this God had an Eye to, when in the mean time he cast the Lot of that accursed devoted Race in that spot of Ground which he had spied out for his own People; this Moses takes notice of, Deut. 32. 8. *when the most High divided to the Nations their Inheritance; he set the Bounds of the People according to the number of the Children of Israel*. 2. That by this Account it appears that the Posterity of Canaan was both Numerous and Rich, and very pleasantly seated, and yet Canaan was under a Curse, a Divine Curse, and not a Curse Causeless. Note, Those that are under the Curse of God may yet perhaps thrive and prosper greatly in this World; for we cannot know Love or Hatred, the Blessing or the Curse by what is before us, but by what is within us, Eccl. 9. 1. The Curse of God always works really, and always terribly, but perhaps it is a secret Curse, a Curse to the Soul, and doth not work visibly, or a slow Curse, and doth not work presently, but Sinners are by it reserved for, and bound over to a day of Wrath; Canaan here has a better Land than either Shem or Japheth, and yet they have a better Lot, for they inherit the Blessing.

21 Unto Shem also the father of all the children of Eber, the brother of Japheth the elder, even to him were children born. 22 The children of Shem; Elam and Ashur, and Arphaxad, and Lud, and Aram. 23 And the children of Aram; Uz, and Hul, and Gether, and Mash. 24 And Arphaxad begat Salah; and Salah begat Eber. 25 And unto Eber were born two sons: the name of one was Peleg, for in his days was the earth divided; and his brothers name was Joktan. 26 And Joktan begat Almodad,

dad, and Sheleph, and Hazarmaveth, and Jerah, 27 And Hadoram, and Uzal, and Diklah, 28 And Obal, and Abimael, and Sheba, 29 And Ophir, and Havilah, and Jobab: all these were the sons of Joktan. 30 And their dwellings was from Mesha, and as thou goest unto Sephar, a mount of the east. 31 These are the sons of Shem, after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, after their nations. 32 These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations: and by these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood.

Two things especially are observable in this account of the Posterity of Shem. 1. The Description of Shem, v. 21. we have not only his Name Shem, which signifies a Name, but two Titles to distinguish him by. (1.) He was the Father of all the Children of Eber: Eber was his great Grandson, but why should he be called the Father of all his Children rather than of all Arphaxad's or Salah's, &c. probably because Abraham and his Seed, God's Covenant People, not only descended from Heber, but from him were called Hebrews, Gen. 14. 13. Abram the Hebrew: St. Paul looked upon it as his Privilege, that he was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, Phil. 3. 5. Eber himself, we may suppose, was a Man eminent for Religion in a time of general Apostacy, and a great Example of Piety to his Family; and the Holy Tongue being commonly called from him the Hebrew, 'tis probable he retain'd it in his Family in the Confusion of Babel, as a special token of God's favour to him; and from him the Professors of Religion were called the Children of Eber; now when the inspired Penman would give Shem an honourable Title, he calls him the Father of the Hebrews, tho' when Moses wrote this they were a poor despised People, Bond-slaves in Egypt, yet being God's People, 'twas an honour to a Man to be a-kin to them. As Ham, tho' he had many Sons, is dishonoured by being called the Father of Canaan, on whose Seed the Curse was entail'd, Chap. 9. 22. So Shem, tho' he had many Sons, is dignified with the Title of the Father of Eber, on whose Seed the Blessing was entail'd. Note, A Family of Saints is more truly honourable than a Family of Nobles, Shem's Holy Seed than Ham's Royal Seed. Jacob's twelve Patriarchs than Ishmael's twelve Princes, Gen. 17. 20. Goodness is true Greatness. (2.) He was the Brother of Japheth the Elder; by which it appears that tho' Shem be commonly put first, yet he was not Noah's first-born, but Japheth was Elder: But why should this also be put as part of Shem's Title and Description, that he was the Brother of Japheth, since that had been in effect said often before: And was not he as much Brother to Ham? Probably this is intended to signify the Union of the Gentiles with the Jews in the Church. He had mentioned it as Shem's Honour, that he was the Father of the Hebrews; but lest Japheth's Seed should therefore be looked upon as for ever shut out from the Church, he here minds us, that he was the Brother of Japheth, not in Birth only, but in Blessing, for Japheth was to dwell in the Tents of Shem. Note 1. Those are Brethren in the best Manner that are so by Grace, and that meet in the Covenant of God, and in the Communion of Saints. 2. God, in dispensing his Grace, doth not go by Seniority, but the Younger sometimes gets the start of the Elder in coming into the Church, so the last shall be first, and the first last. 2. The Reason of the Name of Peleg, v. 25. because in his Days (i. e. about the time of his Birth, when his Name was given him) was the Earth divided among the Children of Men that were to inhabit it; either when Noah divided it by an orderly Distribution of it, as Joshua divided the Land of Canaan by Lot, or when upon their refusal to comply with that Division, God, in Justice, divided them by the Confusion of Tongues; which soever of these was the occasion, Pious Heber saw cause to perpetuate the remembrance of it in the Name of his Son; and justly may our Sons be called by the same Name, for in our Days in another sense is the Earth, the Church, most wretchedly divided.

CHAP. XI.

The old Distinction between the Sons of God and the Sons of Men, Professors and Prophane, survived the Flood, and now appeared again, when Men began to multiply: According to this Distinction we have in this Chapter, 1. The Dispersion of the Sons of Men at Babel, v. 1.-9. where we have, (1.) their presumptuous provoking Design, which was to build a City and a Tower, v. 1.-4. (2.) The righteous Judgment of God upon them in disappointing their Design, by confounding their Language, and so scattering them, v. 5.-9. 2. The Pedigree of the Sons of God down to Abraham, v. 10.-26. with a general account of his Family, and remove out of his native Country, v. 27. ad fin.

1 AND the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. 2 And it came to

pass as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. 3 And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. 4 And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven, and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.

The close of the foregoing Chapter tells us, that by the Sons of Noah, or, among the Sons of Noah the Nations were divided in the Earth after the Flood, i. e. They were distinguish'd into several Tribes or Colonies, and the Places they had hitherto lived in together, being grown too strait for them, 'twas either appointed by Noah, or agreed upon among his Sons, which way each several Tribe or Colony should steer its course, beginning with the Countries that were next them, and designing to proceed further and further, and to remove to a greater distance from each other, as the increase of their several Companies should require. Thus was the matter well settled 100 years after the Flood, about the time of Peleg's Birth: But the Sons of Men, it should seem were loth to scatter into distant Places, they thought the more the merrier, and the safer, and therefore they contrived to keep together, and were slack to go to possess the Land which the Lord God of their Fathers had given them, Jos. 18. 3. thinking themselves wiser than either God or Noah. Now here we have,

1. The Advantages which befriended their design of keeping together. 1. They were all of one Language, v. 1. If there were any different Language before the Flood, yet Noah's only, which 'tis likely was the same with Adam's, was preserved through the Flood, and continued after it. Now while they all understood one another, they would be the more likely to love one another, and the more capable of helping one another, and the less inclinable to separate one from another. 2. They found a very convenient commodious Place to settle in, v. 2. a Plain in the Land of Shinar, a spacious Plain, and able to contain them all, a fruitful Plain, and able to sustain them all, according as their present numbers were, not considering what room there would be for them, when they would be multiplied. Note, Inviting Accommodations for the present, often prove too strong Temptations to neglect both Duty and Interest, for hereafter.

2. The Method they took to bind themselves to one another, and to settle together in one Body. Instead of coveting to enlarge their Borders by a peaceable Departure under the Divine Protection, they contrived to fortify it, and as those that were resolved to wage War with Heaven, they put themselves into a posture of Defence. Their unanimous Resolution is, Let us build us a City and a Tower. 'Tis observable that the first Builders of Cities both in the Old World, Gen. 4. 17. and in the New World here, were not Men of the best Character and Reputation: Tents served God's Subjects to dwell in, Cities were first built by those that were Rebels against him, and Revolters from him. Observe here,

(1.) How they excited and encouraged one another to set about this work; they said, Go to, let us make Brick, v. 3. and again, v. 4. Go to, let us build us a City; by mutual excitements they made one another more Daring and Resolute. Note, Great things may be brought to pass when the Undertakers are Numerous and Unanimous, and stir up one another to it. Let us learn to provoke one another to Love, and to good Works, as Sinners stir up and encourage one another to Wicked Works. See Psal. 122. 1. Isa. 2. 3. 5. Jer. 50. 5.

(2.) What Materials they used in their Building: The Country being a Plain, yielded neither Stone nor Mortar, yet that did not discourage them from their Undertaking, but they made Brick to serve instead of Stone and Slime, or Pitch instead of Mortar. See here, 1. What shift those will make that are resolute in their Purposes; were we but thus zealously affected in a good Thing we should not balk our Work, so oft as we do, under pretence that we want Conveniences for the carrying of it on. 2. What a difference there is between Men's Building and God's; when Men build their Babel, Brick and Slime are their best Materials, but when God builds his Jerusalem, he lays even the Foundations of it with Sapphires, and all its Borders with pleasant Stones, Isa. 54. 11, 12. Rev. 21. 19.

(3.) For what ends they Built. Some think they intended hereby to secure themselves against the Waters of another Flood. God had told them indeed he would not again drown the World, but they would trust to a Tower of their own making, rather than to a Promise of God's making, or an Ark of his appointing: But if they had had this in their Eye they would have chosen to build their Tower upon a Mountain rather than upon a Plain; but three things it seems they aimed at in building this Tower.

1. It seems designed for an Affront to God himself: For they would build a Tower, whose top might reach to Heaven, which speaks a Defiance of God, or at least a Rivalship with him; they will be like the most High, or come as near him as they can, not in Holiness but in Height. They forget their Place, and scorning to creep on the Earth, they resolve to climb to Heaven, not by the Door, or Ladder, but some other way.

2. They hoped hereby to make them a Name: They would do something to be talked of now, and to give Posterity to know that there had been such Men as they in the World: Rather than die and leave no Memorandum behind them, they would leave this Monument of their Pride and Ambition, and Folly. Note, 1. Affectation of Honour and a Name among Men commonly spirits Men strangely for great and difficult Undertakings, and often betrays them to that which is Evil, and offensive to God. 2. It is just with God to bury those Names in the Dust which are raised by Sin. These Babel-Builders put themselves to a great deal of foolish Expence to make them a Name; but they could not gain, no not this point, for we do not find in any History the Name of so much as one of these Babel-Builders: Philo Judæus saith, they engraved every one his Name upon a Brick, in perpetui rei memoriam, yet neither did that serve their purpose.

3. They did it to prevent their Dispersion; lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the Earth: 'Twas done (saith Josephus) in disobedience to that Command, Chap. 9. 1. replenish the Earth. God orders them to scatter; No, say they, we will not, we will live and die together. In order hereunto they engage themselves and one another in this vast Undertaking. That they might unite in one Glorious Empire they resolve to build this City and Tower, to be the Metropolis of their Kingdom, and the Centre of their Unity. 'Tis probable the Hand of ambitious Nimrod was in all this: He could not content Himself with the Command of a particular Colony, but aimed at an universal Monarchy, in order to which, under pretence of uniting for their Common Safety, he contrives to keep them in one Body, that having them all under his Eye, he might not fail to have them under his Power. See the daring Presumption of these Sinners: Here's (1.) a bold Opposition to God; you shall be scattered, saith God, but we will not, say they; *Wo unto him that thus strives with his Maker.* (2.) A bold Competition with God. 'Tis God's Prerogative to be universal Monarch, Lord of all, and King of Kings; the Man that aims at it, offers to step into the Throne of God, who will not give his Glory to another.

5 And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men build.

6 And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. 7 Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.

8 So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of the earth, and they left off to build the city. 9 Therefore is the name of it called Babel, because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

We have here the Quashing of the Project of the Babel-Builders, and the turning of the Counsel of those froward Men headlong, that God's Counsel might stand in spite of them. Here's,

1. The Cognizance God took of the design that was on foot, v. 5. The Lord came down to see the City; 'tis an Expression after the manner of Men, he knew it as clearly and fully as Men know that which they come upon the place to view. Observe, 1. Before he gave Judgment upon their Cause, he enquir'd into it, for God is unconfessably just and fair in all his Proceedings against Sin and Sinners, and condemns none unheard. 2. 'Tis spoken of as an Act of Condescension in God to take notice even of this Building, which the Undertakers were so proud of; for he humbles himself to behold the Transactions, even the most considerable ones of this lower World, Psal. 113. 6. 3. 'Tis said to be the Tower which the Children of Men built, which speaks, 1. Their Weakness and Frailty as Men. 'Twas a very foolish thing for the Children of Men, Worms of the Earth, to defie Heaven, and to provoke the Lord to jealousy. Are they stronger than he? 2. Their Sinfulness and Obnoxiousness, they were the Sons of Adam, so 'tis in the Hebrew, nay, of that Adam, that sinful Disobedient Adam, whose Children are by Nature Children of Disobedience, Children that are Corrupters. 3. Their Distinction from the Children of God, the Professors of Religion, from whom these daring Builders had separated themselves, and

built this Tower to support and perpetuate the Separation. Pious Eber is not found among this Ungodly Crew, for he and his are called, the Children of God, and therefore their Souls come not into the secret, nor unite themselves to the Assembly of these Children of Men.

2. The Counsels and Resolves of the Eternal Mind concerning this Matter; he did not come down merely as a Spectator, but as a Judge, as a Prince to look upon these proud Men, and abase them, Job 40. 11, 12, 13, 14. Observe, 1. He suffered them to proceed a good way in their Enterprize, before he put a stop to it, that they might have space to repent, and if they had so much consideration left, might be ashamed of it, and weary of it themselves. And if not, that their Disappointment might be the more shameful, and every one that passed by might laugh at them, saying, These Men began to build, and were not able to finish: And the works of their Hands, from which they promised themselves Immortal Honour, would turn to their perpetual Reproach. Note, God has Wise and Holy Ends in permitting the Enemies of his Glory, to carry on their Impious Projects a great way, and to prosper long in their Enterprizes. 2. When they had with much Care and Toil made some considerable progress in their Building, then God determin'd to break their Measures, and disperse them. Observe, 1. The Righteousness of God which appears in the Considerations upon which he proceeded in this Resolution, v. 6. Two things he considered, 1. Their Oneness, as a Reason why they must be scattered, Behold the People is one, and they have all one language, and if they continue one, much of the Earth will be left uninhabited, the Power of their Prince will soon be Exorbitant, Wickedness and Profaneness will be unsufferably Rampant, for they will strengthen one another's Hands in it, and which is worst of all, they will be an overbalance to the Church, and these Children of Men, if thus incorporated, will swallow up the little Remnant of God's Children, therefore 'tis decreed they must not be one: Note, Unity is Policy, but it is not the infallible Mark of a true Church: yet while the Builders of Babel, tho' of different Families, Dispositions and Interests were thus Unanimous in opposing God, what a pity is it, and what a shame, that the Builders of Zion, tho' united in one common Head and Spirit should be divided as they are in serving God; but marvel not at the matter, Christ came not to send Peace. 2. Their Obstinance, now nothing will be restrained from them, and this is a reason why they must be cross'd, and thwarted in their Design: God had try'd by his Commands and Admonitions to bring them off from this Project, but in vain, therefore he must take another Course with them. See here, 1. The Sinfulness of Sin, and the wilfulness of Sinners, ever since Adam would not be restrained from the forbidden Tree, his unsanctified Seed have been impatient of Restraint, and ready to rebel against it. 2. See the Necessity of God's Judgments upon Earth, to keep the World in some order, and to tie the Hands of those that will not be check'd by Law.

2. See the Wisdom and Mercy of God in the Methods that were taken for the defeating of this Enterprize, v. 7. Go to, let us go down and there confound their Language: This was not spoken to the Angels as if God needed either their Advice or their Assistance, but God speaks it to himself, or the Father to the Son and Holy Ghost; they said, Go to, let us make Brick, and go to, let us build a Tower, animating one another to the Attempt, and now God saith, Go to, let us confound their Language; for if Men stir up themselves to Sin, God will stir up himself to take Vengeance, Isa. 59. 17, 18. Now observe here,

(1.) The Mercy of God in moderating the Penalty, and not making that proportionable to the Offence, for he deals not with us according to our Sins: He doth not say, Let us go down now, in Thunder and Lightning, and consume those Rebels in a Moment: Or, let the Earth open and swallow up them and their Building, and let them go down quick into Hell, who are climbing to Heaven the wrong way, no, only let us go down and scatter them: They deserved Death, but are only Banished or Transported, for the Patience of God is very great towards a provoking World. Punishments are chiefly reserved for the future state, God's Judgments on Sinners in this Life, compared with those, are little more than Restraints.

(2.) The Wisdom of God, in pitching upon an effectual Expedient to stay Proceedings, which was the confounding of their Language, that they might not understand one another's Speech, nor could they well join Hands when their Tongues were divided; so that this would be a very proper Means, both to take them off from their Building, for if they could not understand one another, they could not help one another, as also to dispose them to scatter, for when they could not understand one another, they could not enjoy one another. Note, God has various means and effectual ones to baffle and defeat the Projects of proud Men that set themselves against him, and particularly to divide them among themselves, either by dividing their Spirits, Jud. 9. 23. or by dividing their Tongues, as David prays, Psal. 55. 10.

3. The Execution of these Counsels of God, to the blasting and defeating of the Counsels of Men, v. 8, 9. God made them know *whose Word should stand, his or theirs*, as the Expression is, Jer. 44. 28. Notwithstanding their Oneness and Obstinacy, God was too hard for them, and wherein they dealt proudly *he was above them; for who ever harden'd his Heart against him and prospered*. Three things were done. 1. Their Language was confounded. God, who when he made Man, taught him to speak, and put Words into his Mouth fit to express the Conceptions of his Mind by, now made those Builders to forget their former Language; and to speak and understand a *new one*, which yet was the same to those of the same Tribe or Family, but not to others: Those of one Colony could converse together, but not with those of another. Now, (1.) This was a great Miracle, and a proof of the Power which God has upon the Minds and Tongues of Men, which he turneth *as the Rivers of Water*. (2.) This was a great Judgment upon those Builders, for being thus deprived of the knowledge of the ancient and holy Tongue, they were become incapable of Communicating with the true Church, in which it was retained, and probably it contributed much to their Loss of the knowledge of the true God. (3.) We all suffer by it to this day: In all the Inconveniences we sustain by the diversity of Languages, and all the Pains and Trouble we are at to learn the Languages we have occasion for, we smart for the Rebellion of our Ancestors at Babel. Nay, and those unhappy Controversies which are *strifes of Words*, and arise from our misunderstanding of one another's Language, for ought I know, are owing to this Confusion of Tongues. (4.) The Project of some to frame an universal Character in order to an universal Language; how desirable soever it may seem, yet I think is but a vain thing to attempt, for it is to strive against a Divine Sentence, by which the Languages of the Nations will be divided while the World stands. (5.) We may here lament the loss of the universal use of the Hebrew Tongue, which from henceforth was the vulgar Language of the Hebrews only, and continued so till the Captivity in Babylon, where even among them, it was exchanged for the Syriac. (6.) As the confounding of Tongues divided the Children of Men, and scattered them abroad, so the Gift of Tongues bestowed upon the Apostles, *Act. 2.* contributed greatly to the gathering together of the Children of God, which were scattered abroad, and the uniting of them in Christ, that with *one Mind and Mouth* they might glorify God, Rom. 15. 6.

2. Their Building was stoppt, they left off to build the City. This was the effect of the Confusion of their Tongues; for it not only disabled them to help one another, but probably struck such a damp upon their Spirits that they could not proceed, since they saw in this the Hand of the Lord gone out against them. Note 1. It's Wisdom to leave off that which we see God fights against. 2. God is able to blast and bring to nought all the Devices and Designs of Babel-builders. He sits in Heaven, and laughs at the Counsels of the Kings of the Earth against him and his Anointed, and will force them to confess, that there is no Wisdom nor Counsel against the Lord, Prov. 21. 30. Isa. 8. 9, 10.

3. The Builders were scattered abroad from thence upon the Face of the whole Earth, v. 8, 9. they departed in Companies after their Families, and after their Tongues, (Chap. 10. 5, 20, 31.) to the several Countries and Places allotted to them in the Division that had been made, which they knew before, but would not go to take the Possession of till now that they were forced to it. Observe here, 1. That the very thing which they feared came upon them; that Dispersion which they thought to evade by their Rebellion, they pulled upon themselves by it; for that Trouble we are most likely to fall into which we seek to evade by indirect and sinful Methods. 2. That it was God's Work; the Lord scattered them; God's Hand is to be acknowledged in all scattering Providences; if the Family be scattered, Relations scattered, Churches scattered, 'tis the Lord's doing. 3. That tho' they were as firmly in League with one another, as could be, yet the Lord scattered them; for no Man can keep together what God will put asunder. 4. That thus God justly took Vengeance on them for their Oneness in that Presumptuous Attempt to build their Tower; shameful Dispersions are the just Punishment of sinful Unions; Simon and Levi, who had been Brethren in Iniquity, were divided in Jacob, Gen. 49. 5, 7. Psal. 83. 5, 7, 13. 5. That they left behind them a perpetual Memorandum of their Reproach in the Name given to the Place, 'twas called Babel, Confusion. They that aim at a Great Name commonly come off with an Ill Name. 6. The Children of Men were now finally scattered, and never did nor ever will come all together again till the Great Day, when the Son of Man shall sit upon the Throne of his Glory, and all Nations shall be gathered before him, Mat. 25. 31, 32.

10 These are the generations of Shem: Shem was an hundred years old, and begat Arphaxad two years after the flood. 11 And Shem lived after he begat Arphaxad five hundred years, and begat sons and daughters. 12 And Arphaxad lived five and thirty years, and begat Salah. 13 And

Arphaxad lived after he begat Salah four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters. 14 And Salah lived thirty years, and begat Eber. 15 And Salah lived after he begat Eber four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters. 16 And Eber lived four and thirty years, and begat Peleg. 17 And Eber lived after he begat Peleg four hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters. 18 And Peleg lived thirty years, and begat Reu. 19 And Peleg lived after he begat Reu two hundred and nine years, and begat sons and daughters. 20 And Reu lived two and thirty years, and begat Serug. 21 And Reu lived after he begat Serug two hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters. 22 And Serug lived thirty years, and begat Nahor. 23 And Serug lived after he begat Nahor two hundred years, and begat sons and daughters. 24 And Nahor lived nine and twenty years, and begat Terah. 25 And Nahor lived after he begat Terah an hundred and nineteen years, and begat sons and daughters. 26 And Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

We have here a Genealogy, not an endless Genealogy, for here it ends in Abram the Friend of God, and leads further to Christ the promised Seed, who was the Son of Abraham, and from Abraham the Genealogy of Christ is reckoned, Mat. 1. 1, &c. so that put, Gen. 5. Gen. 11. and Mat. 1. together, and you have such an entire Genealogy of Jesus Christ as cannot be produced (for ought I know) concerning any Person in the World out of his Line, and at such a distance from the Fountain-head. And laying these three Genealogies together, we shall find, that twice ten and thrice fourteen Generations or Descents pass'd between the first and second Adam, making it clear concerning Christ, not only that he was the Son of Abraham, but the Son of Man, and the Seed of the Woman. Observe here, 1. That nothing is left upon record concerning those of this Line, but their Names and Ages; the Holy Ghost seeming to hasten through them to the story of Abraham. How little do we know of those that are gone before us in this World, even those that lived in the same Places where we live, as we likewise know little of those that are our Contemporaries, but in distant Places; we have enough to do to mind the Work of our own Day, and let God alone to require that which is past, Eccl. 3. 15. 2. That there was an observable gradual decrease in the years of their Lives, Shem reached to 600 years, which yet fell short of the Age of the Patriarchs before the Flood; the three next came short of 500, the three next did not reach to 300, and after them we read not of any that attained to 200, but Terah, and not many Ages after this, Moses reckoned 70 or 80 to be the utmost Men ordinarily arrive at: When the Earth began to be replenished, Mens lives began to shorten, so that the decrease is to be imputed to the Wise disposal of Providence, rather than to any decay of Nature; for the Elect's fake Men's Days are shortened, and being Evil, 'tis well they are few, and attain not to the years of the Lives of our Fathers, Gen. 46. 9. 3. That Eber, from whom the Hebrews were denominated, was the longest Liver of any that were born after the Flood; which perhaps was the Reward of his singular Piety, and strict adherence to the ways of God.

27 Now these are the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begat Lot. 28 And Haran died before his father Terah, in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees. 29 And Abram and Nahor took them wives; the name of Abrams wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahors wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah. 30 But Sarai was barren, she had no child. 31 And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his sons son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abrams wife, and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there. 32 And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran.

Here

Here begins the story of *Abram*, whose name is famous from henceforward in both Testaments; we have here,

1. His Country: *Ur of the Chaldees*, that was the *Land of his Nativity*, an Idolatrous Country, where even the Children of *Eber* themselves were degenerated. *Note*, Those who are through Grace, Heirs of the Land of Promise, ought to remember what was the *Land of their Nativity*; what was their corrupt and sinful state by Nature, the Rock out of which they were hewn.

2. His Relations, mentioned for his sake, and because of their Interests in the following story. 1. His Father was *Terah*, of whom it is said, *Josh. 24.* 2. that he served other Gods on t'other side of the Flood; so early did Idolatry gain footing in the World, and so hard is it even for those that have some good Principles to swim against the Stream. Tho' it is said, *v. 26.* that when *Terah* was 70 years old he begat *Abram*, *Nahor* and *Haran*, which seems to tell us that *Abram* was the eldest Son of *Terah*, and born in his 70th year, yet by comparing *v. 32.* which makes *Terah* to die in his 205th year, with *Act. 7.* 4. where it is said that *Abram* removed from *Haran* when his Father was dead, and *Chap. 12.* 4. where 'tis said that he was but 75 years old when he removed from *Haran*, it appears that he was born in the 130th year of *Terah*, and probably was his youngest Son; for in God's choices oft-times the last shall be first, and the first last. We have 2. some account of his Brethren, (1.) *Nahor*, out of whose Family both *Isaac* and *Jacob* had their Wives. (2.) *Haran*, the Father of *Lot*, of whom it is here said, *v. 28.* that he died before his Father *Terah*. *Note*, Children cannot be sure that they shall survive their Parents, for Death doth not go by Seniority, taking the eldest first; the shadow of Death is without any order, *Job 10.* 22. 'Tis likewise said that he died in *Ur of the Chaldees*, before the Happy Remove of the Family out of that Idolatrous Country. *Note*, it concerns us to hasten out of our Natural State lest Death surprize us in it. 3. His Wife was *Sarai*, who, some think, was the same with *Ischah*, the Daughter of *Haran*. *Abram* himself faith of her, that she was the Daughter of his Father, but not the Daughter of his Mother, *Chap. 20.* 12. she was 10 years younger than *Abram*.

3. His departure out of *Ur of the Chaldees*, with his Father *Terah*, his Nephew *Lot* and the rest of his Family, in obedience to the Call of God, of which we shall read more, *Chap. 12.* 1, &c. This Chapter leaves them in *Haran*, or *Charran*, a Place about the mid-way between *Ur* and *Canaan*, where they dwelt till *Terah's* Head was laid, probably because the Old Man was unable through the Infirmities of Age to proceed in his Journey. Many reach to *Charran*, and yet fall short of *Canaan*, they are not far from the Kingdom of God, and yet never come thither.

CHAP. XII.

The Pedigree and Family of *Abram* we had an account of in the foregoing Chapter; here the Holy Ghost enters upon his Story, and from hence forward, *Abram* and his Seed are almost the only Subject of the Sacred History. In this Chapter we have, 1. God's Call of *Abram* to the Land of *Canaan*, *v. 1, 2, 3.* 2. *Abram's* Obedience to this Call, *v. 4, 5.* 3. His welcome to the Land of *Canaan*, *v. 6-9.* 4. His Occasional Remove into Egypt, with an account of what happened to him there. *Abram's* Flight and Fault, *v. 10-13.* *Sarai's* Danger and Deliverance, *v. 14-20.*

NOW the LORD had said unto *Abram*, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee. 2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing. 3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

We have here the call by which *Abram* was removed out of the Land of his Nativity into the Land of Promise, which was designed both to try his Faith and Obedience, and also to separate him, and set him apart for God, and for special Services and Favours which were further designed. The Circumstances of this Call we may be somewhat helped to the knowledge of, from *Stephen's* Speech, *Act. 7.* 2. where we are told, 1. That the God of Glory appeared to him, to give him this Call, appeared in such displays of his Glory, as left *Abram* no Room to doubt the Divine Authority of this Call. God spake to him after in divers manners, but this first time, when the Correspondence was to be settled, he appeared to him as the God of Glory, and spake to him. 2. That this Call was given him in *Mesopotamia*, before he dwelt in *Charran*; therefore we rightly read it,

The Lord had said unto *Abram*, viz. in *Ur of the Chaldees*; and in Obedience to this Call, as *Stephen* further relates the Story, *v. 4.* he came out of the Land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in *Charran*, or *Haran*, about 5 years, and from thence when his Father was dead, by a fresh Command, pursuant to the former, he removed him into the Land of *Canaan*. Some think *Haran* was in *Chaldea*, and so was still a part of *Abram's* Country, or he having staid there five years, began to call it his Country, and to take root there till God let him know this was not the Place he was intended for. *Note*, If God love us and have Mercy in store for us, he will not suffer us to take up our Rest any where short of *Canaan*, but will graciously repeat his Calls till the good Work begun be perform'd, and our Souls repose in God only.

In the Call it self we have a Precept and a Promise.

1. A Trying Precept. *v. 1.* Get thee out of thy Country. Now, 1. By this Precept he was tried whether he loved God better than he loved his native Soil and dearest Friends, and whether he could willingly leave all to go along with God. His Country was become Idolatrous, his Kindred and his Father's House were a constant Temptation to him, and he could not continue with them without danger of being infected by them, therefore, Get thee out 77 77 vade tibi, get thee gone with all speed, escape for thy Life, look not behind thee, *Chap. 19.* 17. *Note*, Those that are in a sinful State are concerned to make all haste possible out of it. Get out for thy self, so some read it, i. e. for thine own Good. *Note*, those who leave their Sins and turn to God, will themselves be unspeakable Gainers by the Change, *Prov. 9.* 13. This Command, which God gave to *Abram*, is much the same with the Gospel Call, by which all the Spiritual Seed of Faithful *Abraham* are brought into Covenant with God. For, (1.) Natural Affection must give way to Divine Grace: Our Country is dear to us, our Kindred dearer, and our Father's House dearest of all, and yet they must all be hated, *Luke 14.* 26. that is, we must love them less than Christ, hate them in Comparison with him, and whenever any of these come in Competition with him, those must be postponed, and the Preference given to the Will and Honour of the Lord Jesus. (2.) Sin, and all the Occasions of it, must be forsaken, and particularly Bad Company: We must abandon all the Idols of Iniquity which have been set up in our Hearts, and get out of the way of Temptation, plucking out even a right Eye that leads us to Sin, *Mat. 5.* 29: willingly parting with that which is dearest to us when we cannot keep it without hazard of our Integrity. Those that resolve to keep the Commandments of God must quit the Society of evil Doers, *Pf. 119.* 115. *Act. 2.* 40. (3.) The World, and all our Enjoyments in it, must be looked upon with a Holy Indifferency and Contempt, we must no longer look upon it as our Country, or Home, but as our Inn, and must accordingly fit loose to it, and live above it, Get out of it in Affection.

2. By this Precept he was tried whether he could trust God further than he saw him, for he must leave his own Country to go to a Land that God would shew him; he doth not say, 'tis a Land that I will give thee, only shew thee. Nor doth he tell him what Land it was, or what kind of Land, but he must follow God with an implicit Faith, and take God's Word for it in the general, tho' he had no particular Securities given him, that he should be no loser by leaving his Country to follow God. *Note*, Those that will deal with God must deal upon trust, we must quit the things that are seen for the things that are not seen, and submit to the sufferings of this present Time, in hopes of a Glory that is yet to be revealed, *Rom. 8.* 18. for it doth not yet appear what we shall be, 1 *Joh. 3.* 2. no more than it did to *Abram* when God called him to a Land he would shew him, so teaching him to live in a continual Dependance upon his Conduct, and with his Eye ever towards him.

2. Here's an encouraging Promise, nay, 'tis a Complication of Promises, many, and exceeding great and precious. *Note*, All God's Precepts are attended with Promises to the Obedient; when he makes himself known to us as a Commander, he makes himself known also as a Rewarder: If we obey the Command, God will not fail to perform the Promise. Here are six Promises.

1. I will make of thee a great Nation: When God took him from his own People, he promised to make him the Head of another People; he cut him off from being the Branch of a wild Olive, to make him the Root of a good Olive. This promise was, 1. A great Relief to *Abram's* Burthen, for he had now no Child. *Note*, God knows how to suit his Favours to the Wants and Necessities of his Children. He that has a Plaster for every Sore, will provide one for that first that is most painful. 2. A great Trial to *Abram's* Faith, for his Wife had been long Barren, so that if he believe it must be against Hope, and his faith must build purely upon that Power which can out of Stones raise up Children unto *Abraham*, and make them a great Nation. *Note*, (1.) God makes Nations. By him they are born at once, *Isa. 66.* 8. and he speaks to build and plant them, *Jer. 18.* 9. And

And (2.) If a Nation be made great in Wealth and Power, it is God that greatens it. (3.) God can raise a great Nation out of a dry ground, and can make a little one to be a thousand.

2. *I will bless thee*, either particularly with the Blessing of Fruitfulness and Increase, as he had blessed Adam and Noah, or, in general, *I will bless thee* with all manner of Blessings, both of the upper and nether Springs: Leave thy Father's House, and I will give thee a Father's Blessing, better than that of thy Progenitors. Note, Obedient Believers shall be sure to inherit the Blessing.

3. *I will make thy Name Great*: By deserting his Country he lost his Name there; care not for that (saith God) but trust me, and I'll make thee a greater Name than ever thou couldst have had there. Having no Child, he feared he should have no Name, but God will make him a great Nation, and so make him a great Name. Note, 1. God is the Fountain of Honour, and from him Promotion comes, 1 Sam. 2. 8. 2. The Name of Obedient Believers shall certainly be Celebrated and made Great: The best Report is that which the Elders obtained by Faith, Heb. 11. 2.

4. *Thou shalt be a blessing*, that is, 1. Thy Happiness shall be a Sampler of Happiness, so that those who would bless their Friends, shall only pray that God would make them like Abram, as Ruth 4. 11. Note, God's dealings with obedient Believers are so kind and gracious, that we need not desire for our selves or our Friends to be any better dealt with, that's Blessedness enough. 2. Thy Life shall be a Blessing to the Places where thou shalt Sojourn. Note, Good Men are the Blessings of their Country, and it is their unspeakable Honour and Happiness to be made so.

5. *I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee*. This made it a kind of a League Offensive and Defensive, between God and Abram. Abram heartily espoused God's Cause, and here God promiseth to Interest himself in his; 1. He promiseth to be a Friend to his Friends, to take Kindnesses shewn to him as done to himself, and to recompense them accordingly. God will take care that none be losers at long run, by any Service done for his People, even a Cup of cold Water shall be Rewarded. 2. He promiseth to appear against his Enemies; there were those that hated and cursed even Abram himself; but while their causeless Curses could not hurt Abram, God's righteous Curse would certainly overtake and ruin them, Num. 24. 9. This is a good reason why we should Bless them that Curse us, because it is enough that God will Curse them, Psal. 38. 13, 14, 15.

6. *In thee shall all Families of the Earth be blessed*: This was the Promise that crowned all the rest, for it points at the Messiah, in whom all the Promises are *Yea and Amen*. Note, 1. Jesus Christ is the great Blessing of the World, the greatest that ever the World was blest with: He is a Family Blessing, by him Salvation is brought to the House, Luke. 19. 9. When we reckon up our Family Blessings, let us put Christ in the Imprimis, as the Blessing of Blessings. But how are all the Families of the Earth blessed in Christ, when so many are Strangers to him? Answer 1. All that are Blessed are Blessed in him, Act. 4. 12. 2. All that believe, of what Family forever they are, shall be blessed in him. 3. Some of all the Families of the Earth are blessed in him. 4. There are some Blessings which all the Families of the Earth are blessed with in Christ, for the Gospel Salvation is a Common Salvation.

2. It is a great Honour to be related to Christ: This made Abram's Name Great, that the Messiah was to descend from his Loins, much more than that he should be the Father of many Nations. 'Twas Abram's Honour to be his Father by Nature, 'twill be ours to be his Brethren by Grace, Mat. 12. 50.

4 So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. 5 And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brothers son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan they came.

Here's 1. Abram's removal out of his Country, out of Ur first, and afterwards out of Haran, in Compliance with the Call of God, so Abram departed: He was not disobedient to the Heavenly Vision; but did as he was bidden, not *confering with Flesh and Blood*, Gal. 1. 15, 16. His Obedience was speedy, and without delay, submissive, and without dispute.

pute, for he went out, not knowing whether he went, Heb. 11. 8. but knowing whom he followed, and under whose Conduct he went. Thus God called him to his Foot, Isa. 41. 2.

2. His Age when he removed; he was 75 years old, an Age when he should rather have had Rest and Settlement; but if God will have him to begin the World again, now in his old Age he will submit. Here's an Instance of an old Convert. 3. The Company and Cargo that he took with him.

1. He took his Wife and his Nephew Lot with him, not by Force, and against their Wills, but by Persuasions; Sarai, his Wife, would be sure to go with him; God had joyned them together, and nothing should put them asunder. If Abram leave all to follow God, Sarai will leave all to follow Abram, though neither of them knew whither. And it was a Mercy to Abram to have such a Companion in his Travels, a Help meet for him. Note, It is very Comfortable when Husband and Wife agree to go together in the way to Heaven. Lot also, his Kinsman, was influenced by Abram's good Example, who was perhaps his Guardian after the Death of his Father, and he was willing to go along with him too. Note, Those that go to Canaan need not go alone, for tho' few find the strait Gate, blessed be God some do; And it is our Wisdom to go with those with whom God is, (Zech. 8. 23.) where-ever they go.

2. They took all their Effects with them: *All their Substance* and moveable Goods that they had gathered. For, (1.) With themselves they would give up their All to be at God's Dispose, would keep back no Part of the Price, but venture all in one Bottom, knowing it was a good Bottom. (2.) They would furnish themselves with that which was requisite, both for the service of God, and the supply of their Family in the Country whither they were going. To have thrown away his Substance because God had promised to bless him, had been to tempt God, not to trust him. (3.) They would not be under any Temptation to return, therefore they leave not a hoof behind, lest that should make them mindful of the Country from which they came out.

3. They took with them the Souls that they had gotten, that is, 1. The Servants they had bought, which were part of their Substance, but are called Souls, to mind Masters that their poor Servants have Souls, precious Souls, which they ought to take care of, and provide Food Convenient for. 2. The Proselytes they had made and persuaded to attend the Worship of the true God, and to go with them to Canaan: The Souls which (as one of the Rabbins expresseth it) they had gathered under the Wings of the Divine Majesty. Note, Those who serve and follow God themselves, should do all they can to bring others to serve and follow him too. Those Souls they are said to have gained; we must reckon our selves true gainers if we can but win Souls to Christ.

Lastly, Here's their happy arrival at their Journeys end, They went forth to go into the Land of Canaan, so they did before, Chap. 11. 31. and then took up short, but now they held on their way, and to the Land of Canaan they came, by the good Hand of their God upon them, and by a fresh Revelation were told, this was the Land God promised to shew them. They were not discouraged by the difficulties they met with in their way, nor diverted by the Delights they met with, but pressed forwards. Note, 1. Those that set out for Heaven must persevere to the end, still reaching forth to those things that are before. 2. That which we undertake in obedience to God's Command, and an humble Attendance upon his Providence, will certainly succeed, and end with Comfort at last.

6 And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land. 7 And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him. 8 And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Beth-el, and pitched his tent, having Beth-el on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD. 9 And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south.

One would have expected that Abram having had such an extraordinary Call to Canaan, some great Event should have followed upon his arrival there, that he should have been

been introduc'd with all possible marks of Honour and Respect, and that the Kings of Canaan should immediately have *surrendered* their Crowns to him, and done him Homage: No, he comes not *with Observation*, little Notice is taken of him, for still God will have him *to live by Faith*, and to look upon Canaan even when he was in it as a Land of Promise: Therefore observe here,

1. How little Comfort he had in the Land he came to, for,

(1.) He had it not to himself, *the Canaanite was then in the Land*. He found the Country peopled and possessed by *Canaanites*, who were likely to be but bad Neighbours and worse Landlords; and for ought appears he could not have ground to pitch his Tent on, but by their Permission: Thus the accursed *Canaanites* seemed to be in better Circumstances than blessed *Abram*. Note, The Children of this World have commonly more of it than God's Children.

(2.) He had not a Settlement in it. He *passed through the Land*, v. 6. He *removed to a Mountain*, v. 8. He *journeyed going on still*, v. 9. Observe here, 1. That sometimes it is the Lot of good Men to be unsettled, and obliged oft to remove their Habitation. Holy *David* had his *wandings*, his *sittings*, *Psal.* 56. 8. 2. Our removes in this World, are often into various Conditions. *Abram* sojourned first in a Plain, v. 6. then in a Mountain, v. 8. God has *set the one over against the other*. 3. All Good People must look upon themselves as Strangers and Sojourners in this World, and by Faith sit loose to it as a *strange Country*. So *Abram* did, *Heb.* 11. 8. 4. While we are here in this present state, we must be *journeying and going on still*, from strength to strength, as having not yet attained.

2. How much Comfort he had in the God he followed, when he could have little satisfaction in converse with the *Canaanites* whom he found there, he had abundance of pleasure in *Communion with that God* who brought him thither, and did not leave him. Communion with God is kept up by the Word and Prayer, and by these, according to the Methods of that Dispensation, *Abram's* Communion with God was kept up in the Land of his Pilgrimage.

(1.) God appeared to *Abram*, probably in a Vision, and spoke to him good Words, and comfortable Words, *Unto thy Seed will I give this Land*. Note, 1. No Place or condition of Life can shut us out from the Comfort of God's gracious Visits. *Abram* is a Sojourner, unsettled, among *Canaanites*, and yet here also he meets with him that *lives and sees him*. Enemies may part us and our Tents, us and our Altars, but not us and our God. Nay, 2. Those that faithfully follow God in a way of Duty, tho' he lead them from their Friends, he will himself make up that Loss by his gracious appearances to them. 3. God's Promises are sure and satisfying to all those who conscientiously observe and obey his Precepts; and those, who in Compliance with God's Call, leave or lose any thing that is dear to them, shall be sure of something else abundantly better in lieu of it. *Abram* had left the Land of his *Nativity*; well, faith God, I'll give thee this Land, *Mat.* 19. 29. 4. God reveals himself and his Favours to his People by degrees: Before he had promised to shew him this Land, now, to give it him: As Grace is growing, so is Comfort. 5. 'Tis Comfortable to have Land of God's giving, not by Providence only, but by Promise. 6. Mercies to the Children are Mercies to the Parents: I'll give it, *not to thee*, but to *thy seed*; 'tis a Grant in Reversion, to his Seed, which yet it should seem *Abram* understood also as a Grant to himself of a better Land, in Reversion, of which this was a Type; for he looked for a *Heavenly Country*, *Heb.* 11. 16.

(2.) *Abram* attended on God in his instituted Ordinances. He built an Altar unto the Lord who appeared to him, v. 7. built an Altar, and called on the Name of the Lord, v. 8. Now consider this, 1. as done upon a special Occasion; when God appeared to him, then and there built an Altar, with an Eye to the God that appeared to him: Thus he returned God's Visit, and kept up his Correspondence with Heaven, as one that resolved it should not fall on his side: Thus he acknowledged with *Thankfulness* God's Kindness to him in making him that gracious Visit and Promise: And thus he testified his Confidence in, and Dependence upon the Word which God had spoken. Note, An active Believer can heartily bless God for a Promise which he doth not yet see the Performance of, and build an Altar to the Honour of God that appears to him, tho' he doth not yet appear for him. 2. As his constant Practice whithersoever he removed: As soon as *Abram* was got to Canaan, tho' he was but a Stranger and Sojourner there, yet he set up, and kept up the Worship of God in his Family; and where-ever he had a Tent, God had an Altar, and that an Altar sanctified by Prayer. For he minded not only the Ceremonial part of Religion, the offering of Sacrifice, but made Conscience of the natural Duty of seeking to his God, and calling on his Name, that *spiritual Sacrifice with which God is well-pleased*: He preached concerning the Name of the Lord, i. e. he instructed his Family and Neighbours in the knowledge of the true God, and his Holy Religion. The souls he had gotten in Haran, being Discipled, must be further taught. Note, Those that would approve themselves the Children of faithful *Abram*, and would inherit the Blessing of *Abram*,

must make Conscience of keeping up the Solemn Worship of God particularly in their Families, according to the Example of *Abram*: The way of Family Worship is a good old way, is no novel Invention, but the ancient usage of all the Saints. *Abram* was very Rich, and had a numerous Family, was now unsettled, and in the midst of Enemies, and yet where-ever he pitched his Tent he built an Altar; where-ever we go let us not fail to take our Religion along with us.

10 And there was a famine in the land: and *Abram* went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was grievous in the land. 11 And it came to pass when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon. 12 Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive. 13 Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee.

Here's, 1. A Famine in the Land of Canaan, a grievous Famine; that Fruitful Land turned into Barrenness, not only to punish the Iniquity of the Canaanites that dwell therein, but to exercise the Faith of *Abram* that sojourned therein: And a very sore Trial it was: It try'd what he would think, (1.) of God that brought him hither, whether he would not be ready to say with his murmuring Seed, that he was brought forth to be killed with Hunger, *Exod.* 16. 3. Nothing short of a strong Faith could keep up good Thoughts of God under such a Providence. (2.) Of the Land of Promise; whether he would think the Grant of it worth the accepting, and a valuable Consideration for the relinquishing of his own Country, when for ought now appeared, it was a Land that eat up the Inhabitants: Now he was tried whether he could trust the God that brought him to Canaan, to maintain him there, and rejoice in him as the God of his Salvation, when the Fig-tree did not blossom, *Hab.* 3. 17, 18. Note, (1.) Strong Faith is commonly exercis'd with divers Temptations, that it may be found to Praise and Honour and Glory, 1 *Pet.* 1. 6, 7. (2.) It pleases God sometimes to try those with great Afflictions that are but young beginners in Religion. (3.) It is possible for a Man to be in the way of Duty, and in the way to Happiness, and yet meet with great Troubles and Disappointments. 2. *Abram's* remove into Egypt upon occasion of this Famine. See how wisely God provides, that there should be Plenty in one Place when there was Scarcity in another, that as Members of the great Body we may not say to one another, I have no need of you. God's Providence took care there should be supply in Egypt, and *Abram's* Prudence made use of the Opportunity; for we tempt God, and do not trust him, if in time of Distress we use not the means he hath graciously provided for our Preservation; we must not expect needless Miracles. But that which is especially observable here to the Praise of *Abram* is, that he did not offer to return upon this occasion to the Country from which he came out, nor so much as towards it: The Land of his *Nativity* lay North-East from Canaan, and therefore when he must for a time quit Canaan, he chuses to go to Egypt which lay South-West, the contrary way, that he might not so much as seem to look back: See *Heb.* 11. 15, 16. Further observe, when he went down into Egypt 'twas to sojourn there, not to dwell there. Note, 1. Tho' Providence for a time may cast us into bad Places, yet we ought to tarry there no longer than needs must; we may Sojourn there where we may not settle. 2. A Good Man, while he is on this side Heaven, where-ever he is, he is but a Sojourner.

3. A great Fault which *Abram* was guilty of in denying his Wife, and pretending that she was his Sister. The Scripture is impartial in relating the Miscarriages of the most celebrated Saints, not for our Imitation but our Admonition; that he who thinks he stands may take heed lest he fall. 1. His Fault was dissembling his Relation to Sarai, and equivocating concerning it, and teaching his Wife (and probably all his Attendants) to do so too. What he said was in a Sense true, *Chap.* 20. 12. but with a purpose to deceive; he so concealed a further Truth, as in effect to deny it, and to expose thereby both his Wife and the Egyptians to Sin. 2. That which was at the bottom of it was a jealous timorous Fancy he had that some or other of the Egyptians would be so charmed with the Beauty of Sarai, Egypt producing few such Beauties, that if they should know he was her Husband they would find some way or other to take him off, that they might marry her. He presumes they would rather be guilty of Murder than of Adultery, such a heinous Crime was it then accounted, and such a sacred Regard had to the Marriage Bond: Hence he infers, without any good Reason, they will kill me. Note, The Fear of Man brings a Snare, and many are driven to Sin by the Dread of Death, *Luke.* 12. 4, 5. The Grace *Abram* was most eminent for was Faith, and yet he thus fell thro' Unbelief and Distrust of the Divine Providence, even after God had appeared to him twice. Alas, What will become of the Willows when the Cedars are thus shaken!

14 And it came to pass, that when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman, that she was very fair. 15 The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. 16 And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he-asses, and men-servants, and maid-servants, and she-asses, and camels. 17 And the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues, because of Sarai Abram's wife. 18 And Pharaoh called Abram, and said, What is this that thou hast done unto me? Why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife? 19 Why saidst thou, She is my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife: now therefore, behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way. 20 And Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him: and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had.

Here's, 1. The Danger Sarai was in of having her Chastity violated by the King of Egypt. And without doubt the Peril of Sin is the greatest Peril we can be in. Pharaoh's Princes, (his Pimps rather) saw her, and observing what a comely Woman she was, they commended her before Pharaoh; not for that which was really her Praise, her Virtue and Modesty, her Faith and Piety, those were no Excellencies in their Eyes, but they admired her Beauty, which they thought too good for the Embraces of a Subject, and therefore recommended her to the King, and she was presently taken into Pharaoh's House, as Esther into the Seraglio of Ahasuerus, Esth. ii. 8. in order to her being taken into his Bed. Now we must not look upon Sarai as standing fair for Preferment, but as entering into Temptation, and the Occasions of it were her own Beauty, which is a Snare to many, and Abram's Equivocation, which is a Sin that commonly is an Inlet to much Sin. While Sarai was in this Danger, Abram far'd the better for her sake, Pharaoh gave him Sheep and Oxen, &c. (v. 16.) to gain his Consent with her whom they supposed his Sister. We cannot think that Abram expected this when he came down into Egypt, much less that he had an Eye to it when he denied his Wife, but God brought Good out of Evil. And thus the Wealth of the Sinner proves, some way or other, laid up for the Just. 2. The Deliverance of Sarai from this Danger. For if God did not deliver us many a time by Prerogative, out of those Straits and Distresses which we bring our selves into by our own Sin and Folly, and which therefore we could not expect any deliverance from by Promise, we should soon be ruined, nay, we had been ruined long ere this. He deals not with us according to our Deserts.

1. God chastised Pharaoh, and so prevented the Progress of his Sin. Note, Those are happy Chastisements that hinder us in a sinful Way, and effectually bring us to our Duty, and particularly to the Duty of restoring that which we have wrongfully taken and detained. Observe, not Pharaoh only, but his House was plagued: probably those Princes, especially that had commended Sarai to Pharaoh. Note, Partners in Sin are justly made Partners in the Punishment. Those that serve others Lufts must expect to share in their Plagues. We are not told particularly what these Plagues were, but doubtless there was something in the Plagues themselves, or some Explication added to them sufficient to convince them that it was for Sarai's sake they were thus plagued.

2. Pharaoh reproved Abram, and then dismissed him with Respect. (1.) The Reproof was calm, but very just. What is this that thou hast done? What an ill thing! How unbecoming a wife and good Man! Note, If those that profess Religion do that which is unfair and disingenuous, especially if they say what which borders upon a Lie, they must expect to hear of it, and have reason to thank those that will tell them of it. We find a Prophet of the Lord justly reproved and upbraided by a Heathen Ship-Master, Jon. i. 6. Pharaoh reasons with him, Why didst thou not tell me that she was thy Wife? Intimating, that if he had known that, he would not have taken her to his House. Note, It is a Fault too common among good People to entertain Suspensions of others beyond what there's Cause for. We have often found more of Virtue, Honour and Conscience in some People, than we thought there was, and it ought to be a Pleasure to us to be thus disappointed, as Abram was here, who found Pharaoh to be a better Man than he expected. Charity teaches us to hope the best.

(2.) The Dismission was kind and very generous. He returned him his Wife without offering any Injury to her Honour, v. 18. Behold thy Wife, take her. Note, Those that would pre-

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vent Sin, must remove the Temptation, or get out of the Way of it. He also sent him away in Peace, and was so far from any Design to Kill him, as he apprehended, that he took particular Care of him. Note, We often perplex and ensnare our selves with Fears, which soon appear to have been altogether groundless. We many a time fear, where no Fear is. We fear the Fury of the Oppressor, as tho' he were ready to destroy, when really there's no Danger, Isa. 51. 13. It had been more for Abram's Credit and Comfort to have told the truth at first; for after all, Honesty is the best Policy. Nay, 'tis said, v. 20. Pharaoh commanded his Men concerning him, that is, 1. He charged them not to injure him in any thing. Note, It is not enough for those in Authority that they do no Hurt themselves, but they must restrain their Servants and those about 'em from doing Hurt. Or, 2. He appointed them, when Abram was dispos'd to return home, after the Famine, to conduct him safe out of the Country, as his Convoy. Probably he was allarm'd by the Plagues, v. 17. and infer'd from them that Abram was a particular Favourite of Heaven, and therefore for fear of the like, took special Care he should receive no Injury in his Country. Note, God has often raised up Friends for his People, by making Men know it is at their Peril if they hurt them. 'Tis a dangerous thing to offend Christ's little ones, Mat. 18. 6. To this passage, among others, the Psalmist refers, Psal. 105. 13, 14, 15. He reproved Kings for their sakes, saying, Touch not mine Anointed. Perhaps if Pharaoh had not sent him away, he would have been tempted to stay in Egypt, and to forget the Land of Promise. Note, Sometimes God makes use of the Enemies of his People, to convince them, and mind them that this World is not their Rest, but they must think of departing. Lastly, Observe a Resemblance betwixt this Deliverance of Abram out of Egypt, and the deliverance of his Seed thence Four Hundred and Thirty Years after Abram went into Egypt on occasion of a Famine, so did they. He was fetched out with great Plagues on Pharaoh, so were they. As Abram was dismiss'd by Pharaoh, and enriched with the Spoil of the Egyptians, so were they. For God's Care of his People is the same Yesterday, to Day, and for ever.

CHAP. XIII.

In this Chapter we have a further Account concerning Abram. 1. In general of his Condition and Behaviour in the Land of Promise, which was now the Land of his Pilgrimage. 1. His Removes, v. 1. 3, 4, 18. 2. His Riches, v. 2. 3. His Devotion, v. 4, 18. 2. A particular Account of a Quarrel that happen'd between him and Lot. (1.) The unhappy Occasion of their Strife, v. 5, 6. (2.) The Parties concerned in the Strife, with the Aggravation of it, v. 7. (3.) The taking up of the Quarrel by the Prudence of Abram, v. 8, 9. (4.) Lot's Departure from Abram to the Plain of Sodom, v. 10-14. (5.) God's Appearance to Abram to confirm the Promise of the Land of Canaan to him, v. 14-17.

1 AND Abram went up out of Egypt, he and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south. 2 And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold. 3 And he went on his journeys from the south, even to beth-el, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Beth-el and Hai; 4 Unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first, and there Abram called on the name of the LORD.

Here's, 1. Abram's Return out of Egypt, v. 1. He came himself, and brought all his with him back again to Canaan. Note, Tho' there may be occasion to go sometimes into Places of Temptation, yet we must hasten out of them as soon as possible. See Ruth i. 6.

2. His Wealth, v. 2. He was very rich. He was very heavy, so the Hebrew Word signifies. For Riches are a Burthen, and they that will be rich do but load themselves with thick Clay, Hab. 2. 6. There's a Burthen of Care in getting 'em, Fear in keeping 'em, Temptation in using 'em, Guilt in abusing 'em, Sorrow in losing 'em, and a Burthen of Account at last to be given up concerning them. Great Possessions do but make Men heavy and unwieldy. Abram was not only rich in Faith and Good Works, and in the Promises, but he was rich in Cattle, and in Silver, and Gold. Note, 1. God in his Providence sometimes makes Good Men Rich Men, and teaches them how to abound as well as how to suffer want. 2. The Riches of Good Men are the Fruits of God's Blessing. God had said to Abram, I will bless thee, and that Blessing made him Rich without Sorrow, Pr. 10. 23. 3. True Piety will very well consist with Great Prosperity. Tho' it is hard for a Rich Man to get to Heaven, yet it is not impossible, Mar. 10. 23, 24. Abram was very Rich, and yet very Religious. Nay, as Piety is a Friend to outward Prosperity, 1 Tim. 4. 8. so outward Prosperity if well managed, is an Ornament to Piety, and an Opportunity of doing for much the more good.

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3. His Remove to Bethel, v. 13, 4. Thither he went not only because there he had formerly had his Tent, and he was willing to go among his old Acquaintance; but because there he had formerly had his Altar, and tho' the Altar was gone, probably he himself having taken it down, when he left the Place, left it should be polluted by the idolatrous Canaanites; yet he came to the Place of the Altar, either to revive the Remembrance of the sweet Communion he had had with God at that Place, or perhaps to pay the Vows he had there made to God when he undertook his Journey into Egypt. Long after God sent Jacob to this same Place on that Errand, Chap. 35. 1. *Go up to Bethel where thou vowedst the Vow.* We have need to be minded, and should take all Occasions to mind our selves of our solemn Vows, and perhaps the Place where they were made, may help to bring 'em fresh to mind, and it may therefore do us good to visit it.

3. His Devotion there. His Altar was gone, so that he could not offer Sacrifice, but he called on the Name of the Lord, as he had done, Chap. 12. 8. Note, 1. All God's People are praying People. You may as soon find a living Man without Breath, as a living Christian without Prayer. 2. Those that would approve themselves upright with their God, must be constant and persevering in the Services of Religion. Abram did not leave his Religion behind him in Egypt, as many do in their Travels. 3. When we cannot do what we would, we must make Confidence of doing what we can in the Acts of Devotion. When we want an Altar, let us not be wanting in Prayer, but wherever we are, call on the Name of the Lord.

5 And Lot also which went with Abram had flocks, and herds, and tents. 6 And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together. 7 And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's Cattle, and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: And the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land. 8 And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen: for we be brethren. 9 Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thy self, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left-hand, then I will go to the right: or if thou depart to the right-hand then will I go to the left.

We have here an unhappy falling out between Abram and Lot, who had hitherto been inseparable Companions. See v. 1. and Chap. xii. 4. but now parted.

1. The Occasion of their Quarrel was their Riches. We read, v. 2. how Rich Abram was, now here we are told, v. 5. that Lot which went with Abram was Rich too, and therefore God blessed him with Riches, because he went with Abram. Note, 1. It's good being in good Company, and going with those with whom God is, *Zech. 8. 1.* 2. Those that are Partners with God's People in their Obedience and Sufferings, shall be Sharers with them in their Joys and Comforts, *1 Jo. 1. 10.* Now, they both being very Rich, the Land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell comfortably and peaceably together. So that their Riches may be consider'd,

(1.) As setting them at a distance one from another; because the Place was too strait for them, and they had not room for their Stocks, 'twas necessary they should live asunder. Note, Every Comfort in this World has its Cross attending it. Business is a Comfort, but it has this Inconvenience in it, that it allows us not the Society of those we love so oft, nor so long as we could wish.

(2.) As setting them at variance one with another. Note, Riches are often an Occasion of Strife and Contention among Relations and Neighbours. This is one of those foolish and hurtful Lusts, which they that will be Rich fall into, *1 Tim. vi. 9.* Riches not only afford Matter for Contention, and are the Things most commonly striven about, but they also stir up a Spirit of Contention, by making People proud and covetous. *Meum and Tuum* are the great Make-bates of the World. Poverty and Travel, Wants and Wandrings, could not separate between Abram and Lot, but Riches did it. Friends are soon lost; but God is a Friend from whose Love neither the Height of Prosperity, nor the Depth of Adversity shall separate us.

2. The immediate Instruments of the Quarrel were their Servants. The Strife began between the Herdmen of Abram's Cattle, and the Herdmen of Lot's Cattle, (v. 7.) 'tis likely they strove which should have the better Pasture, or the better Water, and both interest'd their Masters in the Quarrel. Note, Bad Servants often make a great deal of Mischief in Families, by their Pride and Passion, their Lying, Slandering, and Tale-bearing. It is a

very wicked thing for Servants to do ill Offices between Relations and Neighbours, and to sow Discord; those that do so are the Devil's Agents, and their Masters worst Enemies.

3. The Aggravation of the Quarrel, was that the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the Land: This made the Quarrel, (1.) Very Dangerous. If Abram and Lot cannot agree to feed their Flocks together, 'tis well if the common Enemy do not come upon them and plunder them both. Note, The Division of Families and Churches often prove the Ruine of them. (2.) Very Scandalous. No doubt the Eyes of all the Neighbours were upon them, especially because of the Singularity of their Religion, and the extraordinary Sanctity they profess'd, and Notice would soon be taken of this Quarrel, and Improvement made of it to their Reproach by the Canaanites and Perizzites. Note, The Quarrels of Professors are the Reproach of Profession, and give occasion, as much as any thing, to the Enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.

4. The taking up of this Quarrel was very happy. 'Tis best to preserve the Peace that it be not broken, but the next Best is, if Differences do happen, with all speed to accommodate them, and quench the Fire that's broke out. The Motion for staying this Strife was made by Abram, tho' he was the Senior, and superiour Relation, v. 8.

1. His Petition for Peace was very affectionate; *Let there be no Strife, I pray thee.* Abram here shews himself to be a Man, (1.) Of a cool Spirit, that had the command of his Passion, and knew how to turn away Wrath with a soft Answer. Those that would keep the Peace must never render Railing for Railing. (2.) Of a condescending Spirit: He was willing to beseech even his Inferiour to be at Peace, and made the first Overture of Reconciliation. Conquerors reckon it their Glory to give Peace by Power, and it is no less so to give Peace by the Meekness of Wisdom. Note, The People of God should always approve themselves a peaceable People; whatever others are for, they must be for Peace.

2. His Plea for Peace was very cogent. (1.) Let there not be a Strife between me and thee. Let the Canaanites and Perizzites contend about Trifles, but let not thee and me fall out who know better things, and look for a better Country. Note, Professors of Religion should of all others be careful to avoid Contention. *You shall not be so, Luke xxii. 24, 26. We have no such Custom, 1 Cor. xi. 16.* Let there be no Strife between me and thee, who have liv'd together and lov'd one another so long. Note, The Remembrance of Old Friendships should quickly put an end to New Quarrels which at any time happen. (2.) Let it be remembered that we are Brethren. *Heb. We are Men Brethren; a double Argument, 1. We are Men. And as Men, we are mortal Creatures, we may die to Morrow, and are concerned to be found in Peace; we are rational Creatures, and should be rul'd by Reason. We are Men and not Brutes, Men and not Children; we are sociable Creatures, let us be so then. 2. We are Brethren. Men of the same Nature, of the same Kindred and Family, of the same Religion; Companions in Obedience, Companions in Patience. Note, The Consideration of our Relation to each other as Brethren should always prevail to moderate our Passions, and either to prevent or put an end to our Contentions. Brethren should love as Brethren.*

3. His Proposal for Peace was very fair. Many who profess to be for Peace, yet will do nothing towards it, but Abram hereby approv'd himself a real Friend to Peace that he propos'd an unexceptionable Expedient for the preserving of it, v. 9. *Is not the whole Land before thee? q. d. Why should we quarrel for room while there is room enough for us both? 1. He concludes they must part, and is very desirous they might part Friends. Separate thy self, I pray thee, from me. What could be expressed more affectionately? He doth not expel him, and force him away, but advises that he should separate himself. Nor doth he charge him to depart, but humbly desires him to withdraw. Note, Those that have Power to command, yet sometimes for Love's sake, and Peace sake, should rather beseech, as Paul, Philemon, v. 8, 9. When the great God condescends to beseech us, we may well afford to beseech one another, to be reconciled, 2 Cor. 5. 20. 2. He offers him a sufficient Share of the Land they were in. Tho' God had promised Abram to give this Land to his Seed, *Ch. 12. 7.* and it doth not appear that ever any such Promise was made to Lot, which Abram might have insisted on to the total Exclusion of Lot, yet he allows him to come in Partner with him, and tenders an equal Share to one that had not an equal Right; and will not make God's Promise to patronize his Quarrel, nor under the Protection of that, put any Hardship on his Kinsman. 3. He gives him his Choice, and offers to take up with his Leavings. *If thou wilt take the Left-hand, I will go to the Right.* There was all the reason in the World that Abram should chuse first, yet he recedes from his Right. Note, It is a noble Conquest to be willing to yield for Peace sake, 'tis the Conquest of our selves, and our own Pride and Passion, *Mat. v. 39, 40.* 'Tis not only the Punctilio of Honour, but even Interest it self, that in many Cases must be sacrificed to Peace.*

10 And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it *was* well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, *even* as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. 11 Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other. 12 Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom. 13 But the men of Sodom were wicked, and sinners before the LORD, exceedingly.

We have here the Choice that Lot made when he parted from Abram; upon this Occasion one would have expected, 1. That he should have expressed an unwillingness to part from Abram, and that at least he should have done it with Reluctancy. 2. That he should have been so Civil as to have remitted the Choice back again to Abram. But we find not any Instance of Deference or Respect to his Uncle in the whole Management. Abram having offer'd him the Choice, without Compliment he accepted it, and made his Election. Passion and Selfishness make Men Rude. Now in the Choice which Lot made we may observe,

1. How much he had an Eye to the Goodness of the Land. He beheld all the Plain of Jordan, the flat Country in which Sodom stood, that it was admirably well Watered every where, (and perhaps the Strife had been about Water, which made him particularly fond of that Convenience) and so Lot chose him all that Plain, v. 10, 11. That Valley which was like the Garden of Eden it self, now yielded him a most pleasant Prospect, 'twas in his Eye beautiful for Situation, the Joy of the whole Earth, and therefore he doubted not but it would yield him a comfortable Settlement, and that in such a fruitful Soil he should certainly thrive and grow very Rich, and this was all he looked at. But what came of it? Why, the next News we here of him is, that he's in the Briars among'em, he and his carried Captive; while he lived among them he vexed his righteous Soul with their Conversation, and never had good Day with them, till at last God fired the Town over his Head, and forced him to the Mountain for Safety, who chose the Plain for Wealth and Pleasure. Note, Sensual Choices are Sinful Choices, and seldom speed well. Those that in chusing Relations, Callings, Dwellings, or Settlements, are guided and governed by the Lusts of the Flesh, the Lusts of the Eye, or the Pride of Life, and consult not the Interests of their Souls and their Religion, cannot expect God's Preference with them, nor his Blessing upon them, but are commonly Disappointed even in that which they principally aim'd at, and mis of that which they promis'd themselves Satisfaction in. In all our Choices this Principle should over-rule us, That *that's best for us which is best for our Souls*.

2. How little he consider'd the Badness of the Inhabitants. But the Men of Sodom were wicked, v. 13. Note, 1. Tho' all are Sinners, yet some are greater Sinners than others; The Men of Sodom were Sinners of the first Magnitude, Sinners before the Lord, i. e. impudent daring Sinners, they were so to a Proverb; hence we read of those that declare their Sin as Sodom, they hide it not, Isa. 3. 9. 2. That some Sinners are the worse for living in a good Land. So the Sodomites were, for this was the Iniquity of Sodom, Pride, fulness of Bread, and abundance of Idleness, and all these were supported by the great Plenty their Country afforded, Ezek. 16. 49. Thus the Prosperity of Fools destroys them. 3. That God often gives great Plenty to great Sinners. Filthy Sodomites dwell in a City, in a fruitful Plain, while faithful Abram and his pious Family dwell in Tents upon the barren Mountains. 4. When Wickedness is come to the height, Ruine is not far off. Exceeding Sins are sure Prefaces of approaching Judgments. Now Lot's coming to dwell among the Sodomites may be consider'd, 1. As a great Mercy to them, and a likely Means of bringing them to Repentance, for now they had a Prophet among them, and a Preacher of Righteousness, whom it they had hearkened to they might have been reformed, and the Ruine prevented. Note, God sends Preachers before he sends Destroyers, for he is not willing that any should perish. 2. As a great Affliction to Lot, who was not only grieved to see their Wickedness (2 Pet. 2. 7, 8.) but was molested and persecuted by them, because he would not do as they did. Note, It has often been the vexation of good Men to live among wicked Neighbours, to sojourn in Melech, Psal. 120. 5. and it cannot but be the more grievous if, as Lot here, they have brought it upon themselves by an unadvised Choice.

14 And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward, and south-ward, and east-ward, and west-ward. 15 For all the land which thou seeest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. 16 And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if

a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbred. 17 Arise, walk through the land, in the length of it, and in the breadth of it: for I will give it unto thee. 18 Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD.

We have here an Account of a gracious Visit which God made to Abram, to confirm the Promise to him and his. Observe, 1. When it was that God renewed and ratified the Promise, after that Lot was separated from him; that is, (1.) After the Quarrel was over; for those are best prepared for the Visits of Divine Grace, whose Spirits are calm and sedate, and not ruffled with any Passion. (2.) After Abram's humble self-denying Condescensions to Lot, for the preserving of Peace, God came to him with this Token of his Favour. Note, God will abundantly make up in Spiritual Peace, what we lose for the preserving of Neighbourly Peace. When Abram had willingly offer'd Lot one Half of his Right, God came and confirm'd the Whole to him. (3.) After he had lost the comfortable Society of his Kinsman, by whose Departure, his Hands were weakned, and his Heart sadned, then God came to him with these good Words and comfortable Words. Note, Communion with God may at any time serve to make up the want of Conversation with our Friends; when our Relations are separated from us, yet God is not. (4.) After Lot had chosen that pleasant, fruitful Vale, and was gone to take Possession of it, lest Abram should be tempted to envy him, and to repent that he had given him the Choice, God comes to him, and assures him that what he had should remain to him and his Heirs for ever; so that tho' Lot perhaps had the better Land, yet Abram had the better Title; Lot had the Paradise, such as it was, but Abram had the Promise, and the Event soon made it appear, that however it seem'd now, Abram had really the better part. See Job 22. 20. God owned Abram after his Strife with Lot, as the Churches did Paul after his Strife with Barnabas, Acts 15. 39, 40.

2. The Promises themselves which God now comforted and enriched Abram with. Two things he assures him of, a good Land, and a numerous Issue to enjoy it.

1. Here's the Grant of a Good Land, a Land famous above all Lands, for it was to be the Holy Land, and Emanuel's Land. This is the Land here spoken of.

(1.) God here shews Abram the Land as he had promis'd, Ch. 12. 1. and afterwards he shewed it to Moses from the Top of Pisgah. Lot had lifted up his Eyes, and beheld the Plain of Jordan, v. 10. and he was gone to enjoy what he saw, Come, faith God to Abram, now lift up thine Eyes, and look, and see thy one. Note, That which God has to shew us is infinitely better and more desirable than any thing that the World has to offer to our View. The Prospects of an Eye of Faith are much more rich and beautiful than those of an Eye of Sense. Those for whom the heavenly Canaan is design'd in the other World, have sometimes by Faith a comfortable Prospect of it in their present State, for we look at the things that are not seen, as real tho' distant.

(2.) He secures this Land to him and his Seed for ever, v. 15. to thee will I give it: And again, v. 17. I will give it unto thee. Every Repetition of the Promise is a Ratification of it. To thee and thy Seed, not to Lot, and his Seed; they were not to have their Inheritance in this Land, and therefore Providence so order'd it that he should be separated from Abram first, and then the Grant confirm'd to him and his Seed: Thus God often brings Good out of Evil, and makes Men's Sins and Follies subservient to his own Wise and Holy Counsels. To thee and thy Seed, to thee to sojourn in as a Stranger, to thy Seed to dwell and rule in as Proprietors. To thee, that is, to thy Seed. The granting it to him and his for ever, intimates that it was Typical of the Heavenly Canaan which is given to the spiritual Seed of Abram for ever, Heb. 11. 14.

(3.) He gives him Livery and Seisin of it, tho' it was a Reversion, v. 17. Arise, walk through the Land. Enter and take Possession; survey the Parcels, and it will appear better than upon a distant Prospect. Note, God is willing more abundantly to shew to the Heirs of Promise the Immutability of his Covenant, and the inestimable Worth of Covenant Blessings. Go, walk about Sion, Ps. 48. 12.

2. Here's the Promise of a numerous Issue to replenish this good Land, so that it should never be lost for want of Heirs, v. 16. I will make thy Seed as the Dust of the Earth, i. e. they shall increase incredibly, and take them altogether, they shall be such a great Multitude as no Man can number. They were so in Solomon's Time, 1 Kings 4. 20. Judah and Israel were many as the Sand which is by the Sea in multitude. This God here gives him the Promise of. Note, The same God that provides the Inheritance provides the Heirs. He that has prepar'd the Holy Land, prepares the Holy Seed: He that gives Glory, gives Grace to make meet for Glory. Lastly, We are told what Abram did when God had thus confirm'd the Promises to him, v. 12. 1. He removed his Tent. God bid him walk through the Land,

Land; that is, Do not think of fixing in it, but expect to be always unsettled, and walking through it to a better *Canaan*; in compliance with God's Will herein *he removes his Tent*, conforming himself to the Condition of a Pilgrim. 2. *He built there an Altar*, in token of his Thankfulness to God for the kind Visit he had made him. *Note*, When God meets us with gracious Promises, he expects that we should attend him with our humble Praises.

C H A P. XIV.

We have four Things in the Story of this Chapter. 1. *A War with the King of Sodom and his Allies*, v. 1--11. 2. *The Captivity of Lot in that War*, v. 12. 3. *Abram's Rescue of Lot from that Captivity, with the Victory he obtained over the Conquerors*, v. 13--16. 4. *Abram's Return from that Expedition*, v. 17. *with an Account of what passed,* 1. *Between him and the King of Salem*, v. 18--20. 2. *Between him and the King of Sodom*, v. 21--24. *So that here we have that Promise to Abram in part fulfilled, that God would make his Name great.*

1 **A**ND it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations; 2 *That these made war with Bera king of Sodom, and with Birshah king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the King of Bela which is Zoar.* 3 All these were joyned together in the vale of Siddim, which is in the salt-sea. 4 Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled. 5 And in the fourteenth year came Chedorlaomer, and the kings that were with him, and smote the Rephaims in Ashteroth Karnaim, and the Zuzims in Ham, and the Emims in Shaveh Kiriathaim, 6 And the Horites in their mount Seir, unto El-paran, which is by the wilderness. 7 And they returned, and came to Enmishpat, which is Kadesh, and smote all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites, that dwelt in Hazezon-tamar. 8 And there went out the King of Sodom, and the King of Gomorrah, and the King of Admah, and the King of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (the same is Zoar) and they joyned battle with them in the vale of Siddim; 9 With Chedorlaomer the king of Elam, and with Tidal king of nations, and Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar: four kings with five. 10 And the vale of Siddim was full of slime-pits: and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and fell there: and they that remained fled to the mountain. 11 And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way. 12 And they took Lot Abram's brother's son (who dwelt in Sodom) and his goods, and departed.

We have here an Account of the first War that ever we read of in Scripture, which (tho' the Wars of the Nations make the greatest Figure in History) we had not had the Record of if Abram and Lot had not been concerned in it. Now concerning this War we may observe,

1. The Parties engaged in it. The Invaders were four Kings, two of them no less than Kings of *Shinar*, and *Elam*, *Caldea* and *Persia*, yet probably not the Sovereign Princes of those great Kingdoms in their own Persons, but either Officers under them, or rather the Heads and Leaders of some Colonies which came out of those great Nations, and settled themselves near *Sodom*, but retained the Names of the Countries from which they had their Original. The Invaded were the Kings of five Cities that lay near together in the Plain of *Jordan*, *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, *Admah*, *Zeboiim*, and *Zoar*. Four of them are named, but not the Fifth, the King of *Bela*, either because he was much more mean and inconsiderable, or because he was much more wicked and inglorious than the rest, and worthy to be forgotten.

2. The Occasion of this War was the Revolt of the Five Kings from under the Government of Chedorlaomer. Twelve Years they served him. Small Joy they had of their fruitful Land,

while thus they were Tributaries to a foreign Power, and could not call what they had their own. Rich Countries are a desirable Prey, and idle luxurious Countries are an easy Prey to growing Greatness. The Sodomites were the Posterity of *Canaan* whom *Noah* had pronounced a Servant to *Shem*, from whom *Elam* descended; thus soon did that Prophecy begin to be fulfilled. In the thirteenth Year beginning to be weary of their Subjection, they rebelled, denied their Tribute, and attempted to shake off the Yoke, and retrieve their ancient Liberties. In the fourteenth Year, after some pause and Preparation, Chedorlaomer, in Conjunction with his Allies, set himself to chastise the Rebels, and reduce the Revolters, and since he could not have it otherwise, to fetch hence his Tribute upon the Point of his Sword. *Note*, Pride, Covetousness, and Ambition, are the Lusts from which Wars and Fightings come. To those insatiable Idols the Blood of Thousands has been sacrificed.

3. The Progress and Success of the War. The four Kings laid the neighbouring Countries waste, and enriched themselves with the Spoil of them, v. 5, 6, 7. upon the Alarm of which it had been the Wisdom of the King of *Sodom* to submit, and desire Conditions of Peace, for how could he grapple with an Enemy thus flush'd with Victory? But he would rather venture the utmost Extremity than yield, and it sped accordingly, *quos Deus destruit eos demensat*.

1. The Forces of the King of *Sodom* and his Allies were routed, and it should seem many of them perish'd in the Slime-Pits, who had escaped the sword, v. 10. In all Places we are surrounded with Deaths of various Kinds, especially in the Field of Battle.

2. The Cities were plunder'd, v. 11. All the Goods of *Sodom*, and particularly their Stores, and Provisions of Victuals, were carried off by the Conquerors. *Note*, When Men abuse the Gifts of a bountiful Providence to Gluttony and Excess, 'tis just with God, and his usual Way, by some Judgment or other, to strip them of that which they have so abused, *Hos. 2. 8, 9*.

3. Lot was carried captive, v. 12. They took Lot among the rest, and his Goods. Now Lot may here be consider'd,

(1.) As sharing with his Neighbours in this common Calamity. Though he was himself a Righteous Man, and (which here is express Notice taken of) Abram's Brother's Son, yet he was involved with the rest in this Trouble. *Note*, (1.) All things come alike to all, *Ecc. 9. 2*. The best of Men cannot promise themselves to be exempted from the greatest Troubles in this Life, neither our own Piety, nor our Relation to those that are the Favourites of Heaven, will be our Security when God's Judgments are abroad. (2.) Many an honest Man fares the worse for his wicked Neighbours; 'tis therefore our Wisdom to separate our selves, or at least to distinguish our selves from them, *2 Cor. 6. 17*. and so deliver our selves, *Rev. 18. 4*.

(2.) As Smarting for the foolish Choice he made of a Settlement here: This is plainly intimated here, when 'tis said, they took Abram's Brother's Son, who dwelt in *Sodom*. So near a Relation of Abram should have been a Companion and Disciple of Abram, and should have abode by his Tents, but if he chuse to dwell in *Sodom*, he must thank himself if he share in *Sodom's* Calamities. *Note*, When we go out of the Way of our Duty, we put our selves from under God's Protection, and cannot expect that the Choices which are made by our Lusts should issue to our Comfort. Particular mention is made of their taking Lot's Goods, those Goods which had occasion'd his Contest with Abram, and his Separation from him. *Note*, It is just with God to deprive us of those Enjoyments by which we have suffer'd our selves to be deprived of our Enjoyment of him.

13 And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew; for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner: and these were confederate with Abram. 14 And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan. 15 And he divided himself against them, he and his servants by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left-hand of Damascus. 16 And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people.

We have here an Account of the only Military Action we ever find Abram engag'd in; and this he was not prompted to by his Avarice or Ambition, but purely by a Principle of Charity; 'twas not to enrich himself, but to help his Friend. Never was any Military Expedition undertaken, prosecuted, and finished more Honourably than this of Abram's. *Here's,*

1. The Tidings brought him of his Kinsman's Distress. Providence so order'd it, that he now sojourn'd not far off, that he might be a very present Help. (1.) He is here called *Abram the Hebrew*, i. e. the Son and follower of *Heber*, in whose Family the Possession of the true Religion was kept up in that degenerate Age. *Abram* herein carried himself like a *Hebrew*, not unworthy the Name and Character of a Professor. (2.) The Tidings were brought by one that had escaped with his Life for a Prey. Probably he was a *Sodomite*, and as bad as the worst of 'em, yet knowing *Abram's* Relation to *Lot*, and Concern for him, he implores his Help, and hopes to speed for *Lot's* sake. Note, The worst of Men, in the Day of their Trouble, will be glad to claim Acquaintance with those that are Wife and Good, and get an Interest in them. The Rich Man in Hell called *Abram's* Father; and the foolish Virgins made Court to the Wife for a Share of their Oyl.

2. The Preparations he made for this Expedition. The Cause was plainly Good, his Call to engage in it was clear, and therefore with all speed he armed his trained Servants, born in his House, to the Number of Three Hundred and Eighteen. A great Family, but a small Army, about as many as *Gideon's* that routed the *Midianites*, *Judg. 7. 7.* He drew out his trained Servants, or his catechized Servants, not only instructed in the Art of War, which was then far short of the Perfection which later and worse Ages have improved it to, but instructed in the Principles of Religion, for *Abram* commanded his Household to keep the Way of the Lord. This shews that *Abram* was, 1. A great Man, who had so many Servants depending upon him, and employed by him, which was not only his Strength and Honour, but gave him a great Opportunity of doing Good, which is all that is truly valuable and desirable in great Places, and great Estates. 2. A Good Man, who not only served God himself, but instructed all about him in the Service of God. Note, Those that have great Families have not only many Bodies, but many Souls besides their own to take care of and provide for. Those that would be found the Followers of *Abram*, must see that their Servants be catechized Servants. 3. A Wife Man; for tho' he was a Man of Peace, yet he disciplin'd his Servants for War, not knowing what Occasion he might have, some time or other, so to employ them. Note, Though our Holy Religion teaches us to be for Peace, yet it doth not forbid us to provide for War.

3. His Allies and Confederates in this Expedition. He prevailed with his Neighbours, *Aner*, *Abicol*, and *Mamre*, (with whom he kept up a very fair Correspondence) to go along with him. 'Twas his Prudence thus to strengthen his own Troops with their Auxiliary Forces; and probably they saw themselves concerned in Interest to Act, as they could, against this formidable Power, lest their own Turn should be next. Note, 1. It is our Wisdom and Duty to behave our selves so respectfully and obligingly towards all Men, as that whenever there is Occasion, they may be willing and ready to do us a Kindness. 2. Those who depend on God's Help, yet in times of Distress ought to make use of Men's Help as Providence offers it, else they tempt God.

4. His Courage and Conduct were very remarkable.

(1.) There was a great deal of Bravery in the Enterprize it self, considering the Disadvantages he lay under. What could one Family of Husbandmen and Shepherds do against the Armies of four Princes, who now came fresh from Blood and Victory? 'Twas not a conquer'd but a conquering Army that he was to pursue: Nor was he constrain'd by Necessity to this daring Attempt, but moved to it by Generosity; so that all things consider'd, it was, for ought I know, as great an Instance of true Courage, as ever *Alexander* or *Cesar* were celebrated for. Note, Religion doth not tend to make Men Cowards, but truly Valiant. The Righteous is bold as a Lion. The true Christian is the true Hero.

(2.) There was a great deal of Policy in the Management of it. *Abram* was no Stranger to the Stratagems of War: He divided himself as *Gideon* did his little Army, *Judg. 7. 16.* that he might come upon the Enemy from several Quarters at once, and so make his few seem a great many: He made his Attack by Night that he might surprize them. Note, Honest Policy is a good Friend both to our Safety, and to our Usefulness. The Serpent's Head (provided it be nothing akin to the old Serpent) may well become a good Christian's Body, especially if it have a Dove's Eye in it, *Mat. 10. 16.*

5. His Success was very considerable, *v. 15, 16.* He defeated his Enemies, and rescued his Friends, and we do not find that he sustain'd any Loss. Note, (1.) Those that venture in a Good Cause, with a Good Heart, are under the special Protection of a Good God, and have reason to hope for a Good Issue. (2.) It is all one with the Lord to save by many or by few, *1 Sam. 14. 6.* Observe,

1. He rescued his Kinsman; twice here he is called his Brother *Lot*: The remembrance of the Relation that was between them both by Nature and Grace, made him forget the little Quarrel that had been between them, in which *Lot* had by no means carried himself well towards *Abram*. Justly might *Abram*

here upbraid *Lot* with his Folly in quarrelling with him, and removing from him, and have told him that he was well enough served, he might have known when he was well; but in the charitable Breat of pious *Abram*, 'tis all forgiven and forgotten, and he takes this Opportunity to give a real Proof of the Sincerity of his Reconciliation. Note, 1. We ought to be ready, whenever it is in the Power of our Hands, to Succor and Relieve those that are in Distress, especially our Relations and Friends. A Brother is born for Adversity, *Prov. xvii. 17.* A Friend at Need is a Friend indeed. 2. Tho' others have been wanting in their Duty to us, yet we must not therefore deny our Duty to them. Some have said, they can easier forgive their Enemies than forgive their Friends; but we shall see ourselves obliged to forgive both, if we consider that our God not only when we were Enemies reconciled us, but that also he passeth by the Transgression of the Remnant of his Heritage, *Mic. 7. 18.*

2. He rescued the rest of the Captives for *Lot's* sake: Tho' they were Strangers to him, and such as he was under no Obligation to at all, nay, tho' they were *Sodomites*, Sinners before the Lord exceedingly, and tho' probably he might have recover'd *Lot* alone by Ransom, yet he brought back all the Women, and the People, and their Goods, *v. 16.* Note, As we have Opportunity, we must do Good to all Men. Our Charity must be extensive as Opportunity offers it self. Where-ever God gives Life, we must not grudge the Help we can give to support it. God doth good to the Just and Unjust, and so must we, *Mat. 5. 45.* This Victory which *Abram* obtained over the Kings, the Prophet seems to refer to, *Isa. 41. 2, 3.* Who raised up the righteous Man from the East, and made him rule over Kings. And some suggest that as before he had a Title to this Land by Grant, so now by Conquest.

17 And the king of Sodom went out to meet him (after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer and of the kings that were with him) at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale.

18 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. 19 And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God possessor of heaven and earth: 20 And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.

This Paragraph begins with the mention of the Respects which the King of Sodom paid to *Abram* at his return from the Slaughter of the Kings, but before a particular Account is given of that, the Story of *Melchizedek* is briefly related. Concerning whom observe,

1. Who he was. He was King of Salem, and Priest of the most High God, and other glorious Things are said of him. *Heb. 7. 1, &c.* (1.) The Rabbins, and most of our Rabbinical Writers conclude that *Melchizedek* was *Shem* the Son of *Noah*, who was King and Priest to those that descended from him according to the Patriarchal Model. But this is not at all probable, for why should his Name be changed; and how came he to settle in *Canaan*? (2.) Many Christian Writers have thought that this was an Appearance of the Son of God himself our Lord *Jesus*, known to *Abram* at this time by this Name, as afterwards *Hagar* called him by another Name, *Chap. 16. 13.* He appeared to him as a righteous King, owning a Righteous Cause, and giving Peace. 'Tis hard to think that any meer Man should be said to be without Father, without Mother, and without Descendants; having neither beginning of Days, nor end of Life, *Heb. 7. 3.* 'Tis witnessed of *Melchizedek*, that he liveth, and that he abideth a Priest continually, *v. 3, 8.* nay, *v. 13, 14.* the Apostle makes him of whom these things are spoken, to be our Lord who sprang out of *Judah*. 'Tis likewise hard to think that any meer Man should at this time be greater than *Abram* in the things of God, and that Christ should be a Priest after the Order of any meer Man, and that any Humane Priesthood should so far excel that of *Aaron*, as 'tis certain *Melchizedek's* did. (3.) The most received Opinion is, that *Melchizedek* was a *Canaanite* Prince; that reigned in Salem, and kept up the true Religion there; but if so, why he should occur here only in all the Story of *Abram*; why *Abram* should have Altars of his own, and not attend the Altars of his Neighbour *Melchizedek*, who was greater than he, seems unaccountable: Mr *Gregory of Oxford* tells us, that the *Arabick* *Catena*, which he builds much upon the Authority of, gives this Account of *Melchizedek*, That he was the Son of *Heracim*, the Son of *Peleg*, the Son of *Eber*, and that his Mother's Name was *Salathiel*, the Daughter of *Gomer* the Son of *Japheth*, the Son of *Noah*.

2. What he did. (1.) He brought forth Bread and Wine for the Refreshment of *Abram* and his Soldiers, and in congratulation of their Victory. This he did as a King, teaching us to do good and to communicate, and to be given to Hospitality, accord-

according to our Ability; and representing the spiritual Provisions of Strength and Comfort, which Christ has laid up for us in the Covenant of Grace, for our Refreshment when we are toiled with our spiritual Conflicts. (2.) As *Priest of the most High God* he blessed Abram, which we may suppose a greater Refreshment to Abram than his Bread and Wine were. Thus God having raised up his Son Jesus, has sent him to bless us, as one having Authority, and those whom he blesteth they are blest indeed. Christ went to Heaven when he was Blessing his Disciples, Luke 24. 51. for that's it he ever lives to do.

3. What he said, v. 19. 20. Two things were said by him.

(1.) He blessed Abram from God, v. 19. *Blessed be Abram, Blessed of the most High God.* Observe the Titles he gives to God, which are very glorious. (1.) *The most High God*, which speaks his Absolute Perfections in himself, and his Sovereign Dominion over all the Creatures, he is *King of Kings*. Note, 'Twill greatly help both our Faith and our Reverence in Prayer to Eye God as the *most High God*, and to call him so. (2.) *Possessor of Heaven and Earth*, i. e. rightful Owner and sovereign Lord of all the Creatures, because he made them. This speaks him a great God, and greatly to be praised, Psal. 24. 1. and them a happy People who have an Interest in his Favour and Love.

(2.) He blessed God for Abram, v. 20. and *blessed be the most High God.* Note, (1.) In all our Prayers we must praise God, and joyn *Hallelujahs* with all our *Hosannas*. These are the Spiritual Sacrifices we must offer up daily, and upon particular Occasions. (2.) God as the *most High God*, must have the Glory of all our Victories, Exod. 17. 15. 1 Sam. 7. 10, 12. Jud. 5. 1, 2. 2 Chr. 20. 21. In them he shews himself higher than our Enemies, Exod. 18. 11. and higher than we, for without him we could do nothing. (3.) We ought to give thanks for others Mercies as for our own; triumphing with them that triumph. (4.) Jesus Christ our Great High Priest is the Mediator both of our Prayers and Praises, and not only offers up ours, but his own for us. See Luke 10. 17, 21.

4. What was done to him. Abram gave him *Tithes of all*, i. e. of the Spoils, Heb. 7. 4. This may be looked upon, (1.) As a Gratuity presented to Melchizedek, by way of return for his Regards. Note, They that receive Kindness should shew Kindness. Gratitude is one of Nature's Laws. (2.) As an Offering vowed and dedicated to the most High God, and therefore put into the Hands of Melchizedek his Priest. Note, 1. When we have received some signal Mercy from God, it is very fit we should express our Thankfulness by some special Act of pious Charity. God must always have his Dues out of our Substance; especially when by any particular Providence he has either preferred or increased it to us. 2. That the Tenth of our Increase is a very fit proportion to be set apart for the Honour of God, and the Service of his Sanctuary. 3. That Jesus Christ, our great Melchizedek, is to have Homage done him, and to be humbly acknowledg'd by every one of us as our King and Priest, and not only the *Tithe of all*, but all we have must be surrender'd and given up to him.

21 And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thy self. 22 And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, 23 That I will not take from a thread even to a shoe-latchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich: 24 Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion.

We have here an Account of what passed between Abram and the King of Sodom, who succeeded him that fell in the Battle, v. 10. and thought himself obliged to do this Honour to Abram in return for the good Services he had done him.

Here's 1. The King of Sodom's grateful Offer to Abram, v. 21. *Give me the Soul, and take thou the Substance*, so the Hebrew reads it. Here he fairly begs the Persons, but as freely bestows the Goods on Abram. Note, (1.) Where a Right is dubious and divided, it is Wisdom to compound the Matter by mutual Concessions, rather than to contend. The King of Sodom had an Original Right both to the Persons and to the Goods, and it would bear a Debate whether Abram's acquired Right by Rescue, would supersede his Title and extinguish it; but to prevent all Quarrels, the King of Sodom makes this fair Proposal. (2.) Gratitude teaches us to recompence to the utmost of our Power those that have undergone Fatigues, run Hazards, and been at Expence for our Service and Benefit. Who goes a Warfare at his own Charges? 1 Cor. 9. 7. Soldiers purchase their Pay dearer than any Labourers, and are well worthy of it, because they expose their Lives.

2. Abram's generous Refusal of this Offer. He not only resign-

ed the Persons to him, who being deliver'd out of the Hand of their Enemies, ought to have served Abram, but he restored all the Goods too. He would not take from a Thread to a Shoe-latchet, not the least thing that had ever belonged to the King of Sodom, or any of his. Note, A lively Faith enables a Man to look upon the Wealth of this World, with a holy Contempt, 1 Job. 5. 4. What are all the Ornaments and Delights of Sense to one that has God and Heaven ever in his Eye? He resolves even to a Thread and a Shoe-latchet; for a tender Conscience fears offending in a small Matter.

Now, 1. Abram ratifies this Resolution with a solemn Oath; *I have lift up my Hand to the Lord, that I will not take any thing*, v. 22. Here observe, (1.) The Titles he gives to God, the *most High God, the Possessor of Heaven and Earth*, the same that Melchizedek had just now used, v. 19. Note, It is good to learn of others how to order our Speech concerning God, and to imitate those who speak well in Divine Things. This Improvement we are to make of the Conversation of devout good Men, we must learn to speak after them. 2. The Ceremony us'd in this Oath; *I have lift up my Hand*: In Religious Swearing we appeal to God's Knowledge of our Truth and Sincerity, and imprecate his Wrath if we swear falsely, and the lifting up of the Hand is very significant and expressive of both. 3. The Matter of the Oath was lawful, but what he was not antecedently obliged to, That he would not take any Reward from the King of Sodom: (1.) Probably Abram made this Vow before he went to the Battle, That if God would give him Success, he would, for the Glory of God, and the Credit of his Profession, so far deny himself, and his own Right, as to take nothing of the Spoils to himself. Note, The Vows we have made, when we are in pursuit of a Mercy, must be carefully and conscientiously kept when we have obtained the Mercy, tho' they were made against our Interest. A Citizen of Sion, if he has sworn, whether it be to God or Man, tho' it prove to his own Hurt, yet he changeth not, Pl. 15. 4. Or, (2.) Perhaps Abram now when he saw Cause to refuse the Offer made him, at the same time confirmed his Refusal with this Oath, to prevent further Importunity. Note, 1. There may be good Reason sometimes why we should debar our selves of that which is our undoubted Right, as St. Paul, 1 Cor. 8. 1-ch. 9. 12. 2. That strong Resolutions are of good use to put by the Force of Temptations.

2. He backs his Refusal with a good Reason, *lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich*, which would reflect Reproach, (1.) Upon the Promise and Covenant of God, as if that would not have enriched Abram without the Spoils of Sodom. And, (2.) Upon the Piety and Charity of Abram, as if all he had in his Eye, when he undertook that hazardous Expedition, was to enrich himself. Note, 1. We must be very careful that we give not occasion to others to say things which they ought not. 2. The People of God must for their Credit's sake take heed of doing any thing that looks mean or mercenary, or that favours of Covetousness and self-seeking. Probably Abram knew the King of Sodom to be a proud and scornful Man, and one that would be apt to turn such a thing as this to his Reproach afterwards, tho' most unreasonable; and when we have to do with such Men, we have need to act with particular Caution.

3. He limits his Refusal with a double Proviso, v. 24. In making Vows we ought carefully to insert the necessary Exceptions, that we may not afterwards say before the Angel, it was an Error, Eccl. 5. 6. Abram here excepts, 1. The Food of his Soldiers; they were worthy of their Meat while they trod out the Corn. This would give no Colour to the King of Sodom, to say that he had enriched Abram. 2. The Shares of his Allies and Confederates; *Let them take their Portion*. Note, Those who are strict in restraining their own Liberty, yet ought not to impose those Restraints upon the Liberties of others, nor to judge of them accordingly, we must not make our selves the Standard to measure others by. A good Man will deny himself that Liberty which he will not deny another, contrary to the Practice of the Pharisees, Mat. 23. 4. There was not the same Reason why Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre, should quit their Right, that there was why Abram should. They did not make the Profession that he made, nor were they, as he was, under the Obligation of a Vow: They had not the Hopes that Abram had of a Portion in t'other World, and therefore by all means *Let them take their Portion* of this.

CHAP. XV.

In this Chapter we have a solemn Treaty between God and Abram concerning a Covenant that was to be established between them. In the former Chapter we had Abram in the Field with Kings, there in the Mount with God; and tho' there he looked great, yet methinks here he looks much greater: That Honour have the Great Men of the World, but this Honour have all the Saints. The Covenant to be settled between God and Abram, was a Covenant of Promises: Accordingly here is, (1.) A general Assurance of God's Kindness and Good-Will to Abram, v. 1, 2. (2.) A particular Declaration of the Purposes of his Love concerning him in two Things. 1. That he would give him a Numerous Issue, v. 2. to v. 7. 2. That he would give him Canaan for an Inheritance.

sance, v. 7. to the end. *Either an Estate without an Heir, or an Heir without an Estate, would have been a Half-Comfort to Abram. But God ensures both to him; and that which made these Two, the Promised Seed, and the Promised Land, Comforts indeed to this great Believer was, That they were both Typical of those two invaluable Blessings, Christ and Heaven, and so we have reason to think Abram eyed them.*

1 After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.

Observe here, 1. The Time when God had this Treaty with Abram. *After these things,* (1.) After that famous Act of generous Charity which Abram had done, in relieving his Friends and Neighbours out of Distress; and that *not for Price nor Reward*, after that God made him this gracious Visit. *Note,* Those that shew Favour to Men shall find Favour with God. (2.) After that Victory which he had obtained over four Kings: Left Abram should be too much elevated and pleased, with that God comes to him to tell him he had better things in store for him. *Note,* A believing Converse with spiritual Blessings is an excellent Means to keep us from being too much taken up with temporal Enjoyments. The Gifts of common Providence are not comparable with those of Covenant Love. 2. The Manner how God convers'd with Abram; *The Word of the Lord came unto Abram,* i. e. God manifested himself and his Will to Abram in a Vision; which supposeth Abram awake, and some visible Appearance of the Shechinah, or some sensible Token of the Presence of the Divine Glory. *Note,* The Methods of Divine Revelation are adapted to our State in a World of Sense. 3. The gracious Assurance God gave him of his Favour to him. 1. He called him by Name, Abram, which was a great Honour to him, and made his Name great, and was also a great Encouragement and Assistance to his Faith. *Note,* God's good Word then doth us good when 'tis spoken by his Spirit to us in particular, and brought to our Hearts. The Word saith, *Ho, every one, Isa. 55. 1.* the Spirit saith, *Ho, such a one.* 2. He caution'd him against amazing disquieting Fears; *Fear not, Abram.* Abram might fear lest the Four Kings he had routed should rally again, and fall upon him to his Ruine; No, faith God, *Fear not.* Fear not their Revenges, nor thy Neighbour's Envy, I'll take care of thee. *Note,* (1.) Where there's great Faith, yet there may be many Fears, 2 Cor. 7. 5. (2.) God takes Cognizance of his Peoples Fears, tho' never so secret, and *knows their Souls,* Pl. 31. 7. (3.) It is the Will of God that his People should not give way to prevailing Fears whatever happens. Let the Sinners in Sion be afraid, but *Fear not, Abram.* 3. He assured him of Safety and Happiness, that he should for ever be, 1. As safe as God himself could keep him. *I am thy Shield:* or, somewhat more emphatically, *I am a Shield to thee,* present with thee, actually caring for thee. See 1 Chron. 17. 24. *not only the God of Israel, but a God to Israel.* *Note,* The Consideration of this, that God himself is, and will be a Shield to his People to secure them from all destructive Evils, a Shield ready to them, and a Shield round about them, should be sufficient to silence all their perplexing tormenting Fears.

2. As Happy as God himself could make him. *I will be thy exceeding Reward:* Not only thy Rewarder, but thy Reward. Abram had generously refused the Rewards which the King of Sodom offer'd him, and here God comes and tells him he shall be no loser by it. *Note,* 1. The Rewards of believing Obedience and Self-denial are exceeding great, 1 Cor. 2. 9. 2. God himself is the chosen and promised Felicity of holy Souls; chosen in this World, promised in a better. He is the Portion of their Inheritance and their Cup.

2 And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? 3 And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and lo, one born in my house is mine heir. 4 And behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir, but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. 5 And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: And he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. 6 And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

We have here the Assurance given to Abram of a numerous Off-spring which should descend from him. In which, 1. Abram's repeated Complaint, v. 2, 3. This was that which gave Occa-

sion to this Promise. The great Affliction that sate heavy upon Abram was the want of a Child, and the complaint of this he here pours out before the Lord, and shews before him the trouble, Psal. 142. 2. *Note,* Tho' we must never complain of God, yet we have leave to complain to him, and to be large and particular in the Remonstrance of our Grievances, and it is some ease to a burthen'd Spirit to open its Case to a faithful and compassionate Friend; such a Friend God is, whose Ear is always open. Now his Complaint is four-fold.

1. That he had no Child, v. 3. *Behold to me thou hast given no Seed;* not only no Son, but no Seed; if he had had a Daughter, from her the promised Messias might have come who was to be the Seed of the Woman, but he had neither Son nor Daughter. He seems to lay an Emphasis on that, *to me.* His Neighbours were full of Children, his Servants had Children born in his House, but *to me* (saith he) thou hast given none, and yet God had told him he should be a Favourite above any. *Note,* 1. Those that are written Childless, must see God writing them so. 2. God often withholds those temporal Comforts from his own Children which he gives plentifully to others that are Strangers to him.

2. That in all probability he was never likely to have any; intimated in that, *I go, or, I am going, Childless,* going into Years, going down the Hill apace: Nay, I am going out of the World, going the way of all the Earth: *I die Childless.* So the Seventy. *I leave the World, and leave no Child behind me.*

3. That his Servants were for the present, and were likely to be to him instead of Sons. While he liv'd, the Steward of his House was Eliezer of Damascus, to him he committed the Care of his Family and Estate, who might be faithful, but only as a Servant, not as a Son. When he died one born in his House would be his Heir, and would bear rule over all that for which he had laboured, Eccl. 2. 18, 19, 21. God had already told him that he would make of him a great Nation, Ch. 12. 2. and his Seed as the Dust of the Earth, Ch. 13. 16. But had left him in Doubt whether it should be his Seed begotten, or his Seed adopted, by a Son of his Loins, or only a Son of his House. Now, Lord, saith Abram, if it be only an adopted Son, it must be one of my Servants, which will reflect Disgrace upon the Promised Seed, that is to descend from him. *Note,* While Promised Mercies are delayed, our Unbelief and Impatience is apt to conclude them denied.

4. That the want of a Son was so great a Trouble to him that it took away the Comfort of all his Enjoyments. *Lord, what wilt thou give me?* All is nothing to me if I have not a Son. Now, 1. If we suppose that Abram looked no further than a temporal Comfort, this Complaint was culpable. God had by his Providence given him some good things, and more by his Promise, and yet Abram makes no account of them because he has not a Son. It did very ill become the Father of the Faithful to say, *What wilt thou give me, seeing I go Childless,* immediately after God had said, *I am thy Shield, and thy exceeding great Reward.* *Note,* Those do not rightly value the Advantages of their Covenant-Relation to God, and Interest in him, who do not think it sufficient to balance the want of any Creature-Comfort whatsoever. But, 2. If we suppose that Abram herein had an Eye to the promised Seed, the Importunity of his Desire was very commendable, all was nothing to him, if he had not the Earnest of that great Blessing, and an Assurance of his Relation to the Messias, which God had already raised in him some Expectation of. He has Wealth, and Victory, and Honour, but while he is kept in the Dark about the main Matter, 'tis all nothing to him. *Note,* 'till we have some comfortable Evidence of our Interest in Christ, and the New Covenant, we should not rest satisfied with anything else. This and 'other I have, but what will all this avail me if I go Childless? Yet thus far the Complaint was culpable, that there was some diffidence of the Promise at the bottom of it, and a weariness of waiting God's Time. *Note,* True Believers sometimes find it hard to reconcile God's Promises and his Providences when they seem to disagree.

2. God's gracious Answer to this Complaint. To the first part of the Complaint, v. 2. God gave no immediate Answer, because there was something of Fretfulness in it, but when he renewed his Address somewhat more calmly, v. 3. God answered him Graciously. *Note,* If we continue instant in Prayer, and yet pray with an humble Submission to the Divine Will, we shall not seek in vain.

1. God gave him an express Promise of a Son, v. 4. This that is born in thy House shall not be thine Heir, as thou fearest, but one that shall come forth out of thine own Bowels, shall be thine Heir. *Note,* 1. God makes Heirs; he saith, this shall not, and this shall: What ever Men devise and design, in settling of their Estates, God's Counsel shall stand. 2. God is often better to us than our own Fears, and gives the Mercy we had long despaired of.

2. To affect him the more with this Promise, he took him out, and shewed him the Stars, (this Vision being early in the Morning, before Day) and then tells him, *So shall thy Seed be,* v. 5. (1.) So Innumerable, for so the Stars seem to a common Eye; Abram feared he should have no Child at all, but God tells him the Descendants from his Loins should be so many as not to be number'd. (2.) So illustrious as the Stars of Heaven for Splendor, for to them pertained the Glory, Rom. 9. 4. Abram's Seed, according to the Flesh, were like the Dust of the Earth, Ch. 13. 16. but his Spiritual Seed were like the Stars of Heaven, not only Numerous, but Glorious and very Precious.

3. Abram's

3. *Abram's firm Belief of the Promise God now made him, and God's favourable Acceptance of his Faith, v. 6.* 1. He believed in the Lord; that is, he believed the Truth of that Promise which God had now made him, resting upon the irresistible Power, and the inviolable Faithfulness of him that made it, *Hath he spoken, and shall he not make it Good? Note,* Those who would have the Comfort of the Promises must mix Faith with the Promises. See how the Apostle magnifies this Faith of Abram, and makes it a standing Example, *Rom. 4. 19, 20, 21.* He was not weak in Faith; he staggered not at the Promise; he was strong in Faith; he was fully persuaded. The Lord work such a Faith in every one of us. Some think his Believing in the Lord looks not only at the Lord promising, but promised, the Lord Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant. He believed in him, that is, received and embraced the Divine Revelation concerning him, and rejoiced to see his Day, tho' at so great a distance, *John 8. 56.*

2. *God counted it to him for Righteousness, i. e.* Upon the Score of this he was accepted of God, and as the rest of the Patriarchs by Faith he obtained Witness that he was Righteous, *Heb. 11. 4.* This is urged in the New Testament to prove that we are justified by Faith without the Works of the Law, *Rom. 4. 3. Gal. 3. 6.* for Abram was so justified, while he was yet uncircumcised. If Abram that was so rich in good Works was not justified by them, but by his Faith, much less can we that are so poor in them. This Faith, which was imputed to Abram for Righteousness, had newly struggled with Unbelief, v. 2. and coming off a Conqueror, it was thus Crowned, thus Honour'd. *Note,* A Fiducial practical Acceptance of and Dependence upon God's Promise of Grace and Glory, in and thro' Christ, is that which, according to the Tenor of the New Covenant, gives us a Right to all the Blessings contained in that Promise. All Believers are justified as Abram was, and it was his Faith that was counted to him for Righteousness.

7 And he said unto him, I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it. 8 And he said, Lord GOD, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it? 9 And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she-goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon. 10 And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not. 11 And when the fowls came down upon the carcases, Abram drove them away.

We have here the Assurance given to Abram of the Land of Canaan for an Inheritance.

1. God declares his Purpose concerning it, v. 7. Observe here, (1.) Abram made no Complaint in this Matter, as he had done for the want of a Child. *Note,* Those that are sure of an Interest in the Promised Seed, will see no reason to doubt of a Title to the Promised Land. If Christ be ours, Heaven is ours. (2.) When he believed the former Promise, v. 6. then God explained and ratified this to him. *Note,* To him that hath and improves what he has, more shall be given. Three things God here minds Abram of, for his Encouragement, concerning the Promise of this good Land. 1. What God is in himself: I am the Lord Jehovah; and therefore, (1.) I may give it thee, for I am Sovereign Lord of all, and have a Right to dispose of the whole Earth. (2.) I can give it thee, whatever Opposition may be made, tho' by the Sons of Anak. God never promises more than he is able to perform, as Men often do. (3.) I will make good my Promise to thee, Jehovah is not a Man that he should lie. 2. What he had done for Abram; he had brought him out of Ur of the Chaldees, out of the Fire of the Chaldees, so some, i. e. from their Idolatries, for the Chaldeans worshipped the Fire: Or, 2. From their Persecutions. The Jewish Writers have a Tradition that Abram was cast into a fiery Furnace for refusing to worship Idols, and was miraculously deliver'd. 'Tis rather a Place of that Name. Thence God brought him by an effectual Call, brought him with a gracious Violence; snatched him as a Brand out of the Burning. This was, (1.) a special Mercy; I brought thee, and left others, thousands to perish there; God called him alone, *Isa. 51. 2.* (2.) a spiritual Mercy; a Mercy to his Soul, a Deliverance from Sin, and its fatal Consequences. If God save our Souls, we shall want nothing that's good for us. (3.) a fresh Mercy, lately bestowed, and therefore should be the more affecting; as that in the Preface to the Commandments, I am the Lord that brought thee out of Egypt lately. (4.) a foundation Mercy, the beginning of Mercy, peculiar Mercy to Abram, and therefore a Pledge and Earnest of further Mercy, *Isa. lxvi. 9.* Observe how God speaks of it as that which he gloried in, I am the Lord that brought thee out: He glories in it as an Act both of Power and Grace; compare *Isa. 29. 22.* where

he glories in it long after, Thus saith the Lord, who redeemed Abraham, redeemed him from Sin. 3. What he intended to do yet further for him, I brought thee hither on purpose to give thee this Land to inherit it, not only to possess it, but to possess it as an Inheritance, which is the sweetest and surest Title. *Note,* (1.) The Providence of God hath secret but gracious Designs in all its various Dispensations towards good People, we cannot conceive the Projects of Providence, till the Event shews what it was driving at. (2.) The great thing God designs in all his Dealings with his People, is to bring them safe to Heaven. They are chosen to Salvation, 2 Thes. ii. 13. called to the Kingdom, 1 Thes. ii. 12. begotten to the Inheritance, 1 Pet. i. 3, 4. and by all made meet for it, Col. i. 12, 13. 2 Cor. iv. 17.

2. Abram desires a Sign, v. 8. *Whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?* This did not proceed from distrust of God's Power or Promise, as that of Zecharias, but he desired this, 1. For the strengthening and confirming of his own Faith: He believed, v. 6. but here he prays, Lord, help me against my unbelief. Now he believed, but he desired a Sign to be treasured up against an hour of Temptation, not knowing how his Faith might by some Event or other be shocked and tried. *Note,* We all need, and should desire Helps from Heaven, for the confirming our Faith, and improve Sacraments, which are instituted Signs for that purpose. See *Judg. vi. 36. 2 Kings xx. 8, 9, 10. Isa. vii. 11, 12.* 2. For the ratifying of the Promise to his Posterity, that they also might be brought to believe it. *Note,* Those that are satisfied themselves, should desire that others also might be satisfied of the Truth of God's Promises. John sent his Disciples to Christ, not so much for his own Satisfaction as for theirs, *Mat. xi. 2, 3.* Canaan was a Type of Heaven. *Note,* It is a very desirable thing to know that we shall inherit the heavenly Canaan, that is, to be confirmed in our Belief of the Truth of that Happiness, and to have the Evidences of our Title to it more and more cleared up to us.

3. God directs Abram to make Preparations for a Sacrifice, intending by that to give him a Sign, and Abram makes Preparation accordingly, v. 9, 10, 11. Take me an Heifer, &c. Perhaps Abram expected some extraordinary Sign from Heaven, but God gives him a Sign upon a Sacrifice. *Note,* Those that would receive the Assurances of God's Favour, and would have their Faith confirmed, must attend instituted Ordinances, and expect to meet with God in them. Observe, 1. God appointed that each of the Beasts used for this Service should be three Years old, because then they were at their full Growth and Strength: God must be served with the Best we have, for he is the Best. 2. We do not read that God gave Abram particular Directions how to manage these Beasts and Fowl, knowing that he was so well vers'd in the Law and Custom of Sacrifices, that he needed not any particular Directions; or, perhaps Instructions were given him, which he carefully observed, tho' they be not recorded: At least 'twas intimated to him, that they must be prepared for the Solemnity of ratifying a Covenant, which he well enough knew the manner of. 3. Abram took as God appointed him, tho' as yet he knew not how these things should become a Sign to him. This was not the first Instance of Abram's Implicit Obedience. He divided the Beasts in the midst, according to the Ceremony used in confirming Covenants, *Jer. xxxiv. 18, 19.* where 'tis said, they cut the Calf in twain, and passed between the parts. 4. Abram having prepared according to God's Appointment, now set himself to expect what Sign God would give him by these, like the Prophet upon his Watch-Tower, *Hab. ii. 1.* While God's appearing to own his Sacrifice was deferred. Abram continued waiting, and his Expectations were rais'd by those Delays; when the Fowls came down upon the Carcasses to prey upon them as common and neglected things, Abram drove them away, v. 11. believing that the Vision would at the end speak and not lie. *Note,* A very watchful Eye must be kept upon our spiritual Sacrifices, that nothing be suffer'd to prey upon them, and render them unfit for God's Acceptance. When vain Thoughts, like these Fowls, come down upon our Sacrifices, we must drive them away, and not suffer them to lodge within us, but attend on God without Distraction.

12 And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him. 13 And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety, that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years. 14 And also that nation whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. 15 And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. 16 But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.

We

We have here a full and particular Discovery made to *Abram* of God's Purposes concerning his Seed. Observe,

(1.) The Time when God came to him with this Discovery, *When the Sun was going down, or declining*; about the time of the evening Oblation, *1 Kings xviii. 36. Dan. ix. 21.* early in the Morning before Day, while the Stars were yet to be seen, God had given him Orders concerning the Sacrifices, *v. 5.* and we may suppose it was at least his Mornings Work to prepare them, and set them in order, which when he had done he *abode by them* praying and waiting till towards Evening. Note, God often keeps his People long in Expectation of the Comforts he designs them, for the confirmation of their Faith: But tho' the Answers of Prayer, and the Performance of Promises come slowly, yet they come surely, *at Evening time it shall be light.*

(2.) The Preparatives for this Discovery, (1.) *A deep sleep fell upon Abram*, not a common sleep through Weariness or Carelessness, but a Divine Extasie, like that which the Lord God caused to fall upon Adam, *Gen. ii. 21.* That being hereby wholly taken off from the View of things sensible, he might be wholly taken up with the Contemplation of things Spiritual. The Doors of the Body were lock'd up that the Soul might be private and retir'd, and might act the more freely, and like it self. (2.) With this sleep a Horror of great Darknes fell upon him: A sudden Change! But just before we had him solacing himself in the Comforts of God's Covenant, and in Communion with him, and here a Horror of great Darknes falls upon him. Note, The Children of Light do not always walk in the Light, but sometimes Clouds and Darknes are round about them. This Great Darknes, which brought Horror with it, was designed,

(1.) To strike an awe upon the Spirit of Abram, and to possess him with a Holy Reverence; that the Familiarity which God was pleas'd to admit him to, might not breed Contempt. Note, Holy Fear prepares the Soul for Holy Joy; the Spirit of Bondage makes way for the Spirit of Adoption. God wounds first, and then heals, humbles first, and then lifts up, *Isa. vi. 5, 6.*

(2.) To be a Specimen of the Methods of God's Dealings with his Seed; they must first be in the Horror and Darknes of Egyptian Slavery, and then enter with Joy into the Good Land; and therefore he must first have the fore-taste of their Sufferings, before he had the Fore-sight of their Happiness.

(3.) To be an Indication of the Nature of that Covenant of Peculiarity which God was now about to make with Abram. The Old Testament Dispensation which was founded on that Covenant was a Dispensation, (1.) of Darknes and Obscurity, *2 Cor. iii. 13.* (2.) of Dread and Horror, *Heb. xii. 18, &c.* 3. The Prediction it self: Several things are here foretold.

1. The suffering state of Abram's Seed for a long time, *v. 13.* Let not Abram flatter himself with the Hopes of nothing but Honour and Prosperity in his Family: No, he must know of a surety that which he was loth to believe, that the promised Seed should be a persecuted Seed. Note, 1. God sends the worst first; we must first suffer, and then reign. 2. He lets us know the worst before it comes, that when it comes it may not be a surprise to us, *John xvi. 4.* Now we have here, (1.) The particulars of their Sufferings. 1. They shall be Strangers; so they were in Canaan first, *Pf. cv. 12.* and afterwards in Egypt: Before they were Lords of their own Land, they were Strangers in a strange Land. The Inconveniences of an unsettled State make a happy Settlement the more welcome. Thus the Heirs of Heaven are first Strangers on Earth, a Land that is not theirs. 2. They shall be Servants; so they were to the Egyptians, *Exod. i. 13.* See how that which was the Doom of the Canaanites, *Gen. ix. 25.* proves the Distress of Abram's Seed, they are made to serve, but with this difference, the Canaanites serve under a Curse, the Hebrews under a Blessing: And the Upright shall have Dominion in the Morning, *Pf. xlix. 14.* 3. They shall be Sufferers. Those whom they serve shall afflict them: See *Exod. i. 11.* Note, Those that are blessed and beloved of God are oftentimes sorely afflicted by Wicked Men; and God foresees it, and takes Cognizance of it. (2.) The continuance of their sufferings, 400 years. This Persecution began with Mocking when Ishmael the Son of an Egyptian persecuted Isaac, who was born after the Spirit, (*Gen. xxi. 9. Gal. iv. 29.*) It continued in loathing, for it was an Abomination to the Egyptians to eat Bread with the Hebrews, *Gen. xliii. 32.* And it came at last to Murder, the basest of Murders, that of their new-born Children: so that more or less it continued 400 years, though in Extremity not so many; This was a long time, but a limited time.

2. The Judgment of the Enemies of Abram's Seed, *v. 14.* That Nation whom they shall serve, even the Egyptians, will I judge, This points at the Plagues of Egypt, by which God not only constrained the Egyptians to release Israel, but punished them for all the Hardships they had put upon them. Note, 1. Tho' God may suffer Persecutors and Oppressors to trample upon his People a great while, yet he will certainly reckon with them at last, for his day is coming, *Pf. xxxvii. 12, 13.* 2. The punishing of Persecutors is the judging of them; 'tis a righteous thing with God, and a particular Act of Justice, to recompense Tribulation to those that trouble his People. 3. The judging of the Churches Enemies is God's Work. I will judge; God can do it, for

V O L. I.

he is the Lord, he will do it, for he is his People's God, and he hath said, *Vengeance is mine, I will repay.* To him therefore we must leave it to be done, in his Way and Time.

3. The Deliverance of Abram's Seed out of Egypt: That great Event is here foretold, *afterward shall they come out with great Substance.* 'Tis here promised, (1.) That they should be enlarged, *afterward they shall come out, i. e.* either after they have been afflicted 400 years, when the days of their Servitude are fulfilled, then they may expect Deliverance: Or, after the Egyptians are judged and plagued. Note, The Destruction of Oppressors is the Redemption of the Oppressed; they will not let God's People go till they are forced to it. (2.) That they should be enriched; They shall come out with great Substance: This was fulfilled, *Exod. xii. 35, 36.* God took care they should not only have a Good Lard to go to, but a Good Stock to bring with them.

4. Their Happy Settlement in Canaan, *v. 16.* They shall not only come out of Egypt, but they shall come hither again. Hither, to the land of Canaan, wherein thou now art. The Continuance of their Possession shall be no Defiance of their Right; we must not reckon those Comforts lost for ever that are intermitted for a Time. The reason why they must not have the Land of Promise in Possession till the fourth Generation, is because the Iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full. Israel cannot be possessed of Canaan till the Amorites be dispossessed, and they are not yet ripe for Ruin. The righteous God has determined, that they shall not be cut off till they have perished in Sin so long, and are arrived to such a pitch of Wickedness, that there may appear some equitable Proportion between their Sin and their Ruin: And therefore till it come to that, the Seed of Abram must be kept out of Possession. Note, 1. The Measure of Sin fills gradually: Those that continue Impenitent in Wicked Ways, are treasuring up for themselves Wrath. 2. Some Peoples Measure of Sin fills slowly. The Sodomites that were Sinners before the Lord exceedingly, soon filled their Measure, so did the Jews that were in profession near to God, but the Iniquity of the Amorites was long in the filling up. 3. That this is the reason of the Prosperity of Wicked People, the Measure of their Sins is not yet full. The Wicked live, become Old, and are mighty in Power, while God is laying up their Iniquity for their Children, *Job xxi. 7, 19.* See *Mat. xxiii. 32. Deut. xxxii. 34.*

5. Abram's peaceful quiet Death and Burial before these things should come to pass, *v. 15.* As he should not live to see that good Land in the possession of his Family, but must die as he lived a Stranger in it, so to ballance that he should not live to see the Troubles that should come upon his Seed, much less to share in them. This is promised to *Josiah, 2 Kin. xxii. 20.* Note, Good Men are sometimes greatly favoured by being taken away from the Evil to come, *Isa. lvii. 1.* Let this satisfy Abram, that for his part, 1. He shall go to his Fathers in Peace. Note, (1.) Even the Friends and Favourites of Heaven are not exempted from the stroke of Death; *Are we greater than our Father Abram which is dead? Job. viii. 53.* (2.) Good Men die willingly, they are not fetched, they are not forced, but they go; their Soul is not required, as his, *Luk. xii. 20.* but cheerfully resigned: They would not live always. (3.) At Death we go to our Fathers, to all our Fathers that are gone before us to the State of the Dead, *Job xxi. 33.* To our Godly Fathers that are gone before us to the State of the Blessed, *Heb. xii. 23.* The former helps us to take off the Terror of Death, the latter puts Comfort into it. (4.) Whenever a Godly Man dies, he dies in Peace. If the way be Piety, the end is Peace, *Psal. xxxvii. 37.* Outward Peace to the last, is promised to Abram, Peace and Truth in his Days whatever should come after, *2 King xx. 19.* Peace with God, and Everlasting Peace, are sure to all the Seed.

2. He shall be buried in a good old Age. Perhaps mention is made of his Burial here, where the Land of Canaan is promised Him, because a Burying-place was the first possession he had in it. He shall not only dye in Peace, but dye in Honour, dye and be buried decently; not only dye in Peace, but dye in season, *Job v. 25, 26.* Note, 1. Old Age is a Blessing, 'tis promised in the 5th Commandment, 'tis pleasing to Nature, and a great opportunity of usefulness; 2. Especially if it be a Good Old Age: Theirs may be called a Good Old Age, (1.) that are Old and Healthful, not loaded with such Distempers as make them weary of Life; 2. That are Old and Holy, Old Disciples, *Act. xxi. 16.* whole hoary Head is found in the way of Righteousness, *Pr. xvi. 31.* Old and Useful, Old and Exemplary for Godliness, that's indeed a Good Old Age.

17 And it came to pass, that when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces. 18 In that same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: 19 The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, 20 And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, 21 And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.

I

Here's

Here's, 1. The Covenant ratified, v. 17. the sign which *Abram* desired was given at length, when the Sun was gone down, so that it was dark, for that was a dark Dispensation.

1. The smoking Furnace signified the Affliction of his Seed in Egypt; They were there in the Iron Furnace, *Deut. iv. 20.* the Furnace of Affliction, *Isa. xlviii. 10.* labouring in the very Fire. They were there in the Smoke, their Eyes darkened, that they could not see to the end of their Troubles, and they at a loss what God would do with them: Clouds and Darknes were round about them, which made them weep as Smoke doth.

2. The burning Lamp speaks Comfort, in this Affliction, and this God shewed *Abram* at the same time that he shewed him the smoking Furnace. (1.) Light notes Deliverance out of the Furnace: Their Salvation was as a Lamp that burneth, *Isa. lxii. 1.* When God came down to deliver them he appeared in a Bush that burned and was not consumed, *Exod. iii. 2.* (2.) The Lamp notes Direction in the Smoke; God's Word was their Lamp, this Word to *Abram* was so, 'twas a Light shining in a dark Place; perhaps this burning Lamp prefigured the Pillar of Cloud and Fire which led them out of Egypt; in which God was. (3.) The burning Lamp notes the Destruction of their Enemies that kept them so long in the Furnace: See *Zech. xii. 6.* The same Cloud that enlightened the *Israelites*, troubled and burned the *Egyptians*.

3. The passing of these between the Pieces was the confirming of the Covenant God now made with him, that he might have strong Consolation, being fully persuaded that what God promised he would certainly perform. 'Tis probable this Furnace and Lamp, which passed between the Pieces, burned and consumed them, and so completed the Sacrifice and testified God's Acceptance of it, as of *Gideon's*, *Judg. vi. 21.* *Manoah's*, *Judg. xiii. 19, 20.* and *Solomon's*, *Chr. vii. 1.* so it intimates, 1. That God's Covenants with Men are made by Sacrifice, *Pf. 1. 5.* by Christ, the great Sacrifice: No Agreement without Atonement. 2. God's Acceptance of our Spiritual Sacrifices is a Token for Good, and an Earnest of further Favours: See *Judg. xiii. 23.* And by this we may know that he accepts our Sacrifices, if he kindle in our Souls a Holy Fire of Pious and Devout Affections in them.

2. The Covenant repeated, and explained, v. 18. In that same day, that day never to be forgotten, the Lord made a Covenant with *Abram*, i. e. gave a Promise to *Abram*, saying, unto thy Seed have I given this Land. Here's 1. A Rehearsal of the Grant: He had said before, To thy Seed will I give this Land, *ch. xii. 7-13.* But here he saith, I have given it; that is,

(1.) I have given the Promise of it, the Charter is sealed and delivered, and cannot be disannulled. Note, God's Promises are God's Gifts, and are so to be accounted of.

(2.) The Possession is as sure in due time, as if it were now actually delivered to them: What God hath promised is as sure as if it were already done; Hence 'tis said, He that believes hath everlasting Life, *Joh. iii. 36.* for he shall as surely go to Heaven as if he were there already. 2. A Recital of the Particulars granted, such as is usual in the Grants of Lands. He specifies the Boundaries of the Land intended hereby to be granted, v. 18. And then for the greater certainty, as is usual in this case, he mentions in whose Tenure and Occupation these Lands now were. Ten several Nations or Tribes are here spoken of, v. 19, 20, 21. that must be cast out to make room for the Seed of *Abram*. They were not possessed of all these Countries, when God brought them into Canaan. The Bounds are fixed much narrower, *Numb. xxxiv. 2, 3, &c.* But, 1. in *David's* time and *Solomon's* their Jurisdiction extended to the utmost of these limits, 2. *Chron. ix. 26.* 2. It was their own fault that they were not sooner and longer in possession of all these Territories. They forfeited their Right by their Sins, and by their own Sloth and Cowardise kept themselves out of Possession. 3. The Land granted is here described in its utmost extent, because it was to be a Type of the Heavenly Inheritance, where there is room enough; In our Father's House there are many Mansions. The present Occupants are named, because their Number and Strength, and long Prescription should be no hindrance to the Accomplishment of this Promise in its season. And to magnifie God's love to *Abram* and his Seed, in giving to that one Nation the Possession of many Nations: so precious were they in his sight, and so honourable, *Isa. xliii. 4.*

CHAP. XVI.

Hagar is the Person mostly concerned in the story of this Chapter, an obscure Egyptian Woman, whose Name and story we had never heard of, if Providence had not brought her into the Family of *Abram*. Probably she was one of those Maid-Servants, which the King of Egypt (among other Gifts) bestowed upon *Abram*, *Ch. xii. 16.* Concerning her we have four things in this Chapter: 1. Her Marriage to *Abram* her Master, v. 1-3. 2. Her Misbehaviour towards *Sarai* her Mistress, v. 4-6. 3. Her Discourse with an Angel that met her in her flight, v. 7-14. 4. Her Delivery of a Son, v. 15, 16.

NOW *Sarai* *Abram's* wife bare him no children: and she had an hand-maid an Egypt-

tian, whose name was *Hagar*. 2 and *Sarai* said unto *Abram*, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her: and *Abram* hearkned to the voice of *Sarai*. 3 And *Sarai* *Abram's* wife took *Hagar* her maid the Egyptian, after *Abram* had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband *Abram* to be his wife.

We have here the Marriage of *Abram* to *Hagar*; who was his secondary Wife; herein, tho' he may be excus'd, he cannot be justified, for from the beginning it was not so: And when it was so, it seems to have proceeded from an irregular desire to build up their Families for the speedier Peopling of the World, and the Church: But now we must not be so. Christ has reduced this matter to the first Institution, and makes the Marriage-Union to be between one Man and one Woman only.

Now, 1. The Maker of this Match (would one think it,) was *Sarai* her self: She said to *Abram*, I pray thee go in unto my Maid, v. 2. Note, (1.) It is the Policy of Satan to tempt us by our nearest and dearest Relations, or those Friends that we have an Opinion of, and an Affection for. The Temptation is most dangerous when it is sent by a Hand that's least suspected. 'Tis our Wisdom therefore to consider, not so much who speaks, as what is spoken. (2.) God's Commands consult our own Comfort and Honour much better than our own Contrivances do. It had been much more for *Sarai's* Interest that *Abram* should have kept to the Rule of God's Law, than that he should be guided by her foolish Projects; but we oft do ill for our selves.

2. The inducement to it was *Sarai's* Barrenness.

1. *Sarai* bare *Abram* no Children; she was very fair, *ch. xii. 14.* and a very agreeable dutiful Wife, a sharer with him in his large Possessions, and yet written Childless. Note, 1. God dispenseth his Gifts variously, loading us with Benefits, but not over-loading us: Some Cross or other is appointed to be an allay to great Enjoyments. 2. The Mercy of Children is oft given to the Poor, and denied to the Rich; given to the Wicked and denied to Good People, tho' the Rich have most to leave them, and Good People would take most care of their Education: God doth herein as it has pleased him.

2. She owned God's Providence in this Affliction, the Lord hath restrained me from bearing. Note, (1.) As where Children are, 'tis God that gives them, *Gen. xxxiii. 5.* so where they are wanted, 'tis he that with-holds them, *Gen. xxx. 2.* This Evil is of the Lord, (2.) It becomes us to acknowledge this, that we may bear it, and improve it as an Affliction of his ordering, for Wise and Holy Ends.

3. She used this as an Argument with *Abram* to marry his Maid, and he was prevailed with by this Argument to do it. Note, 1. When our Hearts are too much set upon any Creature-Comfort, we are easily put upon the use of indirect Methods for the obtaining of it: inordinate Desires commonly produce Irregular Endeavours: If our Wishes be not kept in a Submission to God's Providence, our Pursuits will scarce be kept under the Restraints of his Precepts. 2. 'Tis for want of a firm Dependence upon God's Promise, and a patient waiting God's Time that we go out of the way of our Duty to catch at expected Mercy; He that believes doth not make haste.

3. *Abram's* Compliance with *Sarai's* Proposal, we have reason to think was from an earnest Desire of the promised Seed, on whom the Covenant shall be entailed. God had told him that his Heir should be a Son of his Body, but had not yet told him it should be a Son by *Sarai*, therefore he thought, why not by *Hagar*: Since *Sarai* herself propos'd it? Note, 1. Foul Temptations may have very Fair Pretences, and be coloured with that which is mighty Plausible. 2. Fleishly Wisdom as it anticipates God's time of Mercy, so it puts us out of God's way. 3. This would be happily prevented if we would ask Counsel of God, by the Word and Prayer before we attempt that which is Important and Suspicious: Herein *Abram* was wanting: He married without God's Consent. This persuasion came not of him that called him.

4 And he went in unto *Hagar*, and she conceived: And when she saw that she had conceived, her mistrefs was despised in her eyes. 5 And *Sarai* said unto *Abram*, My wrong be upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the LORD judge between me and thee. 6 But *Abram* said unto *Sarai*, Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee. And when *Sarai* dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face.

We have here the immediate ill Consequences of *Abram's* unhappy Marriage to *Hagar*. A deal of Mischief it made presently; when we do not well, both Sin and trouble lie at the Door; and we may thank our selves for the Guilt and Grief that follows us when we go out of the way of our Duty. See it in this Story.

1. *Sarai is despised*, and thereby provoked and put into a Passion, v. 4. *Hagar* no sooner perceives her self with Child by her Master, but she looks scornfully upon her Mistress, upbraids her perhaps with her Barrenness, and insults over her, to *make her to fret*, (as *1 Sam. i. 6.*) boasts of the Prospect she had of bringing an Heir to *Abram*, to that Good Land, and to the Promise, now she thinks her self a better Woman than *Sarai*, more favoured by Heaven, and likely to be better beloved by *Abram*, and therefore she will not take it as she has done. *Note*, 1. Mean and Servile Spirits when favoured and advanced either by God or Man, are apt to grow Haughty and Insolent, and to forget their Place and Original. See *Prov. xxix. 21.---xxx. 21, 22, 23.* It's a hard thing to bear Honour aright. 2. We justly suffer by those whom we have sinfully indulged; and 'tis a righteous thing with God to make those Instruments of our Trouble whom we have made Instruments of our Sin, and to insinuate us in our own Evil Counsels; he that *rolleth this Stone*, 'twill return upon him.

2. *Abram* is clamoured upon, and cannot be easie while *Sarai* is out of humour; she falls foul upon him indecently, and very unjustly charges him with the Injury, v. 5. *My wrong be upon thee*, with a most unreasonable Jealousie suspecting that he countenanced *Hagar's* Insolence, and as one not willing to hear what *Abram* had to say for the rectifying of the Mistake, and the clearing of himself, she rashly appeals to God in the case, *The Lord judge between me and thee*, as if *Abram* had refused to right her. Thus doth *Sarai* in her Passion speak as one of the foolish Women speaketh. *Note*, 1. It is an Absurdity which passionate People are often guilty of, to quarrel with others, for that which they themselves must bear the blame of: *Sarai* could not but own that she had given her Maid to *Abram*, and yet she cries out, *My wrong be upon thee*, when she should have said, *What a Fool was I to do so*; that's never said wisely which Pride and Anger have the inditing of; when Passion's upon the Throne, Reason's out of Doors, and is neither heard nor spoken. 2. Those are not always in the right that are most loud and forward in appealing to God: rash and bold Imprecations are commonly Evidences of Guilt and a Bad Cause.

3. *Hagar* is afflicted, and driven the House, v. 6. Observe,

1. *Abram's* Meekness resigns the Matter of the Maid-Servant to *Sarai*, whose proper Province it was to rule that part of the Family, *thy Maid is in thy Hand*: Tho' she was his Wife, he would not countenance, or protect her in any thing that was disrespectful to *Sarai*; for whom he still retained the same Affection that ever he had. *Note*, Those who would keep up Peace and Love must return soft Answers to hard Accusations; Husbands and Wives particularly should agree, and endeavour not to be both angry together, *yielding pacifies great Offences*. See *Pr. xv. 1.*

2. *Sarai's* Passion will be revenged upon *Hagar*; she dealt hardly with her, not only confining her to her usual Place and Work as a Servant, but probably making her to serve with rigor. *Note*, God takes notice of, and is displeased with the Hardships which harsh Masters unreasonably put upon their Servants: They ought to forbear Threatning, with *Job's* thought, *Did not he that made me make him?* *Job xxxi. 15.*

3. *Hagar's* Pride cannot bear it, her high Spirit is become impatient of rebuke; she fled from her Face; she not only avoided her Wrath for the present, as *David* did *Saul's*, but she totally deserted her Service, and over-run the House, forgetting, 1. what wrong she hereby did to her Mistress, whose Servant she was, and to her Master whose Wife she was. *Note*, Pride will hardly be restrained by any Bonds of Duty, no, not by many. 2. That she herself had first given the Provocation by despising her Mistress. *Note*, Those that suffer for their Faults ought to bear it patiently, *1 Pet. ii. 20.*

7 And the angel of the LORD found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur. 8 And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai. 9 And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thy self under her hands.

Here's the first mention we have in Scripture of an Angel's Appearance: *Hagar* was a Type of the Law, which was given by the Dispensation of Angels, but the World to come is not put in Subjection to them, *Heb. ii. 5.* Observe,

1. How the Angel arrested her in her Flight, v. 7. It should seem she was making towards her own Country, for she was in the way to *Shur*, which lay towards *Egypt*. 'Twere well if our Afflictions would make us think of our Home, the better Country. But *Hagar* was now out of her Place, and out of the way of her Duty, and going further astray, when the Angel found her. *Note*, 1. It is a great Mercy to be stopt in a Sinful way, either by Conscience or Providence. 2. God suffers those that

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are out of the way to wander a while, that when they see their Folly, and what a loss they have brought themselves to, they may be the better disposed to return: *Hagar* was not stopt till she was in the Wilderness, and set down weary enough, and glad of fair Water to refresh her self with; God brings us into a Wilderness, and there meets us, *Hos. ii. 14.*

2. How he examined her, v. 8. He called her *Hagar*, *Sarai's* Maid, (1) As as a check to her Pride: Tho' she was *Abram's* Wife, and as such was obliged to return, yet he calls her *Sarai's* Maid, to humble her. *Note*, Tho' Civility teach us to call others by their highest Titles, yet Humility and Wisdom teach us to call our selves by the lowest. (2.) As a Rebuke to her Flight. *Sarai's* Maid ought to be in *Sarai's* Tent, and not wandering in the Wilderness, and snatching by a Fountain of Water. *Note*, it is good for us often to call to mind what our Place and Relation is. See *Ecl. x. 4.*

Now, 1. The Questions the Angel put to her were proper and very pertinent, (1) *Whence comest thou?* Consider that thou art running away, both from the Duty thou wast bound to, and the Privileges thou wast blest with in *Abram's* Tent. *Note*, It's a great Advantage to live in a Religious Family, which those ought to consider who have that Advantage, and upon every slight inducement are forward to quit it. (2.) *Whither wilt thou go?* Thou art running thy self into Sin in *Egypt*; if she return to that People she will return to their Gods: And into Danger in the Wilderness, through which she must travel, *Deut. viii. 15.* *Note*, Those who are forsaking God and their Duty, would do well to remember not only whence they are fallen, but whither they are falling. See *Jer. ii. 18.* What hast thou to do (with *Hagar*) in the Way of *Egypt*? *Job. vi. 68.*

2. Her Answer was Honest, and a fair Confession, *I flee from the Face of my Mistress*: In which, 1. She acknowledges her Fault in fleeing from her Mistress, and yet, 2. Excuses it, that it was from the Face, or Displeasure of her Mistress. *Note*, Children and Servants must be treated with Mildness and Gentleness, lest we provoke them to take any irregular Courses, and so become accessory to their Sin, which will condemn us, tho' 'twill not justify them.

3. How he sent her back, with suitable and compassionate Counsel, v. 9. *Return to thy Mistress, and submit thy self under her Hand*. Go home and humble thy self for what thou hast done amiss, and beg Pardon, and resolve for the future to behave thy self better. He makes no question but she would be welcome, though it doth not appear that *Abram* sent after her. *Note*, Those that are gone away from their Place and Duty, when they are convinced of their Error, must hasten their return and Reformation, how mortifying soever it may be.

10 And the angel of the LORD said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. 11 And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the LORD hath heard thy affliction. 12 And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him: and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren. 13 And she called the name of the LORD that spake unto her, Thou God seekest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me? 14 Wherefore the well was called Beer lahai-roi; behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered.

We may suppose that the Angel having given *Hagar* that good Counsel, v. 9. to return to her Mistress, she immediately promised to do so, and was setting her Face homewards; and then the Angel went on to encourage her with an Assurance of the Mercy God had in store for her and her Seed. For God will meet those with Mercy that are returning to their Duty, *I said I will confess, and thou forgavest, Ps. xxxii. 5.*

Here's, 1. A Prediction concerning her Posterity, given her for her Comfort in her present Distress. Notice is taken of her Condition; *Behold, thou art with Child*: And therefore this is not a fit Place for thee to be in. *Note*, It is a great Comfort to Women with Child to think that they are under the particular Cognizance and Care of the Divine Providence. God graciously considers that case, and sutes supports to it.

Now, (1.) The Angel assures her of a safe Delivery, and that of a Son, which *Abram* desired. This Fright and Ramble of her's might have made her Miscarry, but God dealt with her not according to her Folly: *Thou shalt bear a Son*, she was saved in Child-bearing, not only by Providence but Promise.

(1) He Names her Child, which was an Honour both to her and it, call him *Ishmael*: *God will hear*, and the reason is because the Lord hath heard: He hath, and therefore he will. Note, The experience we have had of God's seasonable Kindness to us in Distress, should encourage us to hope for the like Help in the like Exigencies, *Psal. x. 17. He hath heard of thy Affliction.* Note, 1. Even there where there is little cry of Devotion, the God of Pity sometimes graciously hears the cry of Affliction: Tears speak as well as Prayers. This speaks Comfort to the Afflicted, that God not only sees what their Afflictions are, but hears what they say. 2. That seasonable Succours in a day of Affliction, ought to be always remembered with Thankfulness to God. Such a time, in such a strait, *The Lord heard the voice of my Affliction, and helped me, Psal. cxxi. 22.*

(3.) He promises her a numerous Off-spring, *v. 10. I will multiply thy Seed exceedingly, Heb. Multiplying I will multiply it, i. e. multiply it in every Age, so as to perpetuate it.* 'Tis supposed that the Turks at this day descend from *Ishmael*, and they are a great People. This was in pursuance of the Promise made to *Abram*, *Chap. xiii. 16. I will make thy Seed as the Dust of the Earth.* Note, Many that are Children of Godly Parents, have, for their sakes, a very large share of outward Common Blessings, though, like *Ishmael*, they are not taken into Covenant: Many are multiplied that are not sanctified.

(4.) He gives a Character of the Child she should bear, which, however it may seem to us, perhaps was not very disagreeable to her, *v. 12. He will be a Wild Man: A wild Asi of a Man*, so the Word is: Rude and Bold, and fearing no Man: untamed, untractable, living at large, and impatient of Service and Restraint. Note, The Children of the Bond Woman who are out of Covenant with God, are, as they were born, like the *Wild Asses Colt*: 'Tis Grace that reclaims Men, civilizeth them, and makes them Wife, and good for something. 'Tis foretold, (1.) That he should live in *strife*, and in a state of War, *His Hand against every Man*, that's his Sin, and *every Man's Hand against him*, that's his Punishment. Note, Those that have turbulent Spirits have commonly *troublesome Lives*: They that are Provoking, Vexatious and Injurious to others, must expect to be repaid in their own Coin. He that has his Hand and Tongue against every Man, shall have every Man's Hand and Tongue against him, and has no reason to complain of it. And yet, (2.) That he should live in *safety*, and hold his own against all the World, *He shall dwell in the Presence of all his Brethren*; tho' threatened and insulted by all his Neighbours, yet he shall keep his Ground, and for *Abram's* sake, more than his own, shall be able to make his part good with them: Accordingly we read *Gen. xxv. 18. that he died as he lived in the presence of all his Brethren.* Note, Many that are much exposed by their own Imprudence, yet are strangely preserved by the Divine Providence; so much better is God to them than they deserve, who not only forfeit their Lives by Sin, but hazard them.

2. *Hagar's* pious Reflection upon this gracious Appearance of God to her, *v. 13, 14.* Observe in what she said.

1. Her awful Adoration of God's Omniscience and Providence, with Application of it to her self; she called the Name of the Lord that spake unto her, *i. e.* thus she made Confession of his Name, this she said to his Praise, *Thou God seest me*: This should be, with her, his Name for ever, and this his Memorial, by which she will know him, and remember him while she lives, *Thou God seest me.* Note, 1. The God with whom we have to do, is a seeing God, an All-seeing God. *God is (as the Antients express'd it) All Eye.* 2. We ought to acknowledge this with Application to our selves. He that sees all, sees me, as *David*, *Pf. cxxxix. 1. O God, thou hast searched me, and known me.* 3. A believing regard to God as a God that sees us, will be of great use to us in our returns to him. 'Tis a proper Word for a Penitent; 1. *Thou seest my Sin and Folly*: I have sinn'd before thee, faith the Prodigal, in thy sight, faith *David*. 2. *Thou seest my Sorrow and Affliction.* This *Hagar* especially refersto, when we have brought our selves into Distress by our own Folly, yet God has not forsaken us. 3. *Thou seest the Sincerity and Seriousness of my Return and Repentance.* Thou seest my secret Mournings for Sin, and secret Motions towards thee. 4. *Thou seest me*, if in any instance I depart from thee, *Psal. xlv. 20, 21.* This Thought should always restrain us from Sin, and excite us to Duty, *Thou God seest me.*

2. Her humble Admiration of God's Favour to her; *Have I here also looked after him that seeth me?* Have I here seen the back parts of him that seeth me? So it might be read, for the Word is much the same with that, *Exod. xxxiii. 23. she saw not Face to Face*, but as through a Glass darkly, *1 Cor. xiii. 12.* Probably she knew not who it was that talked with her, till he was departing, as *Jud. vi. 22.---xiii. 21.* and then she looked after him, with a Reflection like that of the two Disciples, *Luk. xxiv. 31, 32.* Or, *Have I here seen him that seeth me?* Note, 1. That the Communion which Holy Souls have with God, consists in their having an Eye of Faith towards him, as a God that has an Eye of Favour towards them. The Intercourse is kept up by the Eye. 2. That the Privilege of our Communion with God, is to be looked upon with Wonder and Admiration, considering what we are who are admitted to this Favour. Have I? I that am so mean, I that am so vile? *2 Sam. vii. 18.* considering the Place where we

are thus favoured; Here also? not only in *Abram's* Tent, and at his Altar, but here also, in this Wilderness? Here, where I never expected it, where I was out of the way of my Duty? Lord, how is it? *Job. xiv. 22.* Some make the Answer to this Question to be Negative, and so look upon it as a Penitent Reflection: *Have I here also in my Distress and Affliction looked after God?* No, I was as careless and unmindful of him as ever I used to be, and yet he has thus visited and regarded me: For God oft prevents us with his Favours, and is found of those that seek him not, *Eccl. i. 1.*

3. The Name which this gave to the Place, *v. 14. Beer-lahai-roi.* The Well of him that lives and sees me: 'Tis likely *Hagar* put this Name upon it, and it was retained long after, in perpetuum rei memoriam. This was the Place where the God of Glory manifested the special Cognizance and Care he took of a Poor Woman in Distress. Note, 1. He that is All-seeing is Ever-living: he lives and sees us. 2. Those that are graciously admitted into Communion with God, and receive seasonable Comforts from him, should tell others what he has done for their Souls, that they also may be encouraged to seek him and trust in him. 3. God's gracious manifestations of himself to us are to be had in everlasting remembrance by us, and should never be forgotten.

15 And *Hagar* bare *Abram* a son: and *Abram* called his sons name, which *Hagar* bare, *Ishmael*.

16 And *Abram* was fourscore and six years old, when *Hagar* bare *Ishmael* to *Abram*.

'Tis here taken for granted, tho' not expressly recorded, that *Hagar* did as the Angel commanded her, returned to her Mistress, and submitted herself, and then in the fulness of time she brought forth her Son. Note, Those who obey Divine Precepts shall have the Comfort of Divine Promises. This was the Son of the Bond Woman that was born after the Flesh, *Gal. iv. 23.* representing the unbelieving Jews, *v. 25.* Note, 1. Many who can call *Abram* Father, yet are born after the Flesh, *Mat. iii. 9.* 2. The Carnal Seed in the Church are sooner brought forth than the Spiritual. 'Tis an easier thing to persuade Men to assume the Form of Godliness than to submit to the Power of Godliness.

C H A P. XVII.

This Chapter contains Articles of Agreement Covenanted and Concluded upon between the great Jehovah, the Father of Mercies, on the one part, and Pious Abram, the Father of the Faithful, on the other part: Abram is therefore called the Friend of God, not only because he was the Man of his Counsel, but because he was the Man of his Covenant, both these Secrets were with him: Mention was made of this Covenant, *Chap. xv. 18.* but here it is particularly drawn up and put into the Form of a Covenant, that Abram might have strong Consolation. Here's, 1. The Circumstances of the making of this Covenant, the Time and Manner, *v. 1.* And the Posture Abram was in, *v. 3.* 2. The Covenant is self. In the general scope of it, *v. 13.* And after in the particular instances. 1. That he should be the Father of many Nations, *v. 4, 6.* and in token of that his Name was changed, *v. 5.* 2. That God would be a God to him and his Seed, and would give them the Land of Canaan, *v. 7, 8.* And the Seal of this part of the Covenant was Circumcision, *v. 9.---14.* 3. That he should have a Son by *Sarai*, and in token of that her Name was changed, *v. 15, 16.* This Promise Abram received, *v. 17.* And his Request for *Ishmael*, (*v. 18.*) was answered abundantly to his Satisfaction, *v. 19.---22.* 3. The Circumcision of Abram and his Family, according to God's Appointment, *v. 23.* ad fin.

1 AND when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. 2 And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. 3 And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying,

Here's, 1. The Time when God made Abram this gracious visit, when he was Ninety-nine Years Old, full thirteen Years after the Birth of *Ishmael*. (1.) So long it should seem, God's extraordinary Appearances to Abram were intermitted, and all the Communion he had with God was only in the usual way of Ordinances and Providences. Note, There are some special Comforts which are not the daily Bread, nor of the Best Saints, but they are favoured with them now and then. Convenient Food they have, but not a continual Feast on this side Heaven. (2.) So long the Promise of *Isaac* was deferred. (1.) Perhaps to correct Abram's over-hasty marrying of *Hagar*, Note, The Comforts we sinfully anticipate are justly delayed. (2.) That Abram and *Sarai* being so far stricken in Age, God's Power in this Matter might be the more magnified, and their Faith the more tried. See *Deut. xxxii. 36.* *Job. xi. 6, 15.* (3.) That a Child so long waited for might be an *Isaac*, a Son indeed, *Isa. liv. 1.*

2. The way in which God made this Covenant with him; *The Lord appeared to Abram, in the Schechimah, some visible display of God's immediate glorious Presence with him. Note, God first makes himself known to us, and gives us a sight of him by Faith, and then takes us into his Covenant.*

3. The Posture *Abram* put himself into upon this occasion: *He fell on his face while God talked with him, v. 3.* Either, (1.) as one overcome by the brightness of the Divine Glory, and unable to bear the sight of it, tho' he had seen it several times before: *Daniel and John* did likewise, tho' they were also acquainted with the Visions of the Almighty, *Dan. viii. 17-19. Rev. i. 17.* Or, (2.) as one ashamed of himself, and blushing to think of the Honour done to one so unworthy: He looks upon himself with Humility, and upon God with Reverence, and in token of both falls on his face, putting himself into a Posture of Adoration. *Note, 1. God graciously condescends to talk with those whom he takes into Covenant and Communion with himself: He talks with them by his Word, Prov. vi. 22. talks with them by his Spirit, Job: xiv. 26. This Honour have all his Saints. 2. Those that are admitted into Fellowship with God are, and must be, very humble and very reverent in their Approaches to him. If we say we have Fellowship with him, and the Familiarity breeds Contempt, we deceive our selves. 3. Those that would receive Comfort from God, must set themselves to give Glory to God, and to worship at his Footstool.*

4. The general Scope and Summary of the Covenant, laid down as the Foundation, on which all the rest was built: And it is no other than the Covenant of Grace, still made with all Believers in Jesus Christ, *v. 1.* Observe here,

1. What we may expect to find God to us, *I am the Almighty God:* By this Name he chose to make himself known to *Abram* rather than by his Name *Jehovah*, *Exod. vi. 3.* He used it to *Jacob*, *Gen. xxxv. 11.* They called him by this Name, *Gen. xxviii. 3-43. 14-48.* 3. 'Tis the Name of God that is mostly used throughout the Book of *Job*, at least 30 times in the Discourses of that Book in which *Jehovah* is used but once. After *Moses* *Jehovah* is more frequently used, and this very rarely; *I am El-shaddai:* It speaks the Almighty Power of God, either, 1. As an Avenger from *יהוה* he destroyed or laid waste, so some; and they think God took this Title from the Destruction of the Old World. This is countenanced by *Isa. xlii. 6.* and *Joel i. 15.* Or, 2. As a Benefactor, *ו* for *ישר* who, and *י* is sufficient: He is a God that is enough: Or, as our Old English Translation reads it here very significantly, *I am God All-sufficient.* *Note, The God with whom we have to do, is a God that is enough. (1.) He is enough in himself; he is Self-sufficient; he hath every thing, and he needs not any thing. (2.) He is enough to us, if we be in Covenant with him; we have all in him, and we have enough in him; enough to satisfy our most enlarged Desires, enough to supply the defect of every thing else, and to secure to us a Happiness for our Immortal Souls: See Psal. xvi. 5, 6-73. 25.*

2. What God requires that we be to him: The Covenant is mutual, *walk before me, and be thou Perfect*, that is, Upright and Sincere, for herein the Covenant of Grace is well order'd that Sincerity is our Gospel Perfection. Observe, 1. That to be Religious is to walk before God in our Integrity: 'Tis to set God always before us, and to think and speak and act in every thing as those that are always under his Eye. 'Tis to have a constant regard to his Word as our Rule, and to his Glory as our End in all our Actions, and to be continually in his Fear. 'Tis to be inward with him in all the Duties of Religious Worship, for in them particularly we walk before God, *1 Sam. iii. 30.* and to be sincere for him in all Holy Conversation. *I know no Religion but Sincerity. 2. That upright walking with God is the Condition of our Interest in his All-sufficiency. If we neglect him, or dissemble with him, we forfeit the Benefit and Comfort of our Relation to him. 3. A continual regard to God's All-sufficiency will have a great influence upon our upright walking with him.*

4 As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. 5 Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram; but thy name shall be Abraham, for a father of many nations have I made thee. 6 And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee; and kings shall come out of thee.

The Promise here is introduced with Solemnity: As for me, faith the Great God, Behold, behold and admire it, behold and be assured of it, my Covenant is with thee, as before, *v. 2.* I will make my Covenant. *Note, The Covenant of Grace is a Covenant of God's own making; this he glories in (as for me) and so may we. Now here,*

1. 'Tis promised to *Abram*, that he should be a Father of many Nations, *i. e. 1.* That his Seed, after the Flesh, should be very numerous, both in *Isaac* and in *Ishmael*, and in the Sons of *Keisrah*: Something extraordinary is doubtless included in this Promise, and we may suppose the Event answered it, and that there have been, and are, more of the Chil-

dren of Men descended from *Abram* than from any one Man at equal distance with him, from *Noah* the Common Root. 2. That all Believers in every Age should be looked upon as his Spiritual Seed, and he should be called not only the Friend of God, but the Father of the Faithful. In this Sense the Apostle directs us to understand this Promise, *Rom. iv. 16, 17.* He is the Father of those in every Nation that by Faith enter into Covenant with God, and (as the Jewish Writers express it) are gathered under the Wings of the Divine Majesty.

2. In token of this, his Name was changed from *Abram*, a high Father, to *Abraham*, the Father of a Multitude. This was, (1.) to put an Honour upon him: 'Tis spoken of as the Glory of the Church, that she shall be called by a new Name which the Mouth of the Lord shall Name, *Isa. lxii. 2.* Princes dignify their Favourites by conferring new Titles upon them, thus was *Abraham* dignified by him that is indeed the Fountain of Honour: All Believers have a new Name, *Rev. ii. 17.* Some think it added to the Honour of *Abraham's* new Name, that a Letter of the Name, *Jehovah* was inserted into it, as it was a disgrace to *Jehoniah* to have the first Syllable of his Name cut off because it was the same with the first Syllable of that sacred Name, *Jer. xxii. 28.* Believers are named from Christ, *Eph. iii. 15.* (2.) to encourage and confirm the Faith of *Abraham*, while he was Childless perhaps, even his own Name was sometimes an occasion of Grief to him, why should he be called a High Father, who was not a Father at all? But now God had promis'd him a numerous Issue, and had given him a Name which signified so much, that Name was his Joy. *Note, God calleth things that are not as they were.* 'Tis the Apostle's Observation upon this very thing, *Rom. iv. 17.* He called *Abram* the Father of a Multitude, because he should prove to be so in due time, tho' as yet he had but one Child.

7 And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant; to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. 8 And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. 9 And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee, in their generations. 10 This is my covenant, which ye shall keep between me, and you, and thy seed after thee; Every man-child among you shall be circumcised. 11 And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your fore-skin, and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. 12 And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man-child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. 13 He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. 14 And the uncircumcised man-child whose flesh of his fore-skin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people: he hath broken my covenant.

Here's 1. The Continuance of the Covenant; intimated in three things. (1.) It is established, not to be altered or revoked, 'tis fixed, 'tis ratified, 'tis made as firm as the Divine Power and Truth can make it. (2.) It is entailed, 'tis a Covenant; not with *Abram* only, then it would dye with him, but with his Seed after him, not only his Seed after the Flesh, but his Spiritual Seed. (3.) It is everlasting in the Evangelical Sense and Meaning of it. The Covenant of Grace is everlasting; 'tis from everlasting in the Counsels of it, and is everlasting in the Consequences of it; and the external Administration of it is transmitted with the Seal of it to the Seed of Believers, and the internal Administration of it by the Spirit to Christ's Seed in every Age. 2. The Contents of the Covenant; 'Tis a Covenant of Promises, exceeding great and precious Promises: Here are two, which indeed are All-sufficient. (1.) That God would be their God, *v. 7, 8.* All the Privileges of the Covenant, all its Joys, and all its Hopes

Hopes are summ'd up in this: A Man needs desire no more than this to make him Happy. What God is himself, that he will be to his People; his Wisdom their's to guide and counsel them; His Power their's to protect and support them; his Goodness their's to supply and comfort them. What faithful Worshippers can expect from the God they serve, Believers shall find in God as their's. This is enough, yet not all.

(2.) That *Canaan* should be their *everlasting Possession*, v. 8. God had before promised this Land to *Abraham*, and his Seed, Chap. xv. 18. But here, where 'tis promised for an *everlasting Possession*, sure it must be looked upon as a Type of Heaven's Happiness, that everlasting Rest which remains for the People of God, Heb. iv. 9. This is that *better Country* to which *Abraham* had an Eye, and the Grant of which was, that which answered the vast Extent and Compass of that Promise, that God would be to them a God; so that if God had not prepared and designed this, he would have been *ashamed to be called their God*, Heb. xi. 16. As the Land of *Canaan* was secured to the Seed of *Abraham*, according to the Flesh, so Heaven is secured to all his Spiritual Seed, by a Covenant, and for a Possession truly *everlasting*. The offer of this eternal Life is made in the Word, and confirmed by the Sacraments to all that are under the external Administration of the Covenant, and the Earnest of it is given to all Believers, Eph. i. 14. *Canaan* is here said to be the Land wherein *Abraham* was a Stranger; and Heaven is a Land to which we are yet Strangers, for it doth not yet appear what we shall be.

3. The token of the Covenant, and that is *Circumcision*, for the sake of which the Covenant is it self called the *Covenant of Circumcision*, Act. vii. 8. 'Tis here said to be the Covenant which *Abraham* and his Seed must keep, as a Copy or Counterpart, v. 9, 10. 'tis called a *Sign* and *Seal*, Rom. iv. 11. for it was, (1.) A Confirmation to *Abraham* and his Seed, of those Promises which were God's part of the Covenant, assuring them that they should be fulfilled; that in due time *Canaan* should be their's: And the Continuance of this Ordinance after *Canaan* was theirs, intimates, that that Promise looked further to another *Canaan*, which they must still be in Expectation of: See Heb. iv. 8. (2.) An Obligation upon *Abraham* and his Seed to that Duty which was their part of the Covenant; not only to the Duty of accepting the Covenant and consenting to it, and the putting away of the Corruption of the Flesh, which were more immediately and primarily signified by *Circumcision*, but in general to the Observation of all God's Commands as they should at any time hereafter be intimated and made known to them: For *Circumcision* made Men *Debtors to do the whole Law*, Gal. v. 3. They who will have God to be to them a God, must consent and resolve to be to him a People.

Now, 1. *Circumcision* was a bloody Ordinance, for all things by the Law were purged with Blood, Heb. ix. 22. See Exod. xxiv. 8. But the Blood of Christ being shed, all bloody Ordinances are now abolished; *Circumcision* therefore gives way to Baptism. 2. 'Twas peculiar to the Males, tho' the Women also were included in the Covenant, for the Man is the Head of the Woman. In our Kingdom the Oath of Allegiance is required only from Men: Some think the Blood of the Males only was shed in *Circumcision*, because respect was had in it to Jesus Christ, and his Blood. 3. 'Twas the Flesh of the Fore-skin that was to be cut off, because it is by ordinary Generation that Sin is propagated, and with an Eye to the Promised Seed, who was to come from the Loins of *Abraham*. Christ having not yet offer'd himself for us, God would have Man to enter into Covenant by the offering of some part of his own Body, and no part could be better spared. 'Tis a secret part of the Body, for the true *Circumcision* is that of the Heart: This Honour God put upon an *uncomely part*, 1 Cor. xii. 23, 24. 4. The Ordinance was to be administered to Children when they were eight days old, and not sooner, that they might gather some Strength, to be able to undergo the pain of it, and that at least one Sabbath might pass over them. 5. The Children of the Strangers, of whom the Master of the Family was the true Domestick Owner, were to be *Circumcised*, v. 12, 13, which looked favourably upon the Gentiles, who should, in due time, be brought into the Family of *Abraham*, by Faith: See Gal. iii. 14. 6. The Religious Observance of this Institution was required under a very severe Penalty, v. 14. The contempt of *Circumcision* was a contempt of the Covenant; if the Parents did not circumcise their Children, it was at their Peril, as in the case of *Moses*, Exod. xv. 24, 25. And those that were not circumcised in their Infancy, if, when they grew up, they did not themselves come under this Ordinance, God would surely reckon with them: If they cut not off the Flesh of their Fore-skin, God would cut them off from their People. It's a dangerous thing to make light of Divine Institutions, and to live in the neglect of them.

15 And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but

Sarah shall her name be. 16 And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her. 17 Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear? 18 And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee! 19 And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed: and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. 20 And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly: twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation: 21 But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year. 22 And he left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.

Here's, 1. The Promise made to *Abraham* of a Son by *Sarai*, that Son in whom the Promise made to him should be fulfilled, that he should be the Father of many Nations, for the also shall be a Mother of Nations, and Kings of People shall be of her, v. 16. Note, 1. God reveals the Purposes of his Good Will, to his People by degrees. God had told *Abraham* long before, that he should have a Son, but never till now that he should have a Son by *Sarai*. 2. The Blessing of the Lord makes fruitful, and adds no Sorrow with it; no such Sorrow as was in *Hagar's* case. I will bless her, with the Blessing of Fruitfulness, and then thou shalt have a Son of her. 3. Civil Government and Order is a great Blessing to the Church. 'Tis promised not only that People, but Kings of People should be of her; not a headless Rout, but a well modell'd, well govern'd Society.

2. The Ratification of this Promise was the change of *Sarai's* Name into *Sarah*, v. 15. The same Letter added to her Name that was to *Abraham's*, and for the Same Reasons. *Sarai* signifies my Princess, as if her Honour were confined to one Family only; *Sarah* signifies a Princess, viz. of Multitudes; Or, signifying that from her should come the *Messiah*, the Prince, even the Prince of the Kings of the Earth.

3. *Abraham's* joyful thankful Entertainment of this gracious Promise, v. 17. Upon this occasion he express'd, (1.) Great Humility, he fell on his Face. Note, The more Honours and Favours God confers upon us, the more low we should be in our own Eyes, and the more reverent and submissive before God. (2.) Great Joy, he laughed: 'Twas a Laughter of Delight, not of Distrust. Note, Even the Promises of a Holy God as well as his Performances are the Joys of Holy Souls: There is the Joy of Faith, as well as the Joy of Fruition. Now it was that *Abraham* rejoiced to see Christ's day, now he saw it and was glad, Job. viii. 56. for as he saw Heaven in the Promise of *Canaan*, so he saw Christ in the Promise of *Isaac*. (3.) Great Admiration, Shall a Child be born to him that is 100 years old? He doth not here speak of it as at all doubtful, for we are sure he stagger'd not at the Promise, Rom. iv. 20. But as very wonderful, and that which could not be effected but by the Almighty Power of God, and as very kind, and a Favour which was the more affecting and obliging for this, that it was extremely surprizing, Psal. cxxvi. 1, 2.

4. *Abraham's* Prayer for *Ishmael*, v. 18. O that *Ishmael* might live before thee! This he speaks not as desiring that *Ishmael* might be prefer'd before the Son he should have by *Sarah*, but, as dreading lest he should be abandoned and forsaken of God, he puts up this Petition on his behalf. Now God is talking with him he thinks he has a very fair opportunity to speak a good Word for *Ishmael*, and he will not let it slip. Note, 1. Tho' we ought not to prescribe to God, yet he gives us leave in Prayer to be humbly free with him, and particular in making known our Requests, Phil. iv. 6. whatever is the matter of our Care and Fear should be spread before God in Prayer. 2. That it is the Duty of Parents to pray for their Children, for all their Children, as *Job*, who offered Burns-Offerings, according to the number of them all, Job i. 5. *Abraham* would not have it thought that when God promised him a Son by *Sarah*, which he so much desired, that then his Son by *Hagar* was forgotten; no, still he bears him upon

upon his Heart, and shews a concern for him. The Prospect of further Favours must not make us unmindful of former Favours. 3. That the great thing we should desire of God for our Children, is, that they may *live before him*, i. e. that they may be kept in Covenant with him, and may have Grace to walk before him in their uprightness; Spiritual Blessings are the best Blessings, and which we should be most earnest with God for, both for our selves and others. Those live well that *live before God*.

5. God's Answer to this Prayer; and 'tis an Answer of Peace; Abraham could not say he sought God's Face in vain.

1. Common Blessings are secured to Ishmael, v. 20. As for Ishmael, whom thou art in so much Care about, *I have heard thee*, he shall find Favour for thy sake, *I have blessed him*, i. e. I have many Blessings in store for him. (1.) His Posterity shall be numerous, *I will multiply him exceedingly*, more than his Neighbours: This is the Fruit of the Blessing, as that, Gen. i. 26. (2.) They shall be considerable, *twelve Princes shall he beget*; we may charitably hope that Spiritual Blessings also were bestowed upon him, tho' the visible Church was not brought out of his Loins, and the Covenant was not lodged in his Family. Note, Great Plenty of outward good things is often given to those Children of Godly Parents who are born after the flesh, for their Parents sake.

2. Covenant Blessings are reserved for Isaac, and appropriated to him, v. 19, 21. If Abraham, in his Prayer for Ishmael, meant that he would have the Covenant made with him, and the Promised Seed to come from him, then God did not answer him in the Letter, but in that which was equivalent, nay, which was every way better. (1.) God repeats to him the Promise of a Son by Sarah, she shall bear thee a Son indeed. Note, (1.) Even true Believers need to have God's Promises doubled and repeated to them, that they may have strong Consolation, Heb. vi. 18. (2.) Children of the Promise are Children indeed. (2.) He Names that Child, call him Isaac, *Laughter*, because Abraham joyced in Spirit when this Son was promised him. Note, If God's Promises be our Joy, his Mercies promised shall in due time be our exceeding Joy. Christ will be *Laughter* to them that look for him: They that now rejoice in Hope, shall shortly rejoice in having that which they hope for: This is *Laughter* that is not *Mad*. (3.) He entails the Covenant upon that Child, *I will establish my Covenant with him*. Note, God takes whom he pleaseth into Covenant with himself according to the good pleasure of his Will: See Rom. ix. 8, 18.

Thus was the Covenant settled between God and Abraham, with its several Limitations and Remainders, and then the Conference ended, *God left off talking with him*, and the Vision disappeared, *God went up from Abraham*. Note, Our Communion with God here is broken and interrupted, in Heaven it will be a continual and everlasting Feast.

23 And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house; and circumcised the flesh of the fore-skin, in the self-same day, as God had said unto him. 24 And Abraham was ninety years old and nine when he was circumcised in the flesh of his fore-skin. 25 And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his fore-skin. 26 In the self-same day was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son. 27 And all the men of his house, born in the house, and bought with money of the stranger, were circumcised with him.

We have here Abraham's Obedience to the Law of Circumcision: He himself, and all his Family, were Circumcised, so receiving the token of the Covenant, and distinguishing themselves from other Families that had no part nor lot in the Matter. 1. It was an implicit Obedience, he did as God had said unto him, and did not ask why or wherefore. God's will was not only a Law to him, but a Reason; he did it because God bid him. 2. It was a speedy Obedience; in the self-same day, v. 23, 26. Sincere Obedience is not Dilatory, Ps. cxix. 60. while the Command is yet sounding in our Ears, and the Sense of Duty is fresh, 'tis good to apply our selves to it immediately, lest we deceive our selves by putting it off to a more convenient Season. 3. It was a universal Obedience; he did not Circumcise his Family, and excuse himself, but set them an Example; nor did he take the Comfort of the Seal of the Covenant to himself only, but desired that all his might share with him in it: This is a good Example to Masters of Families, they and their Houses must serve the Lord. Tho' God's Covenant was not established with Ishmael, yet he was Circumcised; for, the Children of Believing Parents, as such,

have a right to the Privileges of the visible Church, and the Seals of the Covenant, whatever they may prove afterwards; Ishmael is Blessed, and therefore Circumcised. 4. Abraham did this, tho' much might be objected against it: Tho' Circumcision was painful, tho' to grown Men it was shameful, tho' while they were fore and unfit for Action their Enemies might take advantage against them, as Simeon and Levi did against the Shechemites; though Abraham was 99 years old, and had been justified and accepted of God long since, though so odd a thing done religiously might be turned to his reproach by the Canaanites and the Perizites that dwelt then in the Land, yet God's Command was sufficient to answer these, and a thousand such Objections, what God requires we must do, not conferring with Flesh and Blood.

C H A P. XVIII.

We have an account in this Chapter of another Interview between God and Abraham, probably within a few Days after the former, as the Reward of his cheerful Obedience to the Law of Circumcision: Here is, (1.) The kind visit which God made him, and the kind Entertainment he gave to that visit, v. 1.—8. (2.) The Masters discourse of between them. 1. The Purposes of God's love concerning Sarah, v. 9.—15. 2. The Purposes of God's Wrath concerning Sodom. 1. The Discovery God made to Abraham of his design to destroy Sodom, v. 16.—22. 2. The Intercession Abraham made for Sodom, v. 23.—33.

1 AND the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent-door in the heat of the day. 2 And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent-door, and bowed himself toward the ground, 3 And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant. 4 Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest your selves under the tree. 5 And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that you shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do as thou hast said. 6 And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth. 7 And Abram ran unto the herd, and fetcht a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it. 8 And he took butter and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.

This Appearance of God to Abraham seems to have had in it more of Freedom and Familiarity, and less of Grandeur and Majesty than those we have hitherto read of, and therefore more resembles that great Visit, which, in the fulness of time, the Son of God was to make to the World; when the Word would be made Flesh, and appear as one of us. Observe here,

1. How Abraham expected Strangers, and how richly his Expectations were answered, v. 1, 2. he sat in the Tent-door in the Heat of the Day, not so much to repose or divert himself, as to seek an opportunity of doing Good, by giving Entertainment to Strangers, and Travellers, there being perhaps no Inns to accommodate them. Note, 1. We are likely to have the most Comfort of those Good Works that we are most free and forward to. 2. God graciously visits those in whom he hath first raised the Expectation of him, and manifests himself to those that wait for him. When Abraham was thus sitting, he saw three Men coming towards him: These three men were three Spiritual Heavenly Beings, now assuming Humane Bodies, that they might be visible to Abraham, and conversable with him. Some think they were all three created Angels, others, that one of them was the Son of God, the Angel of the Covenant, whom Abraham distinguished from the rest, v. 3. and who is called *Jehovah*, v. 13. The Apostle improves this for the encouragement of Hospitality, Heb. xiii. 2. Those that have been forward to entertain Strangers have entertained Angels, to their unspeakable Honour and Satisfaction. Where upon a Prudent and Impartial Judgment we see no cause to suspect ill, Charity teacheth us to hope well, and to shew Kindness accordingly; 'tis better to feed five Drones or Wasps than starve one Bee.

2. How

2. How *Abraham* entertained these Strangers, and how kindly his Entertainment was accepted. The Holy Ghost takes particular notice of the very free and affectionate Welcome which *Abraham* gave to the Strangers. (1.) He was mighty Complaisant and Respectful to them; forgetting his Age and Gravity he ran to meet them in the most obliging manner, and made his Honours like a compleat Courtier, bowing himself towards the Ground, tho' as yet he knew nothing of them, but that they appeared graceful, fashionable Men. Note, Religion doth not destroy but improve Good Manners, and teaches us to Honour all Men. Decent Civility is a great Ornament to Piety. (2.) He was very earnest and importunate for their stay, and took it as a great Favour, v. 3, 4. Note, (1.) It becomes those whom God hath blest with Plenty to be liberal and open-hearted in their entertainments, according to their Ability, and not in Complement, but cordially to bid their Friends welcome; we should take a pleasure in shewing Kindness to any, for both God and Man love a cheerful Giver; who would eat the Bread of him that has an evil Eye? Pr. 23. 6, 7. (2.) Those that would have Communion with God, must earnestly desire it and pray for it. God is a Guest worth courting. (3.) His Entertainment tho' it was very free, yet it was plain and homely, and there was nothing in it of the Gaiety and Niceties of these Times. His Dining-Room was an Arbour under a Tree; no rich Table Linen, no Side-board set with Plate; His Feast was a Joynt or two of Veal, and some Cakes baked on the Hearth, and both hastily dress'd up: Here were no Dainties, no Varieties, no Forced Meats, no Sweat-Meats, but good plain wholesome Food, tho' *Abraham* was very Rich, and his Guests very honourable. Note, We ought not to be curious in our Diet; let us be thankful for Food convenient, tho' it be homely and common, and not be desirous of Dainties, for they are deceitful Meats to those that love them and set their Hearts upon them. (4.) He and his Wife were both of them very Officious, and buly to accommodate their Guests with the best they had. *Sarah* her self is Cook and Baker: *Abraham* runs to fetch the Calf, brings out the Milk and Butter, and thinks it not below him to wait at Table, that he might shew how heartily welcome his Guests were. Note, 1. Those that have real Merit need not take State upon them, nor are their prudent Condescensions any Disparagement to them. 2. Heartly Friendship will stoop to any thing but Sin. Christ himself has taught us to wash one another's Feet in humble Love. They that thus abase themselves shall be exalted. Here *Abraham's* faith shew'd it self in Good Works, and so must ours, else it is dead, Jam. ii. 21. The Father of the Faithful was famous for Charity, and Generosity, and Good House-keeping: and we must learn of him to do good and to communicate. *Job* did not eat his Morfels alone, Job. xxxi. 17.

9 And they said unto him, Where is *Sarah* thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent. 10 And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life, and lo, *Sarah* thy wife shall have a son. And *Sarah* heard it in the tent door, which was behind him. 11 Now *Abraham* and *Sarah* were old, and well stricken in age: and it ceased to be with *Sarah* after the manner of women. 12 Therefore *Sarah* laughed within her self saying, After I am waxed old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also? 13 And the LORD said unto *Abraham*, Wherefore did *Sarah* laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? 14 Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed will I return unto thee according to the time of life, and *Sarah* shall have a son. 15 Then *Sarah* denied, saying, I laughed not: for she was afraid. And he said, Nay, but thou didst laugh.

These Heavenly Guests being sent to confirm the Promise lately made to *Abraham*, that he should have a Son by *Sarah*, while they are receiving *Abraham's* kind Entertainment, thus return his Kindness: He receiveth Angels, and hath Angels Reward; a gracious Message from Heaven, Mat. x. 41.

1. Care is taken that *Sarah* should be within hearing. She must conceive by Faith, and therefore the Promise must be made to her, Heb. xi. 11. 'Twas the modest usage of that time that the Women did not sit at Meat with Men, at least not with Strangers, but confin'd themselves to their own Apartments; Therefore *Sarah* is here out of sight, but she must not be out of hearing. The Angels enquire, v. 9. Where is *Sarah* thy Wife? By naming her, they gave intimation enough to *Abraham*, that tho' they seem'd Strangers, yet they very well knew him and his Family: By enquiring after her they shew'd a friendly kind concern for the Family and Relations of one whom they found respectful to them: 'Tis a piece of common Civility which ought to proceed from a Principle of Christian Love, and then 'tis Sancti-

fied. And by speaking of her, she over-hearing it, they drew her to listen to what was further to be said. Where is *Sarah* thy wife? say the Angels; Behold, in the Tent, saith *Abraham*; Where should she be else? There she is in her place as she uses to be, and is now within call. Note, 1. The Daughters of *Sarah* must learn of her, to be chaste, keepers at Home, Tit. ii. 5. There's nothing got by Gadding. 2. Those are most likely to receive Comfort from God, and his Promises that are in their Place, and in the way of their Duty, Luke. ii. 8.

2. The Promise is then renewed, and ratified, that she should have a Son, v. 10. I will certainly return unto thee and visit thee next time with the Performance, as now I do with the Promise. God will return to those that bid him welcome, entertain his Visitors, I will return thy kindness, *Sarah* thy Wife shall have a Son: 'tis repeated again, v. 14. Thus the Promises of the Messiah were oft repeated in the Old Testament for the strengthening of the Faith of God's People. We are slow of Heart to believe, and therefore have need of Line upon Line to the same purpose. This is that Word of Promise which the Apostle quotes, Rom. ix. 9. as that by the virtue of which *Isaac* was born. Note, 1. The same Blessings which others have from Common Providence, Believers have from the Promise, which makes them very sweet, and very sure. 2. The Spiritual Seed of *Abraham* owe their Life, and Joy, and Hope, and all to the Promise. They are born by the Word of God, 1 Pet. i. 23.

3. *Sarah* thinks this too good News to be true, and therefore cannot as yet find in her Heart to believe it, v. 12. *Sarah* laughed within her self. 'Twas not a pleasing Laughter of Faith, like *Abraham's*, Chap. xvii. 17. but 'twas a Laughter of Doubting and Distrust. Note, The same thing may be done from very different Principles, which God only can judge of, who knows the Heart. The Great Objection which *Sarah* could not get over was her Age. I am waxed Old, and past Child-bearing in a course of Nature, especially having been hitherto barren, and which magnifies the Difficulty, My Lord is old also. Observe here,

(1.) That *Sarah* calls *Abraham* her Lord; 'Twas the only Good Word in this Saying, and the Holy Ghost takes notice of it to her Honour, and recommends it to the imitation of all Christian Wives, 1 Pet. iii. 6. *Sarah* obeyed *Abraham*, calling him Lord, in token of Respect and Subjection. Thus must the Wife reverence her Husband, Eph. v. 1. And thus must we be apt to take notice of what is spoken decently and well, to the Honour of them that speak it, tho' it may be mixed with that which is amiss, over which we should cast a Mantle of Love.

(2.) That Humane Improbability oft sets up in Contradiction to the Divine Promise. The Objections of Sense are very apt to stumble and puzzle the weak Faith even of true Believers. It's hard to cleave to the first Cause when second Causes frown.

(3.) That even there where there is true Faith, yet there are often fore conflicts with unbelief; *Sarah* could say, Lord, I believe, (Heb. xi. 11.) and yet must say, Lord, help my unbelief.

The Angel reproves the indecent Expressions of her Distrust, v. 13, 14. Observe, 1. Tho' *Sarah* was now most kindly and generously entertaining these Angels, yet when she did amiss they reproved her for it, as Christ reproved *Maria* in her own House, Luke x. 40, 41. If our Friends be kind to us, we must not therefore be so unkind to them as to suffer Sin upon them. 2. God gave this Reproof to *Sarah* by *Abraham* her Husband; To him he said, Why did *Sarah* laugh? Perhaps because he had not told her of the Promise which had been given him some time before to this purpose, which if he had communicated to her with its Ratifications, she would not have been so surprized at it now. Or, *Abraham* was told of it that he might tell her of it; Mutual Reproof when there is occasion for it is one of the Duties of that Relation. 3. The Reproof it self is plain, and backed with a good Reason. Wherefore did *Sarah* laugh? Note, 1. 'Tis good to enquire into the Reason of our Laughter, that it may not be the Laughter of the Fool, Eccl. vii. 6. Wherefore did I Laugh? 2. Our Unbelief and Distrust is a great Offence to the God of Heaven. He justly takes it ill to have the Objections of Sense set up in contradiction to his Promise, as Luke i. 18. Here's a Question ask'd which is enough to answer all the Cavils of Flesh and Blood; Is any thing too hard for the Lord? Heb. too wonderful, i. e. 1. Is any thing so secret as to escape his Cognizance? No, not *Sarah's* laughing, tho' it was only within her self. Or, 2. Is any thing so difficult as to exceed his Power? No, not the giving of a Child to *Sarah* in her Old Age.

5. *Sarah* foolishly endeavours to conceal her fault, v. 15. she denied, saying, I did not laugh, thinking no body could disprove her, and she told this Lie, because she was afraid, but 'twas in vain to conceal it from an All-seeing Eye, she was told to her Shame, Thou didst laugh. Now, 1. There seems to be in *Sarah* a Retraction of her Distrust. Now she perceived by laying Circumstances together, that 'twas a Divine Promise which had been made concerning her, she renounces all doubting distrustful Thoughts about it. But, 2. There was withal a sinful Attempt to cover a Sin with a Lie. 'Tis a Shame to do amiss, but a greater Shame to deny it, for thereby we add Iniquity to our Iniquity. Fear of a Rebuke oft betrays us to this Snare. See Isa. lviii. 11. Whom hast thou feared that thou hast lied? But we deceive our selves if we think to impose

impose upon God : He can and will bring Truth to light to our Shame. *He that covers his Sin cannot prosper, for the Day is coming which will discover it.*

16 And the men rose up from thence, and looked towards Sodom : and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way. 17 And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do ; 18 Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him ? 19 For I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment ; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him. 20 And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their Sin is very grievous ; 21 I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me ; and if not, I will know. 22 And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom : but Abraham stood yet before the LORD.

The Messengers from Heaven had now dispatched one Part of their Business, which was an Errand of Grace to Abraham and Sarah, and which they deliver'd first, but now they have before 'em Work of another nature ; Sodom is to be destroy'd, and they must do it, Chap. xix. 13. *Note.* As with the Lord there is Mercy, so he is the God to whom Vengeance belongs. Pursuant to their Commission we here find, 1. That they look'd towards Sodom, v. 16. they set their Faces against it in Wrath ; as God is said to look unto the Host of the Egyptians, Exod. xiv. 24. *Note.* Tho' God has long seem'd to connive at Sinners, from which they have infer'd, that the Lord doth not see ; doth not Regard, yet when the Day of his Wrath comes, he will look towards them. 2. That they went towards Sodom, v. 22. And accordingly we find two of them at Sodom, Chap. xix. 1. whether the Third was the Lord before whom Abraham yet stood, and to whom he drew near, v. xxiii. as most think, or whether the Third left 'em before they came to Sodom, and the Lord before whom Abraham stood was the Shechinah, or that Appearance of the Divine Glory which Abraham had formerly seen and convers'd with, is uncertain. However, we have here. (1.) The Honour Abraham did to his Guests, he went with them to bring them on the Way, as one that was loth to part with such good Company, and was desirous to pay his utmost Respects to them. This is a Piece of Civility, proper to be shew'd to our Friends, but it must be done as the Apostle directs, 3 John vi. after a godly sort. (2.) The Honour they did to him ; for those that Honour God he will Honour : God communicated to Abraham his Purpose to destroy Sodom, and not only so, but enter'd into a free Conference with him about it. Having taken him more closely than before into Covenant with himself, Chap. xvii. He here admits him into more intimate Communion with himself than ever, as the Man of his Counsel. Observe here,

1. God's friendly Thoughts concerning Abraham, v. 17, 18, 19. where we have his Resolution to make known to Abraham his Purpose concerning Sodom, with the Reasons of it. If Abraham had not brought them on their Way, perhaps he had not been thus favoured ; but he that loves to walk with Wife-Men shall be Wise, Prov. xiii. 20. See how God is pleas'd to argue with himself : Shall I hide from Abraham (or, as some read it, Am I concealing from Abraham) that thing which I do ? Can I go about such a Thing, and not tell Abraham ? Thus doth God in his Counsels express himself after the manner of Men, with Deliberation. But why must Abraham be of the Cabinet-Council ? The Jews suggest, that because God had granted the Land of Canaan to Abraham and his Seed, therefore he would not destroy those Cities which were a Part of that Land, without his Knowledge and Consent. But God here gives two other Reasons : (1.) Abraham must know, for he is a Friend and a Favourite, and one that God has a particular Kindness for, and great Things in store for. He is to become a great Nation, and not only so, but in the Messiah which is to come from his Loins, All Nations of the Earth shall be blessed. *Note.* the Secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, Ps. xxv. 14. Pr. iii. 32. Those that by Faith live a Life of Communion with God, cannot but know more of his Mind than other People, tho' not with a Prophetical, yet with a Prudential, Practical Knowledge. They have a better Insight than others into what is present, Hof. xiv. 1. Ps. V O L. I.

cvi. 1. and a better Foresight of what's to come, at least so much as sufficeth for their Conduct and for their Comfort. (2.) Abraham must know, for he will teach his Household, v. 19. 7 know Abraham, very well, that he will command his Children, and his Household after him. Consider this, 1. As a very bright Part of Abraham's Character and Example. He not only pray'd with his Family, but he taught them, as a Man of Knowledge, nay, he commanded them as a Man in Authority, and was Prophet and King, as well as Priest in his own House. Observe, (1.) That God having made the Covenant with him and his Seed, and his Household being circumcised, pursuant to that, he was very careful to teach and rule them well. Those that expect Family Blessings, must make Conscience of Family Duty. If our Children be the Lord's, they must be nurs'd for him : If they wear his Livery, they must be trained up in his Work. (2.) That Abraham not only took Care of his Children, but of his Household ; his Servants were catechized Servants. Masters of Families should instruct, and inspect the Manners of all under their Roof. The poorest Servants have precious Souls that must be looked after. (3.) That Abraham made it his Care and Business to promote Practical Religion in his Family. He did not fill their Heads with Matters of nice Speculation, or doubtful Disputation, but he taught them to keep the Way of the Lord, and to do Judgment and Justice ; that is, to be serious and devout in the Worship of God, and to be honest in their Dealings with all Men. (4.) That Abraham herein had an Eye to Posterity, and was in Care not only that his Household with him, but that his Household after him, should keep the Way of the Lord ; that Religion might flourish in his Family when he was in his Grave. (5.) That his doing this was the fulfilling the Conditions of the Promises which God had made him. Those only can expect the Benefit of the Promises that make Conscience of their Duty.

2. We may consider this as the Reason why God would make known to him his Purpose concerning Sodom, because he was Communicative of his Knowledge, and improv'd it for the Benefit of those that were under his Charge. *Note.* to him that hath shall be given, Mat. xiii. 12—25. 29. Those that make a good Use of their Knowledge, shall know more.

3. God's friendly Talk with Abraham, in which he makes known to him his Purpose concerning Sodom, and allows him a liberty of Application to him about that Matter.

1. He tells him of the Evidence there was against Sodom, v. 20. The Cry of Sodom is great. *Note.* Some Sins, and the Sins of some Sinners, cry loud to Heaven for Vengeance. The Iniquity of Sodom was crying Iniquity, i. e. 'Twas so very provoking, that it even urg'd God to punish.

2. The Enquiry he would make upon this Evidence, v. 21. I will go down now and see. Not as if there were any thing concerning which God is in doubt, or in the dark, but he is pleas'd thus to express himself after the manner of Men. 1. To shew the uncontestable Equity of all his judicial Proceedings. Men are apt to suggest that his Way is not equal ; but let them know that his Judgments are the Result of an Eternal Counsel, and are never rash, or sudden Resolves. He never punishes upon Report, or common Fame, or the Information of others, but upon his own certain and infallible Knowledge. 2. To give Example to Magistrates, and those in Authority, with the utmost Care and Diligence to enquire into the Merits of a Cause before they give Judgment upon it. 3. Perhaps the Decree is here spoken of as not yet Peremptory, that Doom and Encouragement might be given to Abraham to make Intercession for them. Thus God looked if there were any to intercede, Isa. lix. 16.

23 And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked ? 24 Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city : wilt thou also destroy, and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein ? 25 That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked : and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee : Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right ? 26 And the LORD said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes. 27 And Abraham answered, and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the LORD, which am but dust and ashes. 28 Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous : wilt thou destroy all the City for lack of five ? And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it. 29 And he spake unto him yet a gain,

gain, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not do it for forties sake. 30 And he said unto him, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And he said, I will not do it, if I find thirty there. 31 And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for twenties sake. 32 And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for tens sake. 33 And the Lord went his way as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place.

Communion with God is kept up by the Word and Prayer. In the Word God speaks to us, in Prayer we speak to him. God had spoken to Abraham his Purposes concerning Sodom; now from thence Abraham takes occasion to speak to God on Sodom's behalf. Note, God's Word then doth us good when it furnisheth us with matter for Prayer, and excites us to it. When God hath spoken to us, we must consider what we have to say to him upon it.

Observe, 1. The Solemnity of Abraham's Address to God on this Occasion, v. 23. Abraham drew near. The Expression intimates, (1.) A Holy Concern. He engageth his Heart to approach to God, Jer. xxx. 21. shall Sodom be destroyed, and I not speak one good Word for it? (2.) A Holy Confidence: He drew near with an Assurance of Faith; drew near as a Prince, Job xxxi. 37. Note, When we address our selves to the Duty of Prayer, we ought to remember that we are drawing near to God, that we may be filled with a Reverence of him, Lev. x. 3.

2. The general Scope of this Prayer. 'Tis the first solemn Prayer we have upon Record in the Bible, and 'tis a Prayer for the sparing of Sodom. Abraham, no doubt, greatly abhor'd the Wickedness of Sodom; he would not have lived among them, as Lot did, if they would have given him the best Estate in their Country, and yet he prayed earnestly for them. Note, Though Sin is to be hated, Sinners are to be pitied and prayed for. God delights not in their Death, nor should we desire, but deprecate the woful day.

1. He begins with a Prayer that the Righteous among them might be spared, and not involved in the common Calamity; Having an Eye particularly to just Lot, whose disingenuous Carriage towards him, he had long since forgiven and forgotten: witness his friendly Zeal to rescue him before by his Sword, and now by his Prayers.

2. He improves this into a Petition that All might be spared for the sake of the Righteous that were among them. God himself countenancing this Request, and in effect putting him upon it by his Answer to his first Address, v. 26. Note, We must Pray not only for our selves, but for others also, for we are Members of the same Body, at least of the same Body of Mankind. All we are Brethren.

3. The particular Graces eminent in this Prayer.

1. Here's great Faith, and 'tis the Prayer of Faith that is the prevailing Prayer. His Faith pleads with God, orders the Cause, and fills his Mouth with Arguments. He acts Faith, especially upon the Righteousness of God, and is very confident, (1.) That God will not destroy the Righteous with the Wicked, v. 23. No, that be far from thee, v. 25. We must never entertain any Thought that derogates from the Honour of God's Righteousness. See Rom. iii. 5, 6. Note, 1. The Righteous are mingled with the Wicked in this World. Among the best there is commonly some bad, and among the worst some good. Even in Sodom, one Lot. 3. Tho' the Righteous be among the Wicked, yet the Righteous God will not, certainly he will not destroy the Righteous with the Wicked. Tho' in this World they may be involved in the same common Calamities, yet, in the great Day, a Distinction will be made. (2.) That the Righteous shall not be as the Wicked, v. 25. Though they may suffer with them, yet they do not suffer like them. Common Calamities are quite another thing to the Righteous than what they are to the Wicked, Isa. xxvii. 7. (3.) That the Judge of all the Earth will do Right; undoubtedly he will, because he is the Judge of all the Earth, 'tis the Apostle's Argument, Rom. iii. 5, 6. Note, 1. God is the Judge of all the Earth, he gives Charge to all, takes Cognizance of all, and will pass Sentence upon all. 2. That God Almighty never did, nor ever will do any Wrong, to any of the Creatures; either by withholding that which is Right, or exacting more than is Right, Job xxiv. 10, 11.

2. Here's great Humility appearing in this Address.

(1.) A deep Sense of his own Unworthiness, v. 27. Behold now I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, who am but Dust and Ashes; and again, v. 21. He speaks as one amazed at his own Boldness, and the Liberty God graciously allowed him, considering God's Greatness, he is the Lord, and his own meanness, but Dust and Ashes. Note, 1. The greatest of Men, the most considerable and deserving, are but Dust and Ashes, mean and vile before God; despicable, frail, and dying. 2. Whenever we draw near to God, it becomes us reverently to acknowledge the vast Distance that there is between us and God. He is the Lord of Glory, we are Worms of the Earth. 3. The Access we have to the Throne of Grace, and the Freedom of Speech allowed us is just matter of humble Wonder, 2 Sam. vii. 18.

(2.) An awful Dread of God's Displeasure. Oh let not the Lord be angry, v. 30. and again, v. 32. Note, 1. The Importunity which Believers use in their Addresses to God is such, that if they were dealing with a Man like themselves, they could not but fear that he would be angry with them. But he with whom we have to do, is God and not Man; and however he may seem, is not really angry with the Prayers of the Upright, Ps. lxxx. 4. for they are his Delight, Prov. xv. 8. and he is pleased when he is wrestled with. 2. That even when we receive special Tokens of the Divine Favour, we ought to be jealous over our selves lest we make ourselves obnoxious to the Divine Displeasure, and therefore must bring the Mediator with us in the Arms of our Faith, to atone for the Iniquity of our Holy Things.

3. Here's great Charity appearing in this Address.

(1.) A charitable Opinion of Sodom's Character: As bad as it was, he thought there were several good People in it. It becomes us to hope the best of the worst Places. Of the two, 'tis better to err on that Extream.

(2.) A Charitable desire of Sodom's Welfare: He us'd all his Interest at the Throne of Grace for Mercy for them. We never find him thus earnest in pleading with God for himself and his Family, as here for Sodom.

4. Here's great Boldness, and believing Confidence in this Address. (1.) He took the Liberty to pitch upon a certain Number of righteous Ones which he supposed might be in Sodom. Suppose there be fifty, v. 24. (2.) He drew upon God's Concessions, again and again. As God granted much, he still beg'd more, in hopes to gain his Point. (3.) He brought the Terms as low as he could for shame, having prevailed for Mercy if there were but Ten righteous Ones in Five Cities, and perhaps so low, that he concluded they would have been spared. (4.) The success of the Prayer. He that thus wrestled, prevailed wonderfully, as a Prince he had Power with God: It was but ask and have. 1. God's general Good-Will appeared in this, that he consented to spare the Wicked for the sake of the Righteous. See how swift God is to shew mercy, He even seeks a Reason for it. See what great Blessings good People are to any Place, and how little those befriend themselves that hate and persecute them. 2. His particular Favour to Abraham appeared in this, that he did not leave off granting till Abraham left off asking: Such is the Power of Prayer, Why then did Abraham leave off asking, when he had prevail'd so far as to get the Place spared if there were but Ten Righteous in it? Either, (1.) Because he owned that it deserved to Perish if there were not so many: As the Dresser of the Vineyard, who confessed that the Barren Tree should be cut down if one Year's trial more did not make it fruitful, Luke xiii. 9. Or, (2.) Because God restrained his Spirit from asking any further. When God hath determin'd the Ruin of a Place, he forbids it to be prayed for, Jer. vii. 16, 11. 14---14. 11.

Lastly, Here's the breaking up of the Conference, v. 33. (1.) The Lord went his Way. The Visions of God must not be constant in this World, where 'tis by Faith only that we are to see God before us. God did not go away till Abraham had said all he had to say, for he is never weary of hearing Prayer, Isa. lix. 1.

(2.) Abraham returned unto his Place; not puffed up with the Honour done him, nor by these extraordinary Interviews taken off from the ordinary Course of Duty; He returned to his Place to wait what the Event would be; and it proved that his Prayer was heard, and yet Sodom not spared, because there were not Ten Righteous in it. We cannot expect too little from Man, nor too much from God.

C H A P. XIX.

The Contents of this Chapter we have, 2 Pet. ii. 6, 7, 8. where we find that God turning the Cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into Ashes, condemned them with an Overthrow. And deliver'd just Lot. 'Tis the History of Sodom's Ruine, and Lot's Rescue from that Ruine. We read, Chap. xviii. of God's coming to take a View of the present State of Sodom, what its Wickedness was, and what Righteous there were in it: Now, here

here we have the Result of that Enquiry. 1. It was found upon trial, that Lot was very Good, v. 1, 2, 3. and it did not appear that there were any more of the same Character. 2. It was found that the Sodomites were very wicked, and vile, v. 4-11. 3. Special Care was therefore taken for the securing of Lot and his Family, in a Place of Safety, v. 12-23. 4. Mercy having rejoiced therein, Justice shows it self in the Ruine of Sodom, and of Lot's Wife, v. 24-26. with a general Repetition of the Story, v. 27-29. 5. A foul Sin that Lot was Guilty of in committing Incest with his two Daughters, v. 30. ad fin.

AND there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom; and Lot seeing them, rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground; 2 And he said, Behold, now my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servants house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay, but we will abide in the street all night. 3 And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house: and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat.

These Angels, it's likely, were two of the three that had just before been with Abraham, the two created Angels that were sent to execute God's Purpose concerning Sodom. Observe here, 1. There was but one good Man in Sodom, and these heavenly Messengers soon found him out. Where-ever we are, we should enquire out those of the Place that live in the Fear of God, and choose to associate our selves with them; *Mat. x. 11. Enquire who is worthy, and there abide.* Those of the same Country, when they are in a foreign Country, love to be together. 2. Lot sufficiently distinguish'd himself from the rest of his Neighbours, at this time, which plainly set a Mark upon him. He that did not act like the rest, must not fare like the rest. 1. Lot sat in the Gate of Sodom at Even; when 'tis likely the rest were Tippling and Drinking, he sat alone waiting an Opportunity to do Good. 2. He was extremely respectful to Men whose Mein and Aspect was sober and serious, tho' they did not come in State. He bowed himself to the Ground when he met them, as if upon the first View he discerned something Divine in them. 3. He was Hospitable, and very free and generous in his Invitations and Entertainments. He courted these Strangers to his House, and to the best Accommodations he had, and gave them all the Evidences that could be of his Sincerity: For, (1.) When the Angels to try whether he were hearty in the Invitation, declined the Acceptance of it at first, (which is the common usage of Modesty, and no reproach at all to Truth and Honesty) their Refusal did but make him more importunate; for he pressed upon them greatly, v. 3. Partly because he would by no means have them to expose themselves to the Inconveniences and Perils of lodging in the Streets of Sodom, and partly because he was desirous of their Company and Converse. He had not seen two such honest Faces in Sodom this great while. *Note,* Those that live in bad Places should know how to value the Society of those that are Wife and Good, and earnestly desire it. (2.) When the Angels accepted his Invitation, he treated them nobly, he made a Feast for them, and thought it well bestowed on such Guests. *Note,* Good People should be (with Prudence) Generous People.

4 But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from very quarter. 5 And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them. 6 And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him. 7 And said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly. 8 Behold now, I have two daughters, which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing, for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof. 9 And they said, Stand back. And they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: Now will we

deal worse with thee than with them. And they pressed fore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door. 10 But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door. 11 And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door.

Now it appeared beyond Contradiction that the Cry of Sodom was no louder than there was cause for. This Night's Work was enough to fill the Measure. For we find here,

1. That they were all wicked, v. 4. Wickedness was grown universal, and they were unanimous in any vile Design. Here were Old and Young, and all from every Quarter engaged in this Riot. The Old were not past it, and the Young were soon come up to it; either they had no Magistrates to keep the Peace, and protect the Peaceable, or their Magistrates were themselves aiding and abetting. *Note,* When the Disease of Sin is become Epidemical, 'tis fatal to any Place, *Isa. i. 5, 6, 7.*

2. That they were arrived to the highest Pitch of Wickedness; they were Sinners before the Lord exceedingly, Chap. xiii. 13. for,

(1.) It was the most unnatural and abominable Wickedness, that they were now set upon, a Sin which still bears their Name, and is called Sodomy. They were carried headlong by those vile Affections (*Rom. i. 26, 27.* which are worse than brutish, and the eternal Reproach of the Humane Nature, and which cannot be thought of without Horror by those that have the least Spark of Virtue, and any Remains of natural Light and Conscience. *Note,* Those that allow themselves in unnatural Uncleanliness are marked for the Vengeance of eternal Fire. See *Jude 7.*

(2.) They were not ashamed to own it, and to prosecute their Design by Force and Arms. The Thing had been ill enough if it had been carried on by Intrigue and Wheedling, but they proclaim War with Virtue, and bid open Defiance to it. Hence daring Sinners are said to declare their Sin as Sodom, *Isa. iii. 9.* *Note,* Those that are become Impudent in Sin, generally prove Impenitent in Sin, and 'twill be their Ruine. Those have hard Hearts indeed that Sin with a high Hand, *Jer. vi. 15.*

(3.) When Lot interpos'd with all the Mildness imaginable, to check the Rage and Fury of their Lust, they were most insolently rude and abusive to him. He ventur'd himself among them, v. 6. He spoke 'em fair, and call'd 'em Brethren, v. 7. beg'd of 'em not to do so Wickedly; and being greatly disturbed at their vile Attempt, unadvisedly and unjustifiably offered to prostitute his two Daughters to them, v. 8. 'Tis true, of two Evils we must chuse the less, but of two Sins we must chuse neither, nor ever do Evil that Good may come of it. He reasoned with them, pleaded the Laws of Hospitality, and the Protection of his House, which his Guests were entitled to: But you had as good offer Reason to a roaring Lion and a ranging Bear, as to these head-strong Sinners who are govern'd only by Lust and Passion. Lot's arguing with them doth but exasperate them, and to complement their Wickedness, and fill up the Measure of it, they fall foul upon him. (1.) They ridicule him, charge him with the Absurdity of pretending to be a Magistrate, when he was not so much as a Free-man of their City, v. 9. *Note,* it is common for Reprovers to be unjustly upbraided as Usurpers: and for offering the Kindness of a Friend, to be charged with assuming the Authority of a Judge; as if a Man might not speak Reason, without taking too much upon him. (2.) They threaten him, and lay violent Hands upon him, and the good Man is in danger of being pulled in pieces by this outrageous Rabble. *Note,* 1. Those that hate to be Reformed, hate those that Reprove them, tho' with never so much Tenderness. Presumptuous Sinners do by their Consciences as the Sodomites did by Lot, baffle their Checks, stifle their Convictions, press hard upon them till they have fear'd them, and quite stop't their Mouths, and so made themselves ripe for Ruine. 2. Abuses offer'd to God's Messengers, and to faithful Reprovers, soon fill the Measure of a People's Wickedness, and bring Destruction without Remedy. See *Prov. xxix. 1.* and *2 Chr. xxxvi. 16.* If Reproofs remedy not, there is no Remedy. See *2 Chr. xxv. 16.*

3. That nothing less than the Power of an Angel could save a good Man out of their wicked Hands. 'Twas now past Dispute what Sodom's Character was, and what Course must be taken with it; and therefore the Angels immediately give a Specimen of what they further intended.

1. They Rescue Lot, v. x. *Note,* 1. He that watereth shall be watered also himself. Lot was solicitous to protect them, and now they take effectual Care for his safety, in return of his kindness. 2. Angels are employed for the special Preservation of those that expose themselves to Danger by Well-doing. The Saints at Death are pulled like Lot into a House of perfect Safety, and the Door shut for ever against those that pursue them.

2. They chastise the Insolence of the *Sodomites*, v. 11. they smote them with Blindness. This was designed, 1. To put an end to their Attempt, and disable them to pursue it. Justly were they struck blind that had been deaf to Reason. Violent Persecutors are oft infatuated so that they cannot push on their malicious Designs against God's Messengers, *Job* v. 14, 15. Yet these *Sodomites* after they were struck blind continued seeking the Door to break it down, till they were tired. No Judgments of themselves will change the corrupt Natures and Wills of wicked Men. If their Minds had not been blinded as well as their Bodies, they would have said as the Magicians, this is the Finger of God, and would have submitted. 2. 'Twas to be an earnest of their utter Ruine the next Day. When God in a way of righteous Judgment blinds Men, their Condition is already desperate, *Rom.* xi. 8. 9.

12 And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place. 13 For we will destroy this place: because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD, and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it. 14 And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get ye out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city: but he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law.

We have here the Preparation for Lot's Deliverance.

1. Notice is given him of the Approach of Sodom's Ruine, v. 13. We will destroy this Place. Note, The holy Angels are Ministers of God's wrath for the Destruction of Sinners, as well as of his Mercy for the Preservation and Deliverance of his People. In this Sense the good Angels become evil Angels, *Pf.* lxxviii. 49.

2. He is directed to give notice to his Friends and Relations, that they, if they would might be saved with him, v. 12. Hast thou here any besides that thou art concerned for? If thou hast, go tell them what's coming. Now this implies, 1. The Command of a great Duty, which was to do all he could for the Salvation of those about him, to snatch them as Brands out of the Fire. Note, Those who thro' Grace are themselves deliver'd out of a sinful State and Condition, should do what they can for the deliverance of others, especially their Relations. 2. The offer of great Favour. They do not ask whether he knew any righteous Ones in the City fit to be spared, no, they knew there were none, but they ask what Relations he had there, and whether Righteous or Unrighteous, they should be saved with him. Note, Bad People oft fare the better in this World for the sake of their good Relations. 'Tis good being akin to a Godly Man.

3. He applies himself accordingly to his Sons in Law, v. 14. Observe, 1. The fair warning that Lot gave them, Up, get you out of this Place. The manner of Expression is startling and quick'ning. 'Twas no time to trifle when the Destruction was just at the Door. They had not forty Days to turn them in, as the *Ninevites* had. Now or never they must make their escape. At Midnight this Cry was made. Such as this is our Call to the Unconverted to turn and live.

2. The slight they put upon this Warning, He seemed to them as one that mocked. They thought, perhaps, that the Assault which the *Sodomites* had just now made upon his House, had disturbed his Head, and put him into such a Fright that he knew not what he said: Or, they thought he was not in earnest with them. They that lived a merry Life, and made a Jest of every thing, made a Jest of that; and so they perish'd in the Overthrow. Thus many who are warned of the Misery and Danger they are in by Sin, make a light Matter of it, and think their Ministers do but jest with them; such will perish with their Blood upon their own heads.

15 And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. 16 And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city. 17 And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain: escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed. 18 And Lot said unto them, O not so, my lord. 19 Behold now, thy servant

hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life: and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die. 20 Behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: O let me escape thither (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live. 21 And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken. 22 Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither: therefore the name of the city was called Zoar. 23 The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar.

Here's 1. The Rescue of Lot out of Sodom. Though there were not ten righteous Men in Sodom, for whose sakes it might be spared, yet that one righteous Man that was among them deliver'd his own Soul, *Ezek.* xiv. 14. Early in the Morning his own Guests in kindness to him turned him out of Doors, and his Family with him, v. 15. His Daughters that were married perished with their unbelieving Husbands, but those that continued with him were preserved with him. Observe,

(1.) With what a gracious Violence Lot was brought out of Sodom, v. 16. It seems tho' he did not make a Jest of the Warning given, as his Sons in Law did, yet he lingered, he trifled, he did not make so much Haste as the Case required. Thus many that are under some Convictions about the Misery of their spiritual State, and the necessity of a Change, yet defer that needful work, and foolishly linger. Lot did so, and it might have been fatal to him, if the Angels had not laid hold on his Hand, and brought him forth, and saved him with Fear, *Jude* xxiii. Herein 'tis said, the Lord was merciful to him, otherwise he might justly have left him to perish, since he was so loth to depart. Note, 1. The Salvation of the most righteous Men must be attributed to God's Mercy, not to their own Merit. We are saved by Grace. 2. God's Power also must be acknowledg'd in the bringing of Souls out of a sinful State. If God had not brought us forth, we had never come forth. 3. If God had not been merciful to us, our lingering had been our Ruine.

2. With what a gracious Vehemence; he was urged to make the best of his Way, when he was brought forth, v. 17.

1. He must still apprehend himself in danger of being consumed, and be quicken'd by the Law of Self-Preservation to flee for his Life. Note, There is a holy Fear and Trembling which is necessary to the working out of our Salvation.

2. He must therefore mind his Business with the utmost Care and Diligence. He must not hanker after Sodom, Look not behind thee: He must not loiter by the Way; stay not in all the plain, for it would all be made one dead Sea: He must not take up short of the Place of Refuge appointed him; escape to the Mountain. Such as these are the Commands given to those who thro' Grace are delivered out of a sinful State and Condition. (1.) Return not to Sin and Satan, for that's looking back to Sodom. (2.) Rest not in Self and the World, for that's staying in the plain, And, (3.) Reach towards Christ and Heaven, for that's escaping to the Mountain, short of which we must not take up.

2. The fixing of a Place of Refuge for him. The Mountain was first appointed for him to flee to, but

1. He beg'd for a City of Refuge, one of the five that lay together, called *Bela*, *Ch.* xiv. 2. v. 18, 19, 20. 'Twas Lot's weakness to think a City of his own choosing safer than the Mountain of God's appointing. And he argued against himself when he pleaded, Thou hast magnified thy Mercy in saving my Life, and I cannot escape to the Mountain; for could not He that had pluck'd him out of Sodom when he lingered, carry him safe to the Mountain, tho' he began to tire? Could not he that had saved him from greater Evils, save him from the lesser? He insists much in his Petition upon the smallness of the Place: It is a little one, is it not? Therefore, 'twas to be hoped, not so bad as the rest. This gave a new Name to the Place, 'twas called Zoar, a little one. Intercessions for little Ones are worthy to be remembered.

2. God granted him his Request, tho' there was much Infirmary in it, v. 21, 22. See what Favour God shew'd to a true Saint, though weak. 1. Zoar was spared to gratify him. Though his Intercession for it was not as *Abram's* for Sodom from a Principle of generous Charity, but purely from self-Interest, yet God granted him his Request, to shew how much the fervent Prayer of a righteous Man avails. 2. Sodom's Ruine was suspended till he was safe. I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither. Note, The very Presence of Good Men in a Place helps to keep off Judgments. See what Care God takes for the Preservation of his People. The Winds are held till God's Servants are sealed. *Rev.* vii. 3. *Ezek.* ix. 4.

Lastly,

Lastly, 'Tis taken notice of, that *the Sun was risen when Lot entered into Zoar*. For when a good Man comes into a Place, he brings Light along with him, or should do.

24 Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven. 25 And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.

Then when Lot was got safe into Zoar, then this Ruine came, for Good Men are taken away from the Evil to come. *Then when the Sun was risen* bright and clear, promising a fair Day, then this Storm arose, to shew that it was not from natural Causes. Concerning this Destruction observe, (1.) That God was the immediate Author of it. It was Destruction from the Almighty. *The Lord rained, — from the Lord, v. 24. i. e. God from himself,* by his own immediate Power, and not in the common Course of Nature. Or, *God the Son from God the Father, for the Father has committed all Judgment to the Son.* Note, He that is the Saviour will be the Destroyer of those that reject the Salvation.

(2.) That it was a strange Punishment, Job 31. 3. never was the like before nor since. Hell was rained from Heaven upon them. *Fire and Brimstone, and an horrible Tempest, this was the Portion of their Cup, Psal. xi. 6. not a Flash of Lightning, which is destructive enough when God gives it Commission, but a Shower of Lightning.* Brimstone was scatter'd upon their Habitation. Job xviii. 15. and then the Fire soon fastned upon them. God could have drowned them as he did the Old World, but he would shew that he has many Arrows in his Quiver, Fire as well as Water.

(3.) That it was a Judgment that laid all waste, *It overthrew the Cities, and destroyed all the Inhabitants of them, the Plain, and all that grew upon the Ground, v. 25.* 'Twas an utter Ruine, and irreparable; that fruitful Valley remains to this Day a great Lake, or Dead Sea, 'tis called the *salt Sea*, Num. xxxiv. 12. Travellers say, 'tis about thirty Miles long, and ten Miles broad. It has no living Creature in it. 'Tis not moved by the Wind: The Smell of it is offensive: Things do not easily sink in it: The Greeks call it *Asphaltus*, from a sort of Pitch which it casts up: *Jordan falls into it, and is lost there.*

(4.) That it was a Punishment that answer'd their Sin. Burning Lusts against Nature were justly punish'd with this preternatural Burning. They that went after *strange Flesh* were destroyed by *strange Fire*, Jude 7. They persecuted the Angels with their Rabble, and made Lot afraid; and now God persecuted them with his Tempest, and made them afraid with his Storm, *Ps. lxxxiii. 15.*

(5.) That it was designed for a standing Revelation of the Wrath of God against Sin and Sinners in all Ages. 'Tis accordingly oft refer'd in the Scripture, and made a Pattern of the Ruine of *Israel*, Deut. xxix. 23. of *Babylon*, Isa. xlii. 14. of *Edom*, Jer. xlix. 18. of *Moab and Ammon*, Zeph. ii. 9. Nay, it was Typical of the Vengeance of Eternal Fire, Jude 7. and the Ruine of all that live Ungodly, 2 Pet. ii. 6. especially that despise the Gospel, Mat. x. 15. 'Tis in allusion to this Destruction that the Place of the Damned is oft represented by a *Lake that burns, as Sodom did with Fire and Brimstone.* Let us learn from it, 1. The Evil of Sin, and the hurtful Nature of it. Iniquity tends to Ruine. 2. The Terror of the Lord. See what a fearful Thing it is to fall into the Hands of the living God.

26 But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

This also is written for our Admonition, our Saviour refers to it, Luke xvii. 32. *Remember Lot's Wife.* As by the Example of *Sodom the Wicked are warn'd to turn from their Wickedness,* so by the Example of *Lot's Wife the Righteous are warn'd not to turn from their Righteousness.* See Ezek. iii. 18, 20. We have here,

1. The Sin of Lot's Wife: *she looked back from behind him:* This seem'd a small thing, but we are sure by the Punishment of it that it was a great Sin, and exceeding sinful.

(1.) She disobey'd an express Command, and so sinn'd after the Similitude of *Adam's Transgression*, which ruin'd us all.

(2.) Unbelief was at the bottom of it; she question'd whether *Sodom* would be destroyed, and thought she might still have been safe in it.

(3.) She looked back upon her Neighbours she had left behind with more Concern than was fit, now their Day of Grace was over, and divine Justice was glorifying it self in their Ruine. See Isa. lxvi. 24.

(4.) Probably she hanker'd after her House and Goods in *Sodom*, and was loth to leave them. Christ intimates this to be her Sin, Luke xvii. 31, 32. she too much regarded her Stuff.

(5.) Her looking back spoke an Inclination to go back, and therefore our Saviour uses it as a Warning against Apostasy from our Christian Profession. We have all renounced the World and the Flesh, and have set our Faces Heaven-wards; we are in

the Plain, upon our Probation; and it is at our Peril if we return into the Interests we profess to have abandon'd. Drawing back is to *Perdition*, and looking back is towards it. *Let us therefore Fear,* Heb. iv. 1.

2. The Punishment of Lot's Wife for this Sin. She was struck dead in the Place, yet her Body did not fall down, but stood fixt and erect like a Pillar, or Monument, not liable to waste or decay, as humane Bodies expos'd to the Air are, but metamorphis'd into a Metallick Substance which would last perpetually. Come, *Behold the Goodness and Severity of God,* Rom. xi. 22. towards Lot that went forwards, *Goodness;* towards his Wife that looked back, *Severity.* Tho' she was nearly related to a righteous Man, tho' better than her Neighbours, and tho' a Monument of distinguishing Mercy in her Deliverance out of *Sodom*, yet God did not connive at her Disobedience. For great Privileges will not secure us from the Wrath of God, if we do not carefully and faithfully improve them. This Pillar of Salt should season us. Since it is such a dangerous thing to look back, let us always press forwards, Phil. iii. 13, 14.

27 And Abraham gat up early in the morning, to the place where he stood before the LORD. 28 And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and lo, the smoke of the country went up, as the smoke of a furnace. 29 And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt.

Our Communion with God consists in our *gracious Regard* to him, and his *gracious Regard* to us: We have here therefore the Communion that was between God and *Abraham* in the *Event* concerning *Sodom*, as before in the *Consultation* concerning it; for Communion with God is to be kept up in Providences as well as in Ordinances.

1. Here's *Abraham's* pious regard to God in this Event; In two things, 1. A careful Expectation of the Event, v. 27. he gat up early to look towards *Sodom*, and to intimate that his Design herein was to see what became of his Prayers, he went to the very Place where he had stood before the Lord, and set himself there, as upon his Watch-Tower, Hab. ii. 1. Note, When we have prayed, we must look after our Prayers, and observe the success of them, we must direct our Prayer as a Letter, and then look up for an answer: *Direct our Prayer as an Arrow,* and then look up to see whether it reach the Mark, *Psal. v. 3.* Our Enquiries after News must be in expectation of an Answer to our Prayers.

2. An awful Observation of it: He looked toward *Sodom*, v. 28. not as *Lot's Wife* did, tacitly reflecting upon the Divine Severity, but humbly adoring it, and acquiescing in it. Thus the Saints, when they see the Smoke of *Babylon's* Torment rising up for ever (like *Sodom's* here) will say again and again, *Aleluja, Rev. 19. 3.* Those that have most earnestly interceded for Sinners in the Day of Grace, will in the Day of Judgment, be content to see them perish, and glorify God in it. 2. Here's God's favourable Regard to *Abraham*, v. 29. As before, when *Abraham* prayed for *Ishmael*, God heard him for *Isaac*, so now when he prayed for *Sodom*, he heard him for *Lot*. He remember'd *Abraham*, and for his sake sent *Lot* out of the Overthrow. Note, 1. God will certainly give an Answer of Peace to the Prayer of Faith in his own Way and Time; tho' for a while it seem to be forgotten, yet sooner or latter 'twill appear to be remember'd. 2. That the Relations and Friends of Godly People fare the better for their Interest in God, and Intercessions with him: 'Twas out of Respect to *Abraham* that *Lot* was rescued; perhaps this Word encourag'd *Moses* long after to pray, *Exod. xxxii. 13.* Lord, remember *Abraham*; and see *Isa. lxiii. 11.*

30 And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters. 31 And the first-born said unto the younger, Our father is old, and there is not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth. 32 Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. 33 And they made their father drink wine that night: and the first-born went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose,

rose. 34 And it came to pass on the morrow, that the first-born said unto the younger, Behold, I lay yesternight with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, and lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. 35 And they made their father drink wine that night also: and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. 36 Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father. 37 And the first-born bare a son, and called his name Moab: the same is the father of the Moabites unto this day. 38 And the younger, she also bare a son, and called his name Ben-ammi: the same is father of the children of Ammon unto this day.

Here's 1. The great Trouble and Distress that Lot was brought into after his Deliverance, v. 30. (1.) He was frightened out of Zoar, durst not dwell there, either because he was conscious to himself that it was a Refuge of his own chusing, and that therein he had foolishly prescribed to God, and therefore he could not but distrust his Safety in it: Or, because he found it as Wicked as Sodom, and therefore concluded it could not long survive it: Or, perhaps, he observed the rise and increase of those Waters, which, after the Conflagration, perhaps from Jordan, began to overflow the Plain, and which, mixing with the Ruins, by degrees made the Dead Sea; in those Waters he concluded Zoar must needs perish (tho' it had escaped the Fire) because it stood upon the same Flat. Note, Settlements and Shelters of our own chusing, and in which we do not follow God, commonly prove uneasy to us. (2.) He was forced to betake himself to the Mountain, and to take up with a Cave for his Habitation there. Methinks, it was strange he did not return to Abraham, and put himself under his Protection, to whom he had once and again owed his Safety: But the truth is, there are some Good Men that are not Wise enough to know what's best for themselves. Observe, (1.) He was now glad to go to the Mountain, the Place which God had appointed for his Shelter. Note, 'Tis well if Disappointment in our Way drive us at last to God's Way. (2.) He that a-while ago could not find Room enough for himself and his Stock in the whole Land, but must juggle with Abraham, and get as far from him as he could, is now confined to a Hole in a Hill where he has scarce room to turn him, and there he is solitary and trembling. Note, It is just with God to reduce those to Poverty and Restraint who have abus'd their Liberty and Plenty. See also in Lot what those bring themselves to at last that forsake the Communion of Saints for Secular Advantages: They will be beaten with their own Rod.

2. The great Sin that Lot and his Daughters were guilty of, when they were in this desolate Place. 'Tis a sad Story:

1. His Daughters laid a very wicked Plot to bring him to Sin; and theirs was doubtless the greater Guilt. They contrived, under pretence of cheering up the Spirits of their Father, in his present Condition, to make him Drunk, and then lye with him, v. 31, 32. (1.) Some think their Pretence was plausible; their Father had no Sons, they had no Husbands, nor knew they where to have any of the Holy Seed; or, if they had Children by others, their Father's Name would not be preserved in them: Some think they had the Messiah in their Eye, who they hoped might descend from their Father, for he came from Terah's elder Son, was separated from the rest of Shem's Posterity, as well as Abraham, and was now signally deliver'd out of Sodom: Their Mother, and the rest of the Family were gone, they might not Marry with the cursed Canaanites, and therefore they supposed that the End they aimed at, and the Extremity they were brought to, would excuse the Irregularity: Thus the Learned Monsieur Allix. Note, Good Intentions are oft abus'd to patronize ill Actions. But, (2.) Whatever their Pretence was, 'tis certain their Project was very Wicked and Vile, and an impudent Affront to the very Light and Law of Nature. Note, 1. The sight of God's most tremendous Judgments upon Sinners, will not, of it self, without the Grace of God, restrain evil Hearts from evil Practices: One would wonder how the Fire of Lust could possibly kindle upon them who had so lately been the Eye-witnesses of Sodom's Flames. 2. Solitude has its Temptations as well as Company, and particularly to Uncleannefs. When Joseph was alone with his Mistress, he was in Danger, Gen. xxxix. 11. Relations that dwell together, especially if solitary, have need carefully to watch even against the least evil Thought of this kind, lest Satan get an Advantage.

2. Lot himself by his own Folly and Unwariness, was wretchedly overcome, and suffer'd himself so far to be impos'd upon

by his own Children, as two Nights together to be Drunk, and to commit Incest, v. 33, &c. Lord, what is Man! What are the best of Men when God leaves them to themselves? See here, 1. The Peril of Security: Lot, that not only kept himself Sober and Chaste in Sodom, but was a constant Mourner for the Wickedness of the Place, and a Witness against it, yet in the Mountain, where he was alone, and, as he thought, quite out of the way of Temptation, he is thus shamefully overtaken: Let him therefore that thinks he stands, stands high, and stands firm, take heed lest he fall: No Mountain on this side the Holy Hill above, can set us out of the reach of Satan's fiery Darts. 2. The Peril of Drunkenness; 'tis not only a great Sin it self, but it is the Inlet of many Sins; it may prove the Inlet of the worst and most unnatural Sins, which may be a perpetual Wound and Dishonour. Excellently doth Mr. Herbert describe it, He that is drunken may his Mother kill, big with his Sister, &c. A Man may do that without reluctance when he is Drunk, which, when he is Sober, he could not think of without Horror. 3. The Peril of Temptation, from our dearest Relations and Friends, whom we Love and Esteem, and expect Kindness from. Lot, whose Temperance and Chastity were impregnable against the Batteries of foreign Force, was surprized into Sin and Shame, by the base Treachery of his own Daughters; we must dread a Snare where-ever we are, and be always upon our Guard.

In the Close we have an Account of the Birth of the two Sons, or Grandsons (call them which you will) of Lot, Moab and Ammon, the Fathers of two Nations, Neighbours to Israel, and which we often read of in the Old Testament, both together are called the Children of Lot, Psal. lxxxiii. 8. Note, Tho' prosperous Births may attend incestuous Conceptions, yet they are so far from justifying them, that they rather perpetuate the Reproach of them, and entail Infamy upon Posterity; yet the Tribe of Judah, of which our Lord sprang, descended from such a Birth; and Ruth, a Moabitess, has a Name in his Genealogy, Mat. i. 3, 5.

Lastly, Observe that after this we never read any more of Lot, nor what came of him: No doubt he repented of his Sin and was pardon'd, but from the Silence of the Scripture concerning him, from hence-forward we may learn, that Drunkenness, as it makes Men forgetful, so it makes them forgotten, and many a Name, which otherwise might have been remember'd with Respect, is buried by it in Contempt and Oblivion.

CHAP. XX.

We are here returning to the Story of Abraham, yet that Part of it which is here recorded, is not to his Honour. The fairest Marbles have their Flaws, and while there are Spots in the Moon, we must not expect any thing Spotsless under it. And the Scripture is impartial in relating the Blemishes even of its most celebrated Heroes. We have here, 1. Abraham's Sin in denying his Wife, and Abimelech's Sin thereupon in taking her, v. 1, 2. 2. God's Discourse with Abimelech in a Dream, upon this Occasion, wherein he shews him his Error, v. 3. Accepts his Plea, v. 4, 5, 6. and directs him to make Restitution, v. 7. 3. Abimelech's Discourse with Abraham, wherein he chides him for the Cheat he had put upon him, v. 8, 9, 10. and Abraham excuses it as well as he can, v. 11, 12, 13. 4. The good Issue of the Story, in which Abimelech restores Abraham his Wife, v. 14, 15, 16. and Abraham, by Prayer, prevails with God for the removal of the Judgment Abimelech was under, v. 17, 18.

1 AND Abraham journeyed from thence toward the south-country, and dwelled between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar. 2 And Abraham said of Sarai his wife; She is my sister: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarai.

Here's, 1. Abraham's remove from Mamre, where he had lived near 20 Years, into the Country of the Philistines, v. 1. he sojourned in Gerar. We are not told upon what Occasion he removed, whether terrified by the Destruction of Sodom, or because the Country round was, for the present prejudiced by it, or as some of the Jewish Writers say, because he was grieved at Lot's Incest with his Daughters, and the Reproach which the Canaanites cast upon him and his Religion, for his Kinsman's sake; doubtless there was some good Cause for his removal. Note, 1. In a World where we are Strangers and Pilgrims, we cannot expect to be always in the same Place. 2. Where-ever we are, we must look upon our selves but as Sojourners.

2. His Sin in denying his Wife; as before, Chap. 12, 13, which was not only in it self such an Equivocation, as bordered upon a Lye, and which, if admitted as lawful, would be the ruin of humane Converse, and an Inlet to Falsehood, but

was also an exposing of the Chastity and Honour of his Wife, which he ought to be the Protector of. But besides this it had here a twofold Aggravation, 1. That he had been guilty of this same Sin before, and had been reprov'd for it, and convinc'd of the Folly of the Suggestion, which induced him to it, yet he returns to it. *Note.* It is possible that a Good Man may not only fall into Sin, but relapse into the same Sin, thro' the Surprise and Strength of Temptation, and the Infirmary of the Flesh. Let Backsliders repent then, but not despair, *Jer. iii. 22.* 2. That *Sarah*, as it should seem, was now with Child of the Promised Seed, or at least in expectation of being so quickly, according to the Word of God; he ought therefore to have taken a particular Care of her now, as *Jud. xiii. 4.*

3. The Peril that *Sarah* was brought into by this Means: The King of *Gerar* sent and took her to his House, in order to the taking of her to his Bed. *Note.* The Sin of one often occasions the Sin of others: He that breaks the Hedge of God's Commandments, opens a Gap to he knows not how many: The beginning of Sin is as the letting forth of Water.

3 But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken: for she is a man's wife. 4 But Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, LORD, wilt thou slay also a righteous nation? 5 Said he not unto me, She is my sister? and she, even she herself said, He is my brother: in the integrity of my heart, and innocency of my hands have I done this. 6 And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her. 7 Now therefore restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live: and if thou restore her not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that are thine.

It appears by this that God revealed himself by Dreams, which evidenc'd themselves to be Divine and Supernatural, not only to his Servants the Prophets, but even to those that were out of the Pale of the Church and Covenant; but then usually it was with some regard to God's own People, as in *Pharaoh's* Dream to *Joseph*, in *Nebuchadnezzar's* to *Daniel*, and here in *Abimelech's* to *Abraham* and *Sarah*, for he reprov'd this King for their sake, *Pf. cv. 14, 15.*

1. God gives him notice of his Danger, *v. 3.* His Danger of Sin, telling him that the Woman was a Man's Wife; so that if he take her he wrongs her Husband; his Danger of Death for this Sin, *Thou art a dead Man*, and God's saying so of a Man makes him so. *Note.* Every wilful Sinner ought to be told that he is a dead Man. As the condemned Malefactor, and the Patient, whose Disease is mortal, is said to be so; If thou art an ill Man, certainly thou art a dead Man.

2. He pleads Ignorance, *v. 4, 5.* That *Abraham* and *Sarah* had agreed to impose upon him, and not to let him know that they were any more but Brother and Sister: See what Confidence a Man may have towards God when his Heart condemns him not, *1 Joh. iii. 21.* If our Consciences witness to our Integrity, and that however we may have been cheated into a Snare, we have not knowingly and wittingly sinn'd against God, it will be our Rejoicing in the Day of Evil. He pleads with God as *Abraham* had done, *Chap. xviii. 23.* Wilt thou slay a righteous Nation? Not such a Nation as *Sodom*, which was indeed justly destroyed, but in this Matter innocent.

3. God gives a very full Answer to what he had said.

1. He allows his Plea, and admits that what he did, he did in the Integrity of his Heart, *v. 6. yea, I know it.* *Note.* It is Matter of Comfort to those that are honest, that God knows their Honesty, and will acknowledge it, tho' perhaps Men that are prejudic'd against them, either cannot be convinc'd of it, or will not own that they are.

2. He let's him know that he was kept from proceeding in the Sin, purely by the good Hand of God upon him. *I withheld thee from sinning against me; Abimelech* was hereby kept from doing wrong, *Abraham* from suffering wrong, and *Sarah* from both. *Note.* (1.) There is a great deal of Sin devised and designed that is never executed. As bad as things are in the World, they are not so bad as the Devil and wicked Men would have 'em. (2.) 'Tis God that restrains Men from doing the Ill they would do; 'tis not from him that there is Sin, but 'tis from him that there is not more Sin, either by his Influence on Men's Minds checking their Inclination to Sin, or by his Providence taking away the Opportunity to Sin. (3.) 'Tis a great Mercy

to be hinder'd from committing Sin, and which God must have the Glory of whoever is the Instrument, *1 Sam. xxv. 32.*

3. He chargeth him to make Restitution, *v. 7.* Now therefore, now thou art better informed, restore the Man his Wife. *Note.* Ignorance will excuse no longer than it continues: If we ignorantly did wrong, that will not excuse us if we knowingly persist in it, *Lev. 5. 3, 4.* The Reasons why he must be just and kind to *Abraham*, are, 1. Because he is a Prophet, near and dear to God, for whom God doth in a particular manner concern himself: God highly repents the Injuries done to his Prophets, and takes them as done to himself. 2. Being a Prophet, he shall pray for thee; That's a Prophet's Reward, and a good Reward it is. 'Tis intimated, that there was a great Efficacy in the Prayers of a Prophet; and that Good Men should be ready to help those with their Prayers that stand in need of them, and should make at least this return for the Kindnesses that are done them: *Abraham* was accessary to *Abimelech's* Trouble, and therefore was oblig'd in justice to pray for him. 3. It is at thy Peril if thou do not restore her, know thou that thou shalt surely dye. *Note.* He that doth wrong, whoever he is, Prince or Peasant, shall certainly receive for the Wrong which he has done, unless he Repent and make Restitution, *Col. iii. 25.* No Injustice can be made passable with God, no not by *Cesar's* Image stamp'd upon it.

8 Therefore Abimelech rose early in the morning, and called all his servants, and told all these things in their ears: and the men were fore afraid. 9 Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said unto him, What hast thou done unto us? and what have I offended thee, that thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? thou hast done deeds unto me that ought not to be done. 10 And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What sawest thou, that thou hast done this thing? 11 And Abraham said, Because I thought, Surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will slay me for my wives sake. 12 And yet indeed she is my sister; she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother: and she became my wife. 13 And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said unto her, This is thy kindness which thou shalt shew unto me; At every place whither we shall come, say of me, He is my brother.

Abimelech being thus warn'd of God in a Dream, takes the Warning, and as one truly afraid of Sin and its Consequences, he rises early to pursue the Directions given him.

1. He has a Caution for his Servants, *v. 8.* *Abraham* himself could not be more careful than he was, to command his Household in this Matter. *Note.* Those whom God hath convinc'd of Sin and Danger, ought to tell others what God has done for their Souls, that they also may be awaken'd, and brought to a like Holy Fear.

2. He has a Chiding for *Abraham*. Observe.

1. The serious Reproof which *Abimelech* gave to *Abraham*, *v. 9, 10.* His Reasoning with *Abraham* upon this Occasion was very strong, and yet very mild. Nothing could be said better; he doth not reproach him, nor insult over him: Doth not say, Is this your Profession? I see tho' you will not swear, you'll Lye: If these be Prophets, I'll bless me from them: But he fairly represents the Injury *Abraham* had done him, and calmly signifies his Repentment of it. 1. He calls that Sin which he now found he had been in Danger of, a great Sin. *Note.* Even the Light of Nature teaches Men, that the Sin of Adultery is a great Sin: Be it observed, to the Shame of many who call themselves Christians, and yet make a light Matter of it. 2. He looks upon it that both himself and his Kingdom would have been exposed to the Wrath of God, if he had been guilty of that Sin, tho' ignorantly. *Note.* The Sins of Kings oft prove the Plagues of Kingdoms; Rulers should therefore, for their People's sakes, dread Sin. 3. He charges *Abraham* with doing that which was not justifiable in disowning his Marriage; this he speaks of justly and yet tenderly; he doth not call him a Liar and Cheat, but tells him he had done Deeds that ought not to be done. *Note.* Equivocation and Dissimulation, however they may be palliated, are very ill things, and by no means to be admitted in any Case. 4. He takes it as a very great Injury to himself and his Family that *Abraham* had thus expos'd them to Sin, What have I offended thee? If I had been thy worst Enemy, thou couldst not have done me a worse Turn, nor taken a more effectual Course to be revenged on me. *Note.* We ought to reckon, that those do us the greatest Diskindness in the World that any way tempt

us, or expose us to Sin, tho' they may pretend Friendship, and offer that which is grateful enough to the corrupt Nature. 5. He challenges him to assign any just Cause he had to suspect them as a dangerous People for an honest Man to live among, v. 10. *What sawest thou, that thou hast done this thing?* What Reason hadst thou to think, that if we had known her to be thy Wife, thou wouldst have been exposed to any Danger by it? Note, A Suspicion of our Goodness is justly reckon'd a greater Affront than a Slight upon our Greatness.

2. The poor Excuse that *Abraham* made for himself.

1. He pleaded the ill Opinion he had of the Place, v. 11. He *thought* within himself, tho' he could not give any good Reason for his thinking so; *Surely the Fear of God is not in this Place*, and then they'll *slay me*. Note, 1. Little Good is to be expected there where *no Fear of God is*; See Ps. xxxvi. 1. 2. There are many Places and Persons that have more of the Fear of God in them, than we think they have; perhaps they are not called by our dividing Name, they do not wear our Badges, they do not tie themselves to that which we have an Opinion of, and therefore we conclude they have not the Fear of God in their Hearts, which is very injurious both to Christ and Christians; and makes us obnoxious to God's Judgment, Mat. vii. 1. 3. Uncharitableness and Censoriousness is a Sin that is the Cause of many other Sins. When Men have once persuaded themselves concerning such and such, that they have not the Fear of God, they think that will justify them in the most unjust and unchristian Practices towards them. Men would not do ill if they did not first think ill.

2. He excused it from the Guilt of a downright Lie, by making it out, that in a Sense she was his Sister, v. 12. Some think she was Lot's own Sister, who is called his Brother Lot, Ch. xiv. 16. tho' he was his Nephew, so Sarah is called his Sister. But they to whom he said, *She is my Sister*, understood that she was so his Sister, as not to be capable of being his Wife; so that it was an Equivocation with an Intent to deceive.

3. He clears himself from the Imputation of an Affront designed to *Abimelech* in it, by alledging, that it had been his Practice before, according to an Agreement between him and his Wife, when they first became Sojourners, v. 13. *When God caused me to wander from my Father's House*, then we settled this Matter. Note, 1. God is to be acknowledg'd in all our Wand'rings. 2. Those that Travel abroad and converse much with Strangers, as they have need of the Wisdom of the Serpent, so it is requisite that *that* be ever temper'd with the Innocency of the Dove. It may, for ought I know, be suggested, that God denied to *Abraham* and *Sarah* the Blessing of Children so long, to punish them for this sinful Compact they had made to deny one another: If they will not own their Marriage, why should God own it? But we may suppose that after this Reproof which *Abimelech* gave 'em, they agreed never to do so again, and then presently we read, Chap. 21. 1, 2. that *Sarah* conceived.

14 And *Abimelech* took sheep, and oxen, and men-servants, and women-servants, and gave them unto *Abraham*, and restored him *Sarah* his wife.

15 And *Abimelech* said, Behold, my land is before thee, dwell where it pleaseth thee. 16 And unto *Sarah* he said, Behold, I have given thy brother a thousand pieces of silver: behold, he is to thee a covering of the eyes, unto all that are with thee, and with all other: thus she was reprov'd. 17 So *Abraham* prayed unto God: and God healed *Abimelech*, and his wife, and his maid-servants; and they bare children. 18 For the LORD had fast-closed up all the wombs of the house of *Abimelech*, because of *Sarah* *Abraham's* wife.

Here's, 1. The Kindness of a Prince which *Abimelech* shew'd to *Abraham*; see how unjust *Abraham's* Jealousies were: He fancied, if they knew that *Sarah* was his Wife, they would kill him; but instead of that, when they did know it, they were kind to him, frighten'd at least to be so by the Divine Rebukes they were under. (1.) He gives him his Royal License to dwell where he pleas'd in his Country; courting his Stay, because he saw that God was with him, v. 15. (2.) He gives him his Royal Gifts, v. 14. *Sheep and Oxen*, and v. 16. 1000 *Shekels*. This he gave when he restored *Sarah*, either, 1. By way of Satisfaction for the Wrong he had offer'd to do in taking her to his House; when the *Philistines* restored the Ark, being plagued for detaining it, they sent a Present with it. The Law appointed that when Restitution was made, something should be added to it, Lev. vi. 5. Or, 2. To engage *Abraham's* Prayers for him; not as if Prayers should be bought and sold, but those, whose spiritual Things we reap of, we should endeavour to be kind to,

1 Cor. ix. 11. Note, 'Tis our Wisdom to get and keep an Interest with those that have an Interest in Heaven; and to make those our Friends who are the Friends of God. (3.) He gives to *Sarah*, good Instruction, tells her that her Husband (her Brother he calls him, to upbraid her with calling him so) must be to her for a covering of the Eyes, i. e. she must look at no other, nor desire to be looked at by any other. Note, Yoke-Fellows must be to each other for a covering of the Eyes. The Marriage Covenant is a Covenant with the Eyes, like *Job's*, Chap. xxxi. 1.

2. The Kindness of a Prophet, which *Abraham* shew'd to *Abimelech*, he prayed for him, v. 17, 18. This Honour God would put upon *Abraham*, that tho' *Abimelech* had restored *Sarah*, yet the Judgment he was under should be removed upon the Prayer of *Abraham*, and not before. Thus God healed *Miriam*, when *Moses*, whom she had affronted, prayed for her, Numb. xii. 13. and was reconciled to *Job's* Friends, when *Job* whom they had grieved, prayed for them, (*Job* xlii. 8.) and so did, as it were, give it under his Hand, that he was reconciled to them. Note, The Prayers of Good Men may be a Kindness to Great Men, and ought to be valued.

C H A P. XXI.

In this Chapter we have, 1. *Isaac* the Child of Promise born into *Abraham's* Family, v. 1-8. 2. *Ishmael*, the Son of the Bond-Woman, cast out of it, v. 9-21. 3. *Abraham's* League with his Neighbour *Abimelech*, v. 22-32. 4. His Devotion to his God, v. 33, 34.

1 AND the LORD visited *Sarah* as he had said, and the LORD did unto *Sarah* as he had spoken. 2 For *Sarah* conceived and bare *Abraham* a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. 3 And *Abraham* called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom *Sarah* bare to him, *Isaac*. 4 And *Abraham* circumcised his son *Isaac*, being eight days old, as God had commanded him. 5 And *Abraham* was an hundred years old, when his son *Isaac* was born unto him. 6 And *Sarah* said, God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me. 7 And she said, Who would have said unto *Abraham*, that *Sarah* should have given children suck? for I have born him a son in his old age. 8 And the child grew, and was weaned: and *Abraham* made a great feast the same day that *Isaac* was weaned.

Long looked for comes at last: The Vision concerning the Promised Seed is for an appointed Time, and now at the end it speaks and doth not lie: few under the Old Testament were brought into the World with such Expectation as *Isaac* was, not for the sake of any great personal Eminency to which he was to arrive, but because he was to be in this very thing a Type of Christ, that Seed which the Holy God so long promised, and Holy Men so long expected. In this Account of the first Days of *Isaac* we may observe,

1. The fulfilling of God's Promise in the Conception and Birth of *Isaac*, v. 1, 2. Note, God's Providences look best and brightest when they are compared with his Word, and we observe how God in all acts as he has said, as he has spoken.

1. *Isaac*, was born according to the Promise. The Lord visited *Sarah* in Mercy, as he had said. Note, No Word of God shall fall to the Ground, for he is Faithful that has promised, and God's Faithfulness is the Stay and Support of his People's Faith. He was born at the set Time of which God had spoken to him, v. 2. Note, God is always punctual to his Time; though his promised Mercies come not at the Time that we set, they will certainly come at the Time that he sets, and that's the best Time.

(2.) He was born by virtue of the Promise: *Sarah* by Faith received Strength to conceive, Heb. xi. 11. God therefore, by Promise, gave that Strength. 'Twas not by the Power of common Providence; but by the Power of a special Promise that *Isaac* was born. A Sentence of Death was, as it were, pass'd upon the Second Causes; *Abraham* was Old, and *Sarah* Old, and both as good as dead, and then the Word of God took Place. Note, True Believers, by Virtue of God's Promises, are enabled to do that which is above the Power of Humane Nature; for by them they partake of a Divine Nature, 2 Pet. i. 4.

2. *Abraham's* Obedience to God's Precepts concerning *Isaac*.

(1.) He

(1.) He named him, as God commanded him, v. 3. God directed him to a Name for a Memorial, *Isaac, Laughter*; and Abraham, whose Office it was, gave him that Name, tho' he might have designed him some other Name of a more pompous Signification. *Note*, 'Tis fit the Luxuriancy of Humane Invention should always truckle to the Sovereignty and Plainness of Divine Institution, yet there was good reason for the Names. 1. When Abraham received the Promise of him he laughed for Joy, Chap. xvii. 17. *Note*, When the Sun of Comfort is risen upon the Soul, it is good to remember how welcome the dawning of the day was, and with what Exultation we embraced the Promise. 2. When Sarah received the Promise she laughed with distrust and diffidence. *Note*, When God gives us the Mercies we began to despair of, we ought to remember with Sorrow and Shame our sinful Distrusts of God's Power and Promise, when we are in pursuit of them. 3. Isaac was himself afterwards laughed at by Ishmael, v. 9. and perhaps his Name bid him expect it. *Note*, God's Favourites are of the World's laughing Stocks. 4. The Promise which he was not only the Son, but the Heir of, was to be the Joy of all the Saints in all Ages, and that which would fill their Mouths with Laughter.

(2.) He circumcised him, v. 4. The Covenant being established with him, the Seal of the Covenant was administered to him, and tho' a Bloody Ordinance, and he a Darling, yet it must not be omitted; no nor defer'd beyond the 8th day. God had kept time in performing the Promise, and therefore Abraham must keep time in obeying the Precept.

3. The Impressions which this Mercy made upon Sarah. 1. It filled her with Joy, v. 6. *God has made me so laugh*, he hath given me both cause to rejoyce, and a Heart to rejoyce. Thus the Mother of our Lord, Luk. i. 40. *Note*, 1. God bestows Mercies upon his People to encourage their Joy in his Work and Service: And whatever is the matter of our Joy, God must be acknowledged as the Author of it, unless it be the *Laughter of a Fool*. (2.) When Mercies have been long defer'd, they are the more welcome when they come. (3.) It adds to the Comfort of any Mercy to have our Friends rejoyce with us in it: See Luk. i. 58. *they that hear will laugh with me*, for laughing is catching. Others would rejoyce in this instance of God's Power and Goodness, and be encouraged to trust in him: See Psal. cxix. 74.

2. It filled her with wonder, v. 7. Observe here,

(1.) What it was the thought so wonderful, that Sarah should give Children suck, that she should not only bear a Child, but be so strong and hearty at that Age, as to give it suck. *Note*, Mothers, if they be able, ought to be Nurseries to their own Children: Sarah was a Person of Quality, was Aged, nursing might be thought prejudicial either to her self or to the Child, or to both, she had choice of Nurseries no doubt in her own Family, and yet she would do her Duty in this matter, and her Daughters the Good Wives are while they thus do well, 1 Pet. iii. 5, 6. See Lam. iv. 3.

(2.) How she expressed her wonder, *who would have said it*? The thing was so highly improbable, so near to impossible that, if any one but God had said it, we could not have believed them. *Note*, God's Favours to his Covenant People are such as surpass both their own and others Thoughts and Expectations; who could imagine that God should do so much for those that deserve so little, nay, for those that deserve so ill? See Eph. iii. 20. 2 Sam. vii. 19. *who would have said that God should send his Son to dye for us?* his Spirit to sanctifie us, his Angels to attend us? Who would have said that such great Sins should be pardoned, such mean Services accepted, and such worthless Worms taken into Covenant and Communion with the Great and Holy God?

4. A short Account of Isaac's Infancy, v. 8. *the Child grew*; special notice is taken of this, tho' a thing of course, to intimate, that the Children of the Promise are growing Children: See Luk. i. 80. ii. 40. They that are born of God shall increase more and more with the increase of God, Col. ii. 19. He grew so as not always to need Milk, but was able to bear strong Meat, and then he was weaned; See Heb. v. 13, 14. And then it was that Abraham made a great Feast for his Friends and Neighbours, in thankfulness to God for his Mercy to him. He made this Feast, not the day that Isaac was born, that would have been too great a Disturbance to Sarah, nor the Day he was circumcised, that would have been too great a Diversion from the Ordinance, but the Day he was weaned, because God's Blessing upon the nursing of Children, and the Preservation of them thro' the Perils of the Infant Age, is a signal Instance of the Care and Tenderness of the Divine Providence, which ought to be acknowledged to its Praise: See Psal. xxii. 9, 10. Hof. xi. 1, 2.

9 And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking.
10 Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bond-woman, and her son: for the son of this bond-

woman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac. 11 And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight, because of his son. 12 And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight, because of the lad, and because of thy bond-woman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice: for in Isaac shall thy seed be called. 13 And also of the son of the bond-woman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed.

The casting out of Ishmael is here considered of and resolved on.

1. Ishmael himself gave the occasion, by some Affronts he gave to Isaac his little Brother; some think on the Day that Abraham made the Feast for Joy that Isaac was safely weaned, which the Jews say was not till he was three Years Old, others say five. Sarah her self was an Eye-witness of the Abuse; she saw the Son of the Egyptian, mocking, v. 9. mocking Isaac no doubt, for 'tis said with reference to this, Gal. iv. 29. *that he that was born after the Flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit*. Ishmael is here called the Son of the Egyptian, because (as some think) the Four-hundred Years Affliction of the Seed of Abraham by the Egyptians began now, and was to be dated from hence, Chap. xv. 13. She saw him playing with Isaac, so the Seventy: and in play mocking him. Ishmael was Fourteen Years elder than Isaac, and when Children are together, the Elder should be careful and tender of the Younger, but it argued a very base and sordid Disposition in Ishmael to be abusive to a Child that was no way a Match for him. *Note*, 1. God takes notice what Children say and do in their Play, and will reckon with them, if they say or do amiss, tho' their Parents do not. 2. That Mocking is a great Sin, and very provoking to God. 3. There is a rooted remaining Enmity in the Seed of the Serpent against the Seed of the Woman. The Children of Promise must expect to be mocked. This is Persecution which they that will live Godly must count upon. 4. None are rejected and cast out from God but those who have first deferred it, Ishmael is continued in Abraham's Family till he becomes a Disturbance, Grief and Scandal to it.

2. Sarah made the Motion, v. 10. *Cast out the Bond Woman*, This seems to be spoken in some Heat, yet it is quoted, Gal. iv. 30. as if it had been spoken by a Spirit of Prophecy, and is the Sentence passed on all Hypocrites, and Carnal People, tho' they have a Place and a Name in the visible Church: All that are born after the Flesh, and not born again, that rest in the Law, and reject the Gospel Promise, shall certainly be cast out. 'Tis made to point particularly at the Rejection of the unbelieving Jews, who though they were the Seed of Abraham, yet because they submitted not to the Gospel Covenant were *unchurch'd and disfranchis'd*. And that which above any thing provoked God to cast them off, was their *mocking and persecuting* the Gospel Church, God's Isaac, in its Infancy, 1 Thes. ii. 16. *Note*, There are many who are familiarly conversant with the Children of God in this World, and yet shall not partake with them in the Inheritance of Sons. Ishmael might be Isaac's Play-fellow and School-fellow, yet not his Fellow-heir.

3. Abraham was averse to it, v. 11. *The thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight*. (1.) It grieved him that Ishmael had given such a Provocation. *Note*, Children ought to consider that the more their Parents love them, the more they are grieved at their Miscarriages, and particularly their Quarrels among themselves. (2.) It grieved him that Sarah insisted upon such a Punishment. Might it not suffice to correct him, would nothing less serve than to expel him? *Note*, Even the needful Extremities which must be used with Wicked and Incurable Children are very grievous to tender Parents, who cannot thus afflict willingly.

4. God determin'd it, v. 12, 13. We may well suppose Abraham to be in a mighty toss about this Matter: loth to displease Sarah, and yet loth to expel Ishmael: In this Difficulty God tells him what his Will was, and then he's satisfied. *Note*, A Good Man desires no more in doubtful Cases but to know his Duty, and what God would have him to do, and when he's clear in that, he is, or should be, easy. To make Abraham so, God sets this matter before him in a true Light, and shews him, 1. That the casting out of Ishmael was necessary to the Establishment of Isaac in the Rights and Privileges of the Covenant. *In Isaac shall thy Seed be called*: Both Christ and the Church must descend from Abraham through the Loins of Isaac; This is the Entail of the Promise upon Isaac, and is quoted by the Apostle (Rom. ix. 7.) to shew, that all who came from Abraham's Loins were not the Heirs of Abraham's Covenant. Isaac the Promis'd Son, must be the Father of the Promis'd Seed, therefore, Away with Ishmael, send him far enough, lest he corrupt the Manners, or attempt to invade the Rights of Isaac. 'Twill be his Security to have his Rival banished. The Covenant Seed of Abraham must be a peculiar People, a People by themselves, from the very first distinguished, not mingled.

led with those that were out of Covenant; For this reason *Ishmael* must be separated. *Abraham* was called alone, and so must *Isaac* be. See *Isa. li. 2.* 'Tis likely *Sarah* little thought of this (*Job. xi. 51.*) but God took what she said, and turned it into an Oracle, as afterwards, *Gen. xxvii. 10. 2.* That the casting out of *Ishmael* should not be his Ruine, *v. 13.* he shall be a Nation, because he is thy Seed. We are not sure that it was his Eternal Ruine; 'Tis Presumption to say, that all those who are left out of the external Dispensation of God's Covenant are therefore excluded from all his Mercies: Those may be saved who are not thus honoured. However, we are sure it was not his Temporal Ruine. Though he was chased out of the Church, he was not chased out of the World. *I will make him a Nation.* Note, (1.) Nations are of God's making: He founds 'em, he forms 'em, he fixes 'em. (2.) Many are full of the Blessings of God's Providence, that are Strangers to the Blessings of his Covenant. (3.) The Children of this World often fare the better as to outward things, for their Relation to the Children of God.

14 And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar (putting it on her shoulder) and the child, and sent her away: and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beer-sheba. 15 And the water was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs. 16 And she went, and sat her down over against him, a good way off, as it were a bow-shot, for she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against him, and lift up her voice, and wept. 17 And God heard the voice of the lad: and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is. 18 Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand: for I will make him a great nation. 19 And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water: and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink. 20 And God was with the lad, and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer. 21 And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran: and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt.

Here's, 1. The Casting out of the Bond-Woman and her Son, from the Family of Abraham, *v. 14.* Abraham's obedience to the Divine Command in this Matter was speedy, early in the Morning, we may suppose immediately after he had in the Night Visions received Orders to do this. 'Twas also submissive; 'Twas contrary to his own Judgment, at least to his own Inclination to do it, yet as soon as he perceives 'tis the mind of God, he makes no Objections, but silently doth as he's bidden, as one trained up to an implicit Obedience. In sending them away without Attendants on foot, and slenderly provided for, 'tis probable he observed the Directions given him. If Hagar and Ishmael had carried themselves well in Abraham's Family they might have continued there, but they threw themselves out by their own Pride and Insolence, which was thus justly chastised. Note, by abusing our Privileges we forfeit them. Those that know not when they are well in such a desirable place as Abraham's Family, deserve to be cashiered, and to be made to know the Worth of Mercies by the want of them.

2. Their wandering in the Wilderness, missing their way to the Place Abraham designed them for a Settlement.

(1.) They were reduced to great Distress there: Their Provisions were were spent, Ishmael was sick: He that used to be full fed in Abraham's House, where he waxed fat and kicked, now fainted and sunk when he was brought to short Allowance; Hagar's in Tears, and sufficiently mortified; now she wishes for the Crumbs she had wasted and made light of at her Master's Table: Like one under the Power of the Spirit of Bondage, she despairs of Relief, counts upon nothing but the Death of the Child (*v. 15, 16.*) tho' God had told her before he was born, that he should live to be a Man, a Great Man: We are apt to forget former Promises when present Providences seem to contradict them, for we live by Sense.

(2.) In this Distress God graciously appeared for their Relief: He heard the voice of the Lad, *v. 17.* We read not of a Word he said, but his Sighs and Groans, and Calamitous State cried loud in the Ears of the God of Mercy. An Angel was sent to Comfort Hagar, and it was not the first time that she had met

with God's Comforts in a Wilderness; she had thankfully acknowledged the former kind Visits which God made her in such a case, *chap. xviii. 13.* and therefore God now visited her again with seasonable Succours. (1.) The Angel assures her of the Cognizance God took of her Distress, *God has heard the voice of the Lad where he is*, tho' he be in a Wilderness, for where-ever we are there is a way open Heaven-wards, therefore lift up the Lad, and hold him in thy Hand, *v. 18.* Note, God's readiness to help us when we are in trouble, must not slacken but quicken our Endeavours to help our selves. (2.) He repeats the Promise concerning her Son, that he should be a great Nation, as a reason why she should bestir her self to help him. Note, it should engage our Care and Pains about Children and young People, to consider, that we know not what God has designed 'em for, nor what great use Providence may make of them. (3.) He directs her to a present supply, *v. 19.* He opened her Eyes, which were blubber'd and almost blinded with weeping, and then she saw a Well of Water. Note, Many that have reason enough to be Comforted, go Mourning from day to day, because they do not see the reason they have for Comfort. There's a Well of Water by them in the Covenant of Grace, but they are not aware of it, they have not the Benefit of it, till the same God that opened their Eyes to see their Wound, opens them to see their Remedy, *John. xvi. 6. 7.* Now the Apostle tells us, that those things concerning Hagar and Ishmael are allegorized, *Gal. iv. 24.* they are to be allegorized, this then will serve to illustrate the Folly of those, (1.) Who sought for Righteousness by the Law, and the Carnal Ordinances of it, and not by the Promise made in Christ, as the unbelieving Jews did, thereby running themselves into a Wilderness of Want and Despair. There Comforts are soon exhausted, and, if God save them not by Prerogative, and by a Miracle of Mercy open their Eyes, and undeceive 'em, they are undone. (2.) Their Folly also who seek for Satisfaction and a Happiness in the World, and the things of it. Those that forsake the Comforts of the Covenant and Communion with God, and chuse their Portion in this Earth, take up with a Bottle of Water, poor and slender Provision, and that soon spent; they wander endlessly in pursuit of Satisfaction, and, at length, sit down short of it.

3. The Settlement of Ishmael at last in the Wilderness of Paran, *v. 20, 21.* A Wild Place, fittest for a Wild Man, and such a one he was, *Chap. xvi. 12.* They that are born after the Flesh take up with the Wilderness of this World, while the Children of the Promise aim at the Heavenly Canaan, and cannot be at rest till they are there. Observe, 1. He had some Tokens of God's Presence, *God was with the Lad*; his outward Prosperity was owing to this. 2. By Trade he was an Archer, which intimates that Craft was his Excellency, and Sport his Business: rejected Esau was a cunning Hunter. 3. He matched among his Mothers Relations; she took him a Wife out of Egypt: As great an Archer as he was, he did not think he took his aim well in the business of his Marriage, if he proceeded without his Mothers Advice and Consent.

22 And it came to pass at that time, that Abimelech and Phicol the chief captain of his host spake unto Abraham, saying, God is with thee in all that thou doest. 23 Now therefore swear unto me here by God, that thou wilt not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my sons son: but according to the kindness that I have done unto thee, thou shalt do unto me, and to the land wherein thou hast sojourned. 24 And Abraham said, I will swear. 25 and Abraham reproved Abimelech because of a well of water, which Abimelech's servants had violently taken away. 26 And Abimelech said, I wot not who hath done this thing: neither didst thou tell me, neither yet heard I of it but to day. 27 And Abraham took sheep and oxen, and gave them unto Abimelech: and both of them made a covenant. 28 And Abraham set seven ew-lambs of the flock by themselves. 29 And Abimelech said unto Abraham, what mean these seven ew-lambs, which thou hast set by themselves? 30 And he said, For these seven ew-lambs shalt thou take of my hand, that they may be a witness unto me, that I have digged this well. 31 Wherefore he called that place Beer-sheba: because there they sware both of them. 32 Thus they made a covenant at Beer-sheba:

sheba: then Abimelech rose up, and Phichol the chief captain of his host, and they returned into the land of the Philistines.

We have here an account of the Treaty between *Abimelech* and *Abraham*, in which appears the Accomplishment of that Promise, Chap. xii. 2. That God would *make his Name Great*. His Friendship is valued, is courted, though a Stranger, though a Tenant at Will to the *Canaanites* and *Perizzites*.

1. The League is propos'd by *Abimelech* and *Phichol* his prime Minister of State, and General of his Army.

(1.) The Inducement to it was God's Favour to *Abraham*, v. 22. *God is with thee in all thou doest*, and we cannot but take notice of it. *Note*, 1. God in his Providence sometimes shews his People such Tokens for Good, that their Neighbours cannot but take notice of it, *Psal.* lxxxvi. 17. Their Affairs do so visibly prosper, and they have such remarkable Success in their Undertakings, that a Confession is extorted from all about them, of God's presence with them. 2. It is good being in Favour with those that are in Favour with God, and having an Interest in them that have an Interest in Heaven, *Zech.* viii. 1. *We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you*. We do well for our selves if we have Fellowship with those that have Fellowship with God, 1 *Joh.* i. 3.

(2.) The Tenor of it was in general, that there should be a firm and constant Friendship between the two Families, which should not, upon any account, be violated. This Bond of Friendship must be strengthened by the Bond of an Oath, in which the true God was appealed to, both as a Witness of their Sincerity, and an Avenger in case either side were Treacherous, v. 23. Observe, 1. He desires the entail of this League upon his Posterity, and the extent of it to his People. He would have his Son, and his Sons Son, and his Land likewise to have the benefit of it. Good Men should secure an Alliance and Communion with the Favourites of Heaven, not for themselves only, but for theirs also. 2. He minds *Abraham* of the fair Treatment he had found among them, according to the kindness I have done unto thee. As those that have received Kindness must return it, so those that have shewed Kindness may expect it.

2. 'Tis consented to by *Abraham*, with a particular Clause inserted about a Well. In *Abraham's* part of this Transaction, Observe, 1. He was ready to enter into this League with *Abimelech*, finding him to be a Man of Honour and Conscience, and that had the Fear of God before his Eyes, v. 24. *I will swear*. *Note*, (1.) Religion doth not make Men Morose and Unconquerable, I'm sure it ought not: We must not, under colour of shunning Bad Company, be sower to all Company, and jealous of every Body. (2.) An honest Mind doth not startle at Assurances: If *Abraham* say he will be true to *Abimelech*, he is not afraid to swear it, an Oath is for Confirmation. 2. He prudently settled the matter concerning a Well which *Abimelech's* Servants had quarrel'd with *Abraham* about. Wells of Water it seems were choice Goods in that Country. Thanks be to God that they are not so scarce in ours. (1.) *Abraham* mildly told *Abimelech* of it, v. 25. *Note*, if our Brother trespass against us, we must with the Meekness of Wisdom tell him his Fault, that the matter may be fairly accommodated, and an end made of it, *Mat.* xviii. 15. (2.) He acquiesced in *Abimelech's* Justification of himself in this matter, v. 26. *I was not who has done this thing*; many are suspected of Injustice and Unkindness that are perfectly Innocent, which we should be glad to be convinced of: The Faults of Servants must not be imputed to their Masters, unless they know of them, and justify them: And no more can be expected from an honest Man than that he be ready to do right as soon as he knows that he hath done wrong. (3.) He took care to have his Title to the Well cleared and confirmed, to prevent any Disputes or Quarrels for the future, v. 30. 'Tis Justice as well as Wisdom to do thus, in *perpetuum rei memoriam*. 3. He made a very handsome Present to *Abimelech*, v. 27. 'Twas not any thing curious or fine that he presented to him, but that which was valuable and useful, *Sheep and Oxen*, in Gratitude for *Abimelech's* Kindness to him, and in token of hearty Friendship between them: Interchanging of Courtesies is the improving of Love, that which is mine is my Friends. 4. He ratified the Covenant by an Oath, and registered it by giving a new Name to the Place, v. 31. *Beer-sheba*, the Well of the Oath, in remembrance of the Covenant they swore to, that they might be ever mindful of it: Or, the Well of seven, in remembrance of the seven Lambs given to *Abimelech*, as a Consideration for his confirming *Abraham's* Title to that Well. *Note*, Bargains made must be remembered, that we may make them good, and may not break our Word through oversight.

33 And *Abraham* planted a grove in Beer-sheba, and called there on the name of the LORD, the everlasting God. 34 And *Abra-*

ham sojourned in the Philistines land many days.

Observe, 1. *Abraham* being got into a good Neighbourhood, knew when he was well, and continued a great while there: There he planted a Grove for a shade to his Tent, or perhaps an Orchard of Fruit Trees; and there, though we cannot say he settled, for God would have him while he lived to be a Stranger and a Pilgrim, yet he sojourned many days, as long as would consist with his Character, as *Abraham* the Hebrew, or Passenger.

2. There he made not only a constant Practice, but an open Profession of his Religion, There he called on the Name of the Lord, the everlasting God, probably in the Grove he planted, which was his Oratory, or House of Prayer; Christ prayed in a Garden, on a Mountain. 1. *Abraham* kept up publick Worship, to which probably his Neighbours resorted, and joyned with him. *Note*, Good Men should not only retain their Goodness where-ever they go, but do all they can to propagate it, and make others good. 2. In calling on the Lord we must eye him as the everlasting God; the God of the World; so some. Though God had made himself known to *Abraham* as his God in particular, and in Covenant with him, yet he forgets not to give Glory to him as the Lord of all: The everlasting God who was before all Worlds, and will be when Time and Days shall be no more. See *Isa.* xl. 28.

CHAP. XXII.

We have here that famous Story of *Abraham's* offering up his Son *Isaac*, that is, his offering to offer him, which is justly looked upon as one of the Wonders of the Church. Here's, 1. The strange Command which God gave to *Abraham* concerning it, v. 1, 2. 2. *Abraham's* strange Obedience to this Command, v. 3--10. 3. The strange issue of this Trial. 1. The Sacrificing of *Isaac* was countermanded, v. 11, 12. 2. Another Sacrifice was provided, v. 13, 14. 3. The Covenant was renewed with *Abraham* hereupon, v. 15--19. Lastly, An Account of some of *Abraham's* Relations, v. 20. ad fin.

AND it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt *Abraham*, and said unto him, *Abraham*. And he said, Behold, here I am. 2 And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son *Isaac*, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

Here's the Trial of *Abraham's* Faith, whether it continued so strong, so vigorous, so victorious, after a long Settlement in Communion with God, as it was at first, when by it he left his Country: Then it was made to appear that he loved God better than his Father, now that he loved him better than his Son. Observe here,

1. The Time when *Abraham* was thus tried, v. 1. After these things: After all the other Exercises he had had, all the Hardships and Difficulties he had gone through; Now perhaps he was beginning to think the Storms were all blown over, but after all, this Encounter comes, which is sharper than any yet. *Note*, many former Trials will not supersede nor secure us from further Trials; we have not yet put off the Harness, 1 *Kin.* xx. 11. See *Psal.* xxx. 6, 7.

2. The Author of the Trial: God tempted him, not to draw him to Sin, so Satan tempts; if *Abraham* had Sacrificed *Isaac* he had not sinn'd, his Orders would have justified him, and born him out; but to discover his Graces, how strong they were, that they might be found to Praise, and Honour and Glory, 1 *Pet.* i. 7. Thus God tempted *Job*, that he might appear not only a Good Man, but a Great Man. God did tempt *Abraham*; he did lift up *Abraham*, so some read it; as a Scholar that improves well is lifted up, when he is put into a higher Form. *Note*, Strong Faith is often exercised with strong Trials, and put upon hard Services.

3. The Trial it self: God appeared to him as he had formerly done, called him by Name, *Abraham*, that Name which had been given him in Ratification of the Promise; *Abraham*, like a good Servant, readily answered, Here am I; what faith my Lord unto his Servant? Probably he expected some renewed Promise like those, Chap. xv. 1. and xvii. 1. But to his great Amazement, that which God has to say to him, is in short, *Abraham*, Go kill thy Son: And this Command is given him in such aggravating Language as makes the Temptation abundantly more grievous; when God speaks, *Abraham*, no doubt, takes notice of every Word, and listens attentively to it, and every Word here is a Sword in his Bones; The Trial is steel'd with trying Phrases: Is it any Pleasure to the Almighty that he should afflict? No, it is not, yet when *Abraham's* Faith is to be tried, God seems to take Pleasure in the Aggravation of the Trial. v. 2. Observe,

1. The Person to be offered. (1.) *Take thy Son*, not thy Bullocks and thy Lambs, how willingly would Abraham have parted with them by thousands to redeem Isaac! No, *I will take no Bullock out of thy House*, Psal. l. 10. I must have *thy Son*: Not thy Servant, no, not the Steward of thine House, that shall not serve the turn, I must have *thy Son*. Jephthah in pursuance of a Vow offered a Daughter, but Abraham must offer *his Son*, in whom the Family was to be built up. Lord, let it be an adopted Son; no, (2.) *thine only Son*; thine only Son by Sarah. Ishmael was lately cast out, to the Grief of Abraham, and now Isaac only was left, and must he go too? Yes, (3.) Take Isaac, him by Name, *thy Laughter*, that Son indeed, Chap. xvii. 19. not send for Ishmael back, and offer him, no, it must be Isaac: But, Lord, I love Isaac, he is to me as my own Soul; *Ishmael is not*, and wilt thou take Isaac also? All this is against me: Yea, (4.) that Son *whom thou lovest*. The Trial was of Abraham's Love to God, and therefore it must be in a Beloved Son, and that string must be touched most upon: In the Hebrew 'tis express'd more Emphatically, and, I think, might very well be read thus, *Take now that Son of thine, that only one of thine, whom thou lovest, that Isaac*. God's Command must over-rule all these Considerations.

2. The Place: *In the Land of Moriah*, three days journey off: So that he might have time to consider it, and if he do it, must do it deliberately, that it might be a Service the more reasonable, and the more honourable.

3. The manner: Offer him for a burnt-offering; he must not only kill his Son, but kill him as a Sacrifice, kill him devoutly, kill him by Rule, kill him with all that Pomp and Ceremony, with all that Sedateness and Composedness of Mind with which he used to offer his Burnt-offerings.

3 And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and clave the wood for the burnt-offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.

4 Then on the third day Abraham lift up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. 5 And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide you here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you. 6 And Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife: and they went both of them together. 7 And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering? 8 And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering: so they went both of them together. 9 And they came to the place which God had told him of, and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order; and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.

We have here Abraham's Obedience to this severe Command: *Being tried, he offered up Isaac*, Heb. xi. 17. Observe,

1. The Difficulties which he broke through in this Act of Obedience; much might have been objected against it. As, (1.) It seem'd directly against an Antecedent Law of God, which forbids Murder under a severe Penalty, Gen. ix. 5, 6. Now can the unchangeable God contradict himself? He that *hates Robbery for Burnt-offering*, Isa. lxi. 8. cannot delight in Murder for it. (2.) How would it consist with Natural Affection to his own Son? 'Twould be not only Murder, but the worst of Murders; Cannot Abraham be Obedient, but he must be Unnatural? If God insist upon a Humane Sacrifice, is there none but Isaac to be the Offering? And none but Abraham to be the Offerer? must the Father of the Faithful be the Monster of all Fathers? (3.) God gave him no Reason for it: When *Ishmael* was to be cast out, a just Cause was assigned which satisfied Abraham, but here Isaac must die, and Abraham must kill him, and neither the one nor the other must know why, or wherefore; if Isaac had been to die a Martyr for the Truth, or his Life had been the ransom of some other Life more precious, it had been another Matter: Or, if he had died as a Criminal, a Rebel against God or his Parents, as in the case of the Idolater, Deut. xiii. 8, 9. or, the stubborn Son, Deut. xxi. 18, 19. it might have pass'd as a Sacrifice to Justice; but the case is not

so: He is a Dutiful, Obedient, Hopeful Son; Lord, *what Profit is there in his Blood?* (4.) How would this consist with the Promise? Was it not said, that in *Isaac shall thy Seed be called*? But what comes of that Seed if this pregnant Bud be broke off so soon? (5.) How should he ever look Sarah in the Face again? With what Face can he return to her and his Family with the Blood of Isaac sprinkled on his Garments, and staining all his Raiment? *Surely a bloody Husband hast thou been unto me*, would Sarah say, as Exod. iv. 25, 26. and 'twould be likely to alienate her Affections for ever both from him and from his God. (6.) What would the Egyptians say, and the Canaanites and Perizzites which dwelled then in the Land? 'Twould be an Eternal Reproach to Abraham, and to his Altars: Fair fall Nature if this be Grace. These and many the like Objections might have been made, but he was infallibly assured that it was indeed a Command of God, and not a Delusion, and then that was sufficient to answer them all. *Note*, God's Commands must not be disputed but obeyed; we must not consult with *Flesh and Blood* about them, Gal. i. 15, 16. but with a gracious Obstinacy persist in our Obedience to them.

2. The several steps of this obedience, all which help to magnify it, and to shew that he was guided by Prudence, and govern'd by Faith in the whole Transaction.

1. He rises early, v. 3. Probably the Command was given in the Visions of the Night, and early the next Morning he let himself about the Execution of it, did not delay, did not demur, did not take time to deliberate, for the Command was Peremptory, and would not admit a Debate. *Note*, Those that do the Will of God heartily, will do it speedily; while we delay, Time is lost, and the Heart harden'd.

2. He gets things ready for a Sacrifice, and as if he himself had been a Gibeonite, it should seem with his own Hands he *claves the Wood for the Burnt-offering*, that that might not be to seek when the Sacrifice was to be offered: Spiritual Sacrifices must be thus prepared for.

3. 'Tis very likely he said nothing of it to Sarah; this is a Journey which she must know nothing of, lest she prevent it. There is so much in our own Hearts to hinder our Progress in Duty, that we have need, as much as may be, to keep out of the way of other hindrances.

4. He carefully looked about him to discover the Place appointed for this Sacrifice, which God had promised by some sign to direct him to. Probably the Direction was given by an *Appearance of the Divine Glory* in the Place, some Pillar of Fire reaching from Heaven to Earth, visible at a distance, and to which he pointed when he said, v. 5. we will go yonder where you see the Light, and Worship.

5. He left his Servants at some distance off, v. 5. lest they should have interposed, and created him some disturbance in his strange Oblation, for Isaac was, no doubt, the Darling of the whole Family. Thus when Christ was entering upon his Agony in the Garden, he took only three of his Disciples with him, and left the rest at the Garden Door. *Note*, it is our Wisdom and Duty, when we are going to worship God, to lay aside all those Thoughts and Cares which may divert us from the Service, leave them at the Bottom of the Hill, that we may attend on the Lord without Distraction.

6. He obliged Isaac to carry the Wood, (both to try his Obedience in a lesser matter first, and that he might typify Christ, who carried his own Cross, Joh. xix. 17.) while he himself, though he knew what he did, with a steady and undaunted Resolution carried the fatal Knife and Fire, v. 6. *Note*, Those that through Grace are resolved upon the Substantiality of any Service or Suffering for God, must overlook the little Circumstances which make it doubly difficult to Flesh and Blood.

7. Without any ruffle or disorder he talks it over with Isaac, as if it were but a Common Sacrifice he was going to offer, v. 7, 8. (1.) It was a very pretty Question that Isaac asked him, as they were going together: *My Father, saith Isaac; 'twas a melting Word*, which one would think should strike deeper in the Breast of Abraham than his Knife could in the Breast of Isaac. He might have said, or thought at least, Call me not thy Father, who am now to be thy Murderer: Can a Father be so barbarous, so perfectly lost to all the tenderness of a Father? Yet he keeps his Temper and keeps his Countenance to Admiration, calmly waits for his Son's Question, and this is it, *Behold the Fire and the Wood, but where is the Lamb?* See how expert Isaac was in the Law and Custom of Sacrifices: This it is to be well Catechiz'd: This is, 1. *A trying Question to Abraham*, how could he induce to think that Isaac is himself the Lamb, so it is, but Abraham, as yet, dare not tell him so; where God knows the Faith to be Armour of Proof, he will laugh at the Trial of the Innocent, Job ix. 23. 2. *'Tis a teaching Question to us all*, that when we are going to worship God, we should seriously consider whether we have every thing ready, especially the *Lamb for a Burnt-offering*: Behold, the Fire is ready, i. e. the Spirit's Assistance, and God's Acceptance. The Wood is ready, the instituted Ordinances designed to kindle our Affections

tions, which indeed, without the Spirit, are but like Wood without Fire, but the Spirit works by them: *All things are now ready, but where is the Lamb?* Where is the Heart? Is that ready to be offered up to God, to ascend to him as a Burnt-offering. (2.) It was a very prudent Answer which Abraham gave him, v. 8. *My Son, God will provide himself a Lamb.* This was the Language either, 1. Of his Obedience, we must offer the Lamb, which God has appointed now to be offered; thus giving him this general Rule of Submission to the Divine Will, to prepare him for the Application of it to himself very quickly. Or, 2. Of his Faith; whether he meant it so or no, this proved to be the meaning of it, a Sacrifice was provided instead of Isaac. Thus, (1.) Christ the great Sacrifice of Atonement was of God's providing; when none in Heaven or Earth could have found a Lamb for that Burnt-offering, God himself found the ransom, Pl. lxxxix. 20. (2.) All our Sacrifices of Acknowledgment are of God's providing too. 'Tis he that prepares the Heart, Pl. x. 17. The broken and contrite Spirit is a Sacrifice of God, Pl. li. 17. of his providing.

8. With the same Resolution, and Composedness of Mind, after many Thoughts of Heart he applies himself to the completing of this Sacrifice, v. 9, 10. He goes on with a Holy Willfulness, after many a weary step, and with a heavy Heart he arrives at length at the fatal place, builds the Altar, an Altar of Earth, we may suppose, the saddest that ever he built, and he had built many a one, *lays the Wood in Order* for his Isaac's Funeral Pile, and now tells him the amazing News, *Isaac, thou art the Lamb which God has provided*; and, for ought appears, Isaac is as willing as Abraham, we do not find that he made any Objection against it, any Petition for his Life, that he attempted to make his Escape, much less that he struggled with his Aged Father, or made any resistance; Abraham doth it, God will have it done, and Isaac has learned to submit to both, Abraham, no doubt, comforting him with the same hopes with which he himself by Faith was comforted: Yet 'tis necessary that a Sacrifice be bound. The great Sacrifice, which, in the fulness of time, was to be offered up, must be bound, and therefore so must Isaac: But with what Heart could tender Abraham tie those guiltless Hands that perhaps had oft been lifted up to ask him Blessing, and stretched out to embrace him, and were now more straitly bound with the cords of Love and Duty? However, it must be done: Having bound him, he *lays him upon the Altar*, and his Hand upon the Head of his Sacrifice; and now, we may suppose, with floods of Tears, he gives and takes the final farewell of a parting kiss; perhaps he takes another for Sarah, from her dying Son: This being done, he resolutely forgets the Bowels of a Father, and puts on the awful Gravity of a Sacrificer; with a fixed Heart, and an Eye lifted up to Heaven, he takes the Knife, and stretches out his Hand to give the fatal cut to Isaac's Throat. Be astonish'd, O Heavens, at this, and wonder, O Earth! Here's an Act of Faith and Obedience which deserves to be a Spectacle to God, Angels and Men. Abraham's Darling, Sarah's Laughter, the Churches Hope, the Heir of Promise, lies ready to Bleed and die by his own Father's Hand, who never smays at the doing of it. Now this Obedience of Abraham in offering up Isaac is a lively Representation, 1. Of the Love of God to us, in delivering up his only begotten Son to suffer and dye for us, as a Sacrifice; it pleased the Lord himself to bruise him: See Zech. xiii. 7. Abraham was obliged both in Duty and Gratitude to part with Isaac, and parted with him to a Friend, but God was under no Obligations to us, for we were Enemies. 2. Of our Duty to God in return of that Love; we must tread in the steps of this Faith of Abraham. God, by his Word, calls us to part with all for Christ, all our Sins, though they have been as a Right-Hand, or a Right-Eye, or an Isaac; all those things that are Competitors and Rivals with Christ for the Sovereignty of the Heart, Luke xiv. 26. and we must cheerfully let them all go. God, by his Providence, which is truly the voice of God, calls us to part with an Isaac sometimes, and we must do it by a cheerful Resignation, and Submission to his Holy Will, 1 Sam. iii. 18.

11 And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham. And he said, Here am I. 12 And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. 13 And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: And Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt-offering, in the stead of his son. 14 And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said

to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.

Hitherto this Story has been very Melancholly, and seemed to hasten towards a most Tragical Period, but here the Sky of a sudden clears up, the Sun breaks out, a bright and pleasant Scene opens; the same Hand that had wounded and cast down here, heals and lifts up, for tho' he cause Grief, he will have Compassion: The Angel of the Lord, that is, God himself, the Eternal Word, the Angel of the Covenant, who was to be the great Redeemer and Comforter, he interposed, and put a happy Issue to this Trial.

1. Isaac is rescued, v. 11, 12. The Command to offer him was intended only for Trial, and it appearing upon Trial, that Abraham did indeed love God better than he loved Isaac, the end of the Command was answer'd, and therefore the Order is countermanded without any reflection at all upon the Unchangeableness of the Divine Counsels, *Lay not thine Hand upon the Lad.* Note, 1. Our Creature-Comforts are then most likely to be continued to us when we are most willing to resign them up to God's Will. 2. God's time to help and relieve his People, is, when they are brought to the greatest Extremity: The more imminent the danger is, and the nearest to be put in Execution, the more wonderful and the more welcome is the Deliverance.

2. Abraham is not only approved, but applauded. He obtains an honourable Testimony, that he is righteous: *Now know I that thou fearest God*: God knew it before, but now Abraham had given a most memorable Evidence of it. He need not do no more, what he had done was sufficient to prove the Religious regard he had to God and his Authority. Note, (1.) When God, by his Providence, hinders the Performance of our Sincere Intentions in his Services, he graciously accepts the Will for the Deed, and the Honest Endeavour, though it come short of Finishing. (2.) The best Evidence of our fearing God is our being willing to Serve and Honour him with that which is dearest to us, and to part with all to him, or, for him.

3. Another Sacrifice is provided instead of Isaac, v. 13. Now the Altar was built, and the Wood laid in order, it was necessary that something should be offered. For, 1. God must be acknowledged with Thankfulness for the Deliverance of Isaac; and the sooner the better, when here is an Altar ready. 2. Abraham's Words must be made good, *God will provide himself a Lamb*: God will not disappoint those Expectations of his People which are of his own raising, but, according to their Faith it is to them, *Thou shalt decree a thing, and it shall be established*. 3. Reference must be had to the promised Messiah, the Blessed Seed. (1.) Christ was Sacrificed in our stead, as this Ram instead of Isaac, and his Death was our Discharge, *Here am I, said he, let these go their way*. (2.) Though that Blessed Seed was now lately promised and typified by Isaac, yet the offering of him up should be suspended, till the latter end of the World, and, in the mean time, the Sacrifice of Beasts should be accepted, as this Ram was, as a Pledge of that Expiation, which should one day be made by that great Sacrifice. And 'tis observable, that the Temple, the place of Sacrifice, was afterwards built upon this Mount Moriah, 2 Chr. iii. 1. and Mount Calvary, where Christ was Crucified, was not far off.

4. A new Name is given to the Place, to the Honour of God, and, for the Encouragement of all Believers to the end of the World, cheerfully to trust God in the way of Obedience; *Jehovah-jireh, The Lord will provide*, v. 14. probably alluding to what he had said, v. 8. *God will provide himself a Lamb*. 'Twas not owing to any Contrivance of Abraham, nor was it in answer to his Prayer, though he was a famous Intercessor, but it was purely the Lord's doing: Let it be recorded for the Generations to come. (1.) That the Lord will see; he will always have his Eye upon his People in their Straits and Distresses, that he may come in with seasonable Succour in the Critical Juncture. (2.) That he will be seen, be seen in the Mount, in the greatest Perplexities of his People; he will not only manifest but magnify his Wisdom, Power and Goodness in their Deliverance; where God sees and provides, he should be seen and praised; and perhaps it may refer to God manifest in the flesh.

15 And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, 16 And said, By my self have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: 17 That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed, as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his

his enemies; 18 And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed: because thou hast obeyed my voice. 19 So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beer-sheba, and Abraham dwelt at Beer-sheba.

Abraham's Obedience was graciously accepted, but that was not all, here we have it recompensed, abundantly recompensed, before he stir'd from the Place; probably while the Ram he had Sacrificed was yet burning, God sent him this gracious Message; renewed and ratified his Covenant with him: All Covenants were made by Sacrifice, so was this by the Typical Sacrifices of Isaac and the Ram; very high Expressions here are of God's Favour to Abraham, in this Confirmation of the Covenant with him, above any he had yet been blessed with. *Note*, Extraordinary Services shall be crowned with Honours and Comforts extraordinary: and Favours in the Promise, though not yet perform'd, ought to be accounted real and valuable Recompenses.

1. God is pleased to make mention of Abraham's Obedience as the Consideration of the Covenant, and he speaks of it with an Encomium, *v. 1. Because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy Son, thine only Son*, he lays a mighty Emphasis upon that, and, *v. 18. praises it as an Act of Obedience*, in it thou hast obeyed my Voice, and to obey is better than Sacrifice. Not that this was a proportionable Consideration, but God graciously put this Honour upon that by which Abraham had honoured God.

2. God now confirmed the Promise with an Oath. 'Twas said and sealed before, but now 'tis Sworn. *By my self have I sworn*, for he could swear by no greater, *Heb. vi. 13.* Thus he interpos'd himself by an Oath, as the Apostle expresseth it there, *v. 17. he did (to speak with Reverence) even pawn his own Life and Being upon it, As I live.* That by all those immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, He and his might have strong Consolation. *Note*, If we Exercise Faith God will encourage it. Improve the Promises and God will ratify 'em.

3. The Particular Promise here renewed is that of a numerous Offspring, *v. 17. multiplying I will multiply thee.* *Note*, Those that are willing to part with any thing for God shall have it made up to them with unspeakable Advantage. Abraham has but one Son, and is willing to part with that one in Obedience to God; Well, faith God, thou shalt be recompensed with Thousands and Millions. What a Figure doth the Seed of Abraham make in History! How numerous, how illustrious were his known Descendants, who to this day triumph in this that they have Abraham to their Father! Thus he received a thousand-fold in this time, *Mat. xix. 29.*

4. The Promise doubtless points at the Messiah, and the Grace of the Gospel. This is the Oath sworn to our Father Abraham, which *Zacharias* refers to, *Luke i. 73, &c.* And so here's a Promise, (1.) Of the Great Blessing of the Spirit, in *Blessing I will Bless thee*, viz. with that best of Blessings, the Gift of the Holy Ghost; The Promise of the Spirit was that Blessing of Abraham which was to come upon the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, *Gal. iii. 14.* (2.) Of the Increase of the Church; that Believers his Spiritual Seed should be many as the Stars of Heaven. (3.) Of Spiritual Victories. *Thy Seed shall possess the Gate of his Enemies.* Believers by their Faith overcome the World, and triumph over all the Powers of Darkness, and are more than Conquerors. Probably *Zacharias* refers to this Part of the Oath, *Luke i. 74. That we being delivered out of the hand of our Enemies, might serve him without fear.* But the Crown of all is the last Promise, (4.) Of the Incarnation of Christ. *In thy Seed* (one particular Person that shall descend from thee, for he speaks not of many, but of one, as the Apostle observes, *Gal. iii. 16.*) *shall all the Nations of the Earth be blessed, or shall bless themselves*, as the Phrase is, *Isa. lxxv. 16.* In him all may be happy if they will, and all that belong to him shall be so, and shall think themselves so. Christ is the great Blessing of the World. Abraham was ready to give up his Son for a Sacrifice to the Honour of God, and on that occasion God promised to give his Son a Sacrifice for the Salvation of Man.

20 And it came to pass after these things, that it was told Abraham, saying, Behold Milcah, she hath also born children unto thy brother Nahor; 21 Huz his first born, and Buz his brother, and Kemuel the father of Aram, 22 And Chesed, and Hazo, and Pildash, and Jidlaph, and Bethuel. 23 And Bethuel begat Rebekah: these eight Milcah did bear to Nahor, Abrahams brother. 24 And his concubine whose name was Reumah, she bare also Tebah, and Gaham, and Thabash, and Maachah.

This is recorded here, 1. To shew that though Abraham saw his own Family highly dignified with peculiar Privileges, admitted into Covenant, and blessed with the Entail of the Promise, yet he did not look with contempt and disdain upon his Relations, but was glad to hear of the Increase and Prosperity of their Families. 2. To make way for the following Story of the Marriage of Isaac to Rebekah, a Daughter of this Family.

C H A P. XXIII.

Here's 1. Abraham a Mourner, for the Death of Sarah, *v. 1, 2.* 2. Abraham a Purchaser of a Burying-Place for Sarah. 1. The Purchase humbly proposed by Abraham, *v. 3, 4.* 2. Fairly treated of, and agreed with a great deal of mutual Civility and Respect, *v. 5--16.* 3. The Purchase-Money paid, *v. 16.* 4. The Premises conveyed and secured to Abraham, *v. 17, 18, 20.* 5. Sarah's Funeral, *v. 19.*

1 AND Sarah was an hundred and seven and twenty years old: these were the years of the life of Sarah. 2 And Sarah died in Kirjath-arba; the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan: and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her.

We have here, 1. Sarah's Age, *v. 1.* Almost Forty Years before she had called her self old. *Chap. xviii. 12.* Old People will die never the sooner, but may die the better for reckoning themselves Old. 2. Her Death, *v. 2.* The longest Liver must die at last. Abraham and Sarah had lived comfortably together many Years, but Death parts those whom nothing else could part. The Special Friends and Favourites of Heaven are not exempted from the stroke of Death. She died in the Land of Canaan where she had been above Sixty Years a Sojourner. 3. Abraham's Mourning for her, and he was a true Mourner. He did not only perform the Ceremonies of Mourning according to the Custom of those times, as the *Mourners that go about the Streets*, but he did sincerely lament the great loss he had of a Good Wife, and gave Proof of the constancy of his Affection to her to the last. Therefore two Words are used, he came both to Mourn and to Weep. His Sorrow was not Counterfeit but real. He came to her Tent and sat down by the Corps, there to pay the Tribute of Tears, that his Eye might affect his Heart, and that he might pay the greater respect to the Memory of her that was gone. *Note*, It is not only lawful but duty to Lament the Death of our near Relations, both in compliance with the Providence of God who thus calls to Weeping and Mourning, and in honour to those whom Honour is due. Tears are a Tribute due to our deceased Friends, when the Body is sown it must be watered, but we must not Sorrow as those that have no hope, for we have a good Hope through Grace both concerning them, and concerning our selves.

3 And Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spake unto the sons of Heth, saying, 4 I am a stranger and a sojourner with you: give me a possession of a burying-place with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight. 5 And the children of Heth answered Abraham, saying unto him, 6 Hear us, my lord; thou art a mighty prince amongst us; in the choice of our sepulchers bury thy dead: none of us shall withhold from thee his sepulcher, but that thou mayest bury thy dead. 7 And Abraham stood up, and bowed himself to the people of the land, even to the children of Heth. 8 And he communed with them, saying, If it be your mind that I should bury my dead out of my sight, hear me, and intreat for me to Ephron the son of Zohar: 9 That he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which he hath, which is in the end of his field; for as much money as it is worth he shall give it me, for a possession of a burying-place amongst you. 10 And Ephron dwelt amongst the children of Heth. And Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the audience of the children of Heth, even of all that went in at the gates of his city, saying, 11 Nay, my lord, hear me: the field give I thee,

thee, and the cave that is therein, I give it thee; in the presence of the sons of my people give I it thee: bury thy dead. ¹² And Abraham bowed down himself before the people of the land. ¹³ And he spake unto Ephron in the audience of the people of the land, saying, But if thou wilt give it, I pray thee hear me: I will give thee money for the field; take it of me, and I will bury my dead there. ¹⁴ And Ephron answered Abraham, saying unto him, ¹⁵ My lord, hearken unto me: the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver; what is that betwixt me and thee; bury therefore thy dead.

Here's 1. The humble Request which Abraham made to his Neighbours, the Hittites, for a Burying-Place among them, v. 3, 4. 'Twas strange he had this to do now, but we are to impute it rather to God's Providence than to his Improvidence, as appears, *Act. vii.* 7. where 'tis said, *God gave him no Inheritance in Canaan.* 'Twere well if all those who take care to provide Burying-Places for their Bodies after Death, were as careful to provide a Resting-place for their Souls. Observe here,

(1.) The convenient Diversion which this Affair gave for the present to Abraham's Grief, he stood up from before his Dead. Those that find themselves in danger of over-grieving for their dead Relations and are entering into that Temptation, must take heed of poring upon their Loss, and of sitting alone and melancholly. There must be a time of standing up from before their Dead, and ceasing to mourn. For thanks be to God our Happiness is not bound up in the Life of any Creature. Care of the Funeral may be improved to divert Grief for the Death, as here, at first when 'tis in most danger of tyrannizing. Weeping must not hinder Sowing.

(2.) The Argument he us'd with the Children of Heth, which was this, *I am a Stranger and a Sojourner with you*, therefore I am unprovided, and must become an humble Suiter to you, for a Burying-place. This was one Occasion which Abraham took to confess that he was a Stranger and a Pilgrim upon Earth, he was not ashamed to own it thus publicly, *Heb. xi.* 13. Note, The Death of our Relations should effectually mind us that we are not at home in this World. When they are gone, say, we are going.

(3.) His uneasiness till this Affair was settled, intimated in that Word, *that I may bury my dead out of my sight.* Note, Death will make those unpleasant to our Sight who while they lived were the Desire of our Eyes. The Countenance that was fresh and lively becomes Pale and Ghastly, and fit to be removed into the Land of Darkness. While she was in his Sight it renewed his Grief, which he would prevent.

2. The generous offer which the Children of Heth made to him, v. 5, 6. They complement him, (1.) With a Title of respect; *Thou art a Prince of God among us.* So the Word is, not only Great but Good. He called himself a Stranger and a Sojourner, they call him a Great Prince, for those that humble themselves shall be exalted. God had promised to make Abraham's Name great. (2.) With a Tender of the best of their Burying-Places. Note, Even the light of Nature teaches us to be Civil and Respectful towards all, tho' they be Strangers and Sojourners; The noble Generosity of these Canaanites shames and condemns the Closeness and Selfishness, and ill Humour of many that call themselves Israelites. Observe, That these Canaanites would be glad to mingle their Dust with Abraham's, and to have their last End like his.

3. The particular Proposal which Abraham made to them, v. 7, 8, 9. He returns them his humble Thanks for their kind offer, with all possible Decency and Respect; tho' a great Man, an old Man, and now a Mourner, yet he stands up and makes them a very low Congee, v. 7. Note, Religion teaches Good Manners, and those abuse it that place it in Rudeness, and Clownishness. He then pitches upon the Place he thought most convenient, viz. the Cave of Machpelah, which probably lay near him, and had yet not been us'd for a Burying-Place. The present Owner was Ephron; Abraham cannot pretend to any Interest in him, but he desires that they would improve theirs with him, to get the Purchase of that Cave, and the Field in which it was. Note, A moderate Desire to obtain that which is convenient for us by fair and honest means, is not such a coveting of that which is our Neighbours, as is forbidden in the tenth Commandment.

4. The Present which Ephron made to Abraham of his Field, v. 10, 11. *the Field give I thee.* Abraham thought he must be intreated to sell it, but upon the first mention of it without Intreaty he freely gives it. Some Men have more Generosity than they are thought to have. Abraham no doubt had taken all occasions to oblige his Neighbours, and to do them any Cour-

tely that lay in his Power, and now they return his Kindness, for he that watereth shall be watered also himself. Note, If those that profess Religion adorn their Profession by eminent Civility and Serviceableness to all, they shall find it will redound to their own Comfort and Advantage, as well as to the Glory of God.

5. Abraham's modest and sincere Refusal of Ephron's kind offer, v. 12, 13. Abundance of Thanks he returns him for it, v. 12. makes his Honour to him before the People of the Land, that they might respect Ephron the more for the respect they saw Abraham give him, 1 Sam. xv. 30. but resolves to give him Money for the Field, even the full value of it. 'Twas not in Pride that Abraham refus'd the Gift, because he scorned to be beholden to Ephron; But, (1.) In Justice: Abraham was rich in Silver and Gold, Chap. xiii. 2. and was able to pay for the Field, and therefore would not take advantage of Ephron's Generosity. Note, Honesty as well as Honour forbid us to sponge upon our Neighbours, and to impose upon those that are free. Job reflected upon it, with comfort when he was Poor that he had not eaten the Fruits of his Land without Money, Job xxxi. 39. (2.) In Prudence. He would pay for it, lest Ephron when this good Humour was over, should upbraid him with it, and say, *I have made Abraham Rich*, Gen. xiv. 23. Or, lest the next Heir should question Abraham's Title, because that Grant was made without any Consideration, and claim back the Field. Thus David afterwards refus'd Ornan's Offer, 2 Sam. xxiv. 24. We know not what Affronts we may hereafter receive from those that are now most kind and generous.

6. The Price of the Land ascertained by Ephron, but not insisted on, v. 14, 15. *The Land is worth Four hundred Shekels of Silver*, about Fifty Pound of our Money, but what is that between me and thee? He would rather oblige his Friend than have so much Money in his Pocket. Herein Ephron discovers,

1. A great Contempt of Worldly Wealth. What is that between me and thee? 'Tis a small Matter, not worth speaking of. Many a one would have said, It's a deal of Money, 'twill go far in a Child's Portion, but Ephron saith, *What's that?* Note, It is an excellent thing for People to have low and mean Thoughts of this World and the Wealth of it; 'Tis that which is not, and in the abundance of which a Man's Life doth not consist, Luke xii. 15.

2. Great Courtesy, and Obligingness to his Friend and Neighbour. Ephron was not jealous of Abraham as a Foreigner and an Inmate, nor envious at him as a Man likely to thrive and grow rich, bore him no ill Will for his Singularity in Religion, but was much kinder to him than most People now a-days are to their own Brothers. *What's that between me and thee?* Note, No little thing should break Squares between true Friends. When we are tempted to be hot in resenting Affronts, high in demanding our Rights, or hard in denying a Kindness, we should answer the Temptation with this Question, *What is that between me and my Friend?*

16 And Abraham hearkned unto Ephron, and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver, which he had named in the audience of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant. 17 And the field of Ephron, which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field and the cave which was therein, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the borders round about, were made sure 18 Unto Abraham for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his city. 19 And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah, before Mamre: the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan. 20 And the field and the cave that is therein, were made sure unto Abraham; for a possession of a burying-place; by the sons of Heth.

We have here the Conclusion of the Treaty between Abraham and Ephron about the Burying-place. The Bargain was publicly made before all the Neighbours, in the presence and audience of the Sons of Heth, v. 16, 17. Note, Prudence as well as Justice directs us to be fair and open and above-board in our Dealings; Fraudulent Contracts hate the Light, and chuse to be clandestine, but they that design honestly in their Bargains, care not who are witnesses to them. Our Law countenanceth Sales made in Market overt, and by Deed enrolled.

1. Abraham without Fraud, Covin, or further delay, pays the Money, v. 16. he pays it readily, without dodging, pays it in full without Diminution, and pays it by Weight, current Money with the Merchant, without Deceit. See how ancient-

ly Money was used for the help of Commerce : And see how honestly Money should be paid where it is Due. Observe, Tho' all the Land of Canaan was Abraham's by Promise, yet the time of his possessing being not come, what he had now occasion for he *bought and paid for*. Note, Dominion is not founded in Grace. The Saints Title to an Eternal Inheritance doth not entitle them to the Possessions of this World, nor justify them in doing Wrong.

2. Ephron honestly and fairly makes him a good Title to the Land, v. 17, 18, 20. The Field with all its Appurtenances is conveyed to Abraham and his Heirs for ever in open Court, not by *Writing*, it doth not appear that that was then used, but by such a publick solemn Declaration before Witnesses as was sufficient to pass it. Note, As that which is bought must be honestly paid for, so that which is sold must be honestly delivered and secured.

3. Abraham thereupon takes Possession, and buries Sarah in the Cave or Vault (whether framed by Nature or Art is not certain) which was in the purchased Field. 'Tis likely Abraham had buried Servants out of his Family since he came to Canaan, but the *Graves of the common People* (2 Kin. xxiii. 6.) might suffice for them: Now Sarah was dead, a peculiar place must be found for her Remains. 'Tis worth noting, 1. That a Burying-Place was the *first* spot of Ground Abraham was possessed of in Canaan. Note, When we are entering into the World, it's good to think of our going out of it, for as soon as we are born we begin to die. 2. That 'twas the *only* Piece of Land he was ever possessed of, tho' 'twas all his own in Reversion. Those that have least of this Earth find a Grave in it. Abraham provided not Cities, as Cain and Nimrod, but a Sepulchre, (1.) To be a constant Memorandum of Death to himself and his Posterity, that he and they might learn to die daily. This Sepulchre is said to be at the End of the Field, v. 9. for whatever our Possessions are, there's a Sepulchre at the End of them. (2.) To be a Token of his Belief and Expectation of the Resurrection; for what need such Care be taken of the Body, if it be thrown away for ever, and must not rise again. Abraham in this, said plainly, that he sought a better Country, that is, a heavenly. Abraham is content to be still *striving* while he lives, but secures a place where when he dies his *Flesh* may rest in hope.

C H A P. XXIV.

Marriages and Funerals are the Changes of the Families, and the common News among the Inhabitants of the Villages. In the foregoing Chapter we had Abraham burying his Wife, here we have him marrying his Son. These Stories concerning his Family with their minute Circumstances are largely related, while the Histories of the Kingdoms of the World then in being with their Revolutions are buried in Silence; for the Lord knows them that are his. The Subjoining of Isaac's Marriage to Sarah's Funeral (with a particular Reference to it, v. 67.) shews us that as one Generation passeth away, another Generation comes, and thus the Entail both of the Humane Nature, and of the Covenant is preserved. Here's, 1. Abraham's Care about the marrying of his Son, and the Charge he gave to his Servant about it, v. 1--9. 2. His Servant's Journey into Abraham's Country to seek a Wife for his Young Master among his own Relations, v. 10--14. 3. The kind Providence which brought him acquainted with Rebekah, whose Father was Isaac's Cousin German, v. 15--28. 4. The Treaty of Marriage with her Relations, v. 29--49. 5. Their Consent obtained, v. 50--60. 6. The Happy Meeting and Marriage between Isaac and Rebekah, v. 61. ad fin.

1 AND Abraham was old and well stricken in Age: and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things. 2 And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh: 3 And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites amongst whom I dwell. 4 But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac. 5 And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest? 6 And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou, that thou bring not my son thither again. 7 The LORD God of heaven which took me from my fathers house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake

unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence. 8 And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath: only bring not my son thither again. 9 And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and sware to him concerning that matter.

Three things we may observe here concerning Abraham.

1. The Care he took of a Good Son; to get him Married; well Married. 'Twas high time to think of it now, for Isaac was about Forty Years Old, and it had been customary with his Ancestors to Marry at Thirty or sooner, Gen. xi. 14, 18, 22, 24. Abraham believed the Promise of the building up of his Family, and therefore did not make haste; not more haste than Good Speed. Two considerations moved him to think of it now, v. 1. That he himself was likely to leave the World quickly, for he was old and well stricken in Age, and it would be a Satisfaction to him to see his Son settled before he died. And that he had a good Estate to leave behind him, for the Lord had blessed him in all things. And the Blessing of the Lord that makes rich. See how much Religion and Piety, befriend outward Prosperity. Now Abraham's Pious Care concerning his Son was, 1. That he should not Marry with a Daughter of Canaan, but with one of his Kindred; because he saw by observation that the Canaanites were degenerating into great Wickedness, and knew by Revelation that they were designed for Ruine; and therefore he would not Marry his Son among them lest they should be either a Snare to his Soul, or at least a Blot to his Name. 2. That yet he should not leave the Land of Canaan, to go himself among his Kindred, no not so much as to go a wooing thither, lest he should be tempted to settle there. This Caution is given, v. 6. and repeated, v. 8. Bring not my Son thither again whatever comes of it. Let him rather want a Wife than expose himself to that Temptation. Note. Parents in disposing of their Children, should carefully consult the Welfare of their Souls, and their furtherance in the Way to Heaven. Those who through Grace have escaped the Corruption that is in the World through Lust, and have brought up their Children, accordingly should take heed of doing any thing by which they may be again entangled therein and overcome, 2 Pet. ii. 20. Beware that you bring 'em not thither again, Heb. xi. 15.

2. The Charge he gave to a Good Servant; probably Eliezer of Damascus, one whose Conduct, Fidelity, and Affection to him and his Family, he had had long Experience of. He trusted him with this great Affair, and not Isaac himself, because he would not have Isaac go at all into that Country, but marry thither by Proxy; and no Proxy so fit as this Steward of his House. This matter is settled between the Master and the Servant with a great Deal of Care and Solemnity. (1.) The Servant must be bound by an Oath to do his utmost to get a Wife for Isaac from among his Relations, v. 2, 3, 4. Abraham swears him to it, both for his own Satisfaction, and for the Engagement of his Servant, to all possible Care and Diligence in this Matter. Thus God swears his Servants to their Work, that having sworn they may perform it. Honour is here done to the Eternal God, for he it is that is sworn by, to whom alone those Appeals ought to be made. And some think Honour is done to the Covenant of Circumcision by the Ceremony here used of putting his Hand under his Thigh. Note, Swearing being an Ordinance not peculiar to the Church but common to Mankind, is to be performed by such Signs as are the Appointments and common Usages of our Country, for ascertaining the Person sworn. (2.) He must be clear of this Oath if when he had done his utmost he could not prevail. This proviso the Servant prudently inserted, v. 5. putting the Case that the Woman would not follow him, and Abraham allowed the Exception, v. 8. Note, Oaths are to be taken with great Caution, and the matter sworn to rightly understood and limited, because it is a Snare to devour that which is Holy, and after Vows to make the Enquiry, which should have been made before.

3. The Confidence he put in a Good God, who he doubts not will give his Servant Success in this Undertaking, v. 7. He remembers that God had wonderfully brought him out of the Land of his Nativity, by the effectual Call of his Grace, and therefore doubts not but he will succeed him in his Care, not to bring his Son thither again. He remembers also the Promise God had made and confirmed to him, that he would give Canaan to his Seed, and thence infers that God would own him in his endeavour to match his Son from among those devoted Nations, to one that was fit to be the Mother of such a Seed. Fear not therefore, he shall send his Angel before thee to make thy Way prosperous. Note, 1. Those that carefully keep in the way of Duty, and govern themselves by the Principles of their Religion in their Designs and Undertakings, have good Reason

Reason to expect Prosperity and Success in them. God will issue that to our Comfort in which we sincerely aim at his Glory. 2. God's Promises, and our own Experiences, are sufficient to encourage our Dependence upon God, and our Expectations from him in all the Affairs of this Life. 3. God's Angels are ministering Spirits, sent forth not only for the Protection but Guidance of the Heirs of Promise, *Heb. i. 14. He shall send his Angel before thee, and then thou wilt speed well.*

10 And the servant took ten camels, of the camels of his master, and departed (for all the goods of his master were in his hand :) and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor. 11 And he made his camels to kneel down without the city, by a well of water, at the time of the evening, *even the time that women go out to draw water.* 12 And he said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham. 13 Behold, I stand here by the well of water, and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water : 14 And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also : *let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master.* 15 And it came to pass before he had done speaking, that behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel son of Milcah the wife of Nahor, Abrahams brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder. 16 And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her : and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up. 17 And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me (I pray thee) drink a little water of thy pitcher. 18 And she said, Drink, my lord : and she hastened, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink. 19 And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking. 20 And she hastened, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels. 21 And the man wondering at her, held his peace, to wit, whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous, or not. 22 And it came to pass as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden ear-ring, of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands, of ten shekels weight of gold; 23 And said, Whose daughter art thou? tell me, I pray thee: is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge in? 24 And she said unto him, I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, which she bare unto Nahor. 25 She said moreover unto him, We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in. 26 And the man bowed down his head and worshipped the LORD. 27 And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth : *I being in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren.* 28 And the damsel ran, and told them of her mothers house these things.

Abraham's Servant now begins to make a Figure in this Story, and tho' he be not named, yet much is here recorded to his Honour, and for an Example to all Servants, who shall be honoured, if by faithful serving God and their Masters, they adorn the Doctrine of Christ, compare, *Pr. xxviii. 18. with Tit. ii. 10.* for there is no respect of Persons with God, *Col. iii. 24, 25.* A good

Servant, that makes Conscience of the Duty of his Place, and doth it in the Fear of God, tho' he make not a Figure in the World, nor have Praise of Men, yet shall be owned and accepted of God, and have Praise of him. Observe here,

1. How faithful Abraham's Servant approved himself to his Master. Having received his Charge, with all Expedition he took his Journey, putting himself into an Equipage fit for his Negotiation, *v. 10.* and he had all the Goods of his Master, *i. e.* a Schedule, or particular Account of them, in his Hand, to shew to those with whom he was to treat; for from first to last he consulted his Master's Honour. Isaac being a Type of Christ; some make this fetching of a Wife for him to signify the espousing of the Church by the Agency of his Servants the Ministers. The Church is the Bride, the Lamb's Wife, *Rev. xxi. 9:* Christ is the Bridegroom, and Ministers the Friends of the Bridegroom; (*Job. iii. 29.*) whose Work it is to persuade Souls to consent to him, *2 Cor. xi. 2.* The Spouse of Christ must not be of the Canaanites, but of his own Kindred, born again from above. Ministers, like Abraham's Servant, must lay out themselves with the utmost Wisdom and Care to serve their Master's Interest herein.

2. How devoutly he acknowledg'd God in this Affair, like one of that happy Household which Abraham had commanded to keep the Way of the Lord, &c. *Chap. xviii. 19.* He arrived early in the Evening, (after many Day's journeying) at the Place he designed for, and repos'd himself by a Well of Water, to consider how he might manage his Business for the best. And, 1. He acknowledged God by a particular Prayer, *v. 12, 13, 14.* wherein, (1.) He Petitions for Prosperity and good Success in this Affair, *Send me good Speed this Day.* Note, We have leave to be particular in recommending our Affairs to the Conduct and Care of the Divine Providence. Those that would have good Speed, must pray for it this Day, in this Affair: Thus we must in all our Ways acknowledge God, *Pr. iii. 6.* And if we thus look up to God, in every Undertaking which we are in Care about, we shall have the Comfort of having done our Duty, whatever the Issue be. (2.) He pleads God's Covenant with his Master Abraham. O God of my Master Abraham, shew Kindness to him, Note, As the Children of Good Parents, so the Servants of Good Masters may from thence take Encouragement in Prayer to God for Prosperity and Success. (3.) He proposeth a Sign, *v. 14.* not by it to limit God, or with a Design to proceed no further if he were not gratified in it: But it is a Prayer, (1.) That God would provide a very Good Wife for his young Master; and that was a Good Prayer. He knew that a Prudent Wife is from the Lord, *Pr. xix. 14.* and therefore that for this he will be enquired of. He desires that his Master's Wife might be an Humble and Housewifely Woman, bred up to Care and Labour, and willing to put her Hand to any Work that was to be done: And that she might be of a courteous Disposition, and charitable to Strangers. When he came to seek a Wife for his Master, he did not go to the Play-house or the Park, and pray that he might meet one there, but to the Well of Water, expecting to find one there well employ'd. (2.) That he would please to make his Way in this Matter plain and clear before him, by the Concurrence of minute Circumstances in his Favour. Note, 1. It is the Comfort, as well as the Belief of a Good Man, that God's Providence extends it self to the smallest Occurrences, and admirably serves its own Purposes by them. Our Times are in God's Hand: Not only Events themselves, but the Times of them. 2. It is our Wisdom in all our Affairs to follow Providence, and Folly to force it. 3. It is very desirable, and that which we may lawfully pray for, while in the General we set God's Will before us as our Rule, that he will by Hints of Providence direct us in the Way of our Duty, and give us Indications what his Mind is. Thus he guides his People, with his Eye, *Psal. xxxii. 8.* and leads them in a plain Path, *Psal. xxvii. 11.*

2. God owned him by a particular Providence. He decreed the thing, and it was established to him, *Job xxii. 28.* According to his Faith, so was it unto him. The Answer to his Prayer was, 1. Speedy, before he had made an end of speaking, *v. 15.* as it is written, *Isa. lxxv. 24. while they are yet speaking, I will hear.* Tho' we are backward to pray, God is forward to hear Prayer: 2. Satisfactory: The first that came to draw Water, was and did in every thing according to his own Heart. (1.) She was so well qualified, that in all Respects she answer'd the Characters he wished for in the Woman that was to be his Master's Wife, handsome and healthful, humble and industrious; very courteous and obliging to a Stranger, and having all the Marks of a good Humour: When she came to the Well, *v. 16.* she went down and filled her Pitcher, and came up to go home with it, she did not stand to gaze upon the strange Man and his Camels, but minded her Business, and would not have been diverted from it but by an Opportunity of doing Good: She did not curiously or confidently enter into Discourse with him, but modestly answered him with all the Decorum that became her Sex. What a degenerate Age do we live in, in which appear all the Instances of Pride, Luxury, and Laziness, the Reverse of Rebekah's Character, whose Daughters few are: Those Instances of Goodness which were then in Honour, are now in Contempt. (2.)

Providence so order'd it that she did that which exactly answer'd his Sign, and was wonderful pat to his Proposal: She not only gave him Drink, but, which was more than could have been expected, she offer'd her Service to give his Camels Drink, which was the very Sign he propos'd. *Note*, 1. God in his Providence doth sometimes wonderfully own the Prayer of Faith, and gratifies the innocent Desires of his praying People even in little Things, that he may shew the extent of his Care, and may encourage them at all times to seek to him, and trust in him: yet we must take heed of being *over bold* in *prescribing* to God, lest the Event should weaken our Faith rather than strengthen it. 2. It is good to take all Opportunities of shewing an humble, courteous, charitable Disposition, because some time or other it may turn more to our Honour and Benefit than we think of: Some hereby have *entertained Angels*; and *Rebekah* hereby, quite beyond her Expectation at this time, was brought into the Line of Christ and the Covenant. 3. There may be a great deal of obliging Kindness in that which is but little Cost; Our Saviour has promised a Reward for a Cup of Cold Water. like this here, *Mat. x. 42.* 4. The concurrence of Providences, and their minute Circumstances for the furtherance of our Success in any Business, ought to be particularly observed with Wonder and Thankfulness to the Glory of God, *the Man wonder'd*, v. 21. we have been wanting to our selves, both in Duty and Comfort, by neglecting to observe Providence. (3.) Upon enquiry he found to his great Satisfaction, that she was a near Relation to his Master, and that the Family she was of was considerable, and able to give him Entertainment, v. 23, 24, 25. *Note*, Providence sometimes wonderfully directs those that by Faith and Prayer seek Direction from Heaven in the Choice of suitable Yoke-fellows: Happy Marriages those are likely to be that are made in the Fear of God, and those we are sure are made in Heaven.

3. *Abraham's* Servant acknowledges God in a particular Thank-giving. He first paid his respects to *Rebekah* in gratitude for her Civility, v. 22. Obliging her with such *Ornaments* and *Attire* as a *Maid*, especially a *Bride* cannot forget, *Jer. ii. 32.* which yet we would think disagreeable to the *Pitcher of Water*, but the *Ear-rings* and *Bracelets* she sometimes wore, did not make her think her self above the Labours of the Vertuous Woman, (*Prov. xxxi. 13.*) that *worketh willingly with her Hands*, nor the Services of a Child, which while *under Age*, differs nothing from a *Servant*, *Gal. iv. 1.* Having done this he turns his *Wonder*, v. 21. into *Worshipping*, v. 26, 27. *Blessed be the Lord God of my Master Abraham.* Observe here, 1. He Had prayed for good speed, v. 12. and now he had sped well he gives Thanks. *Note*, What we win by Prayer, we must wear with Praise, for Mercies in answer to Prayer are in a particular manner obliging. 2. He had as yet but a comfortable Prospect of Mercy, and was not certain what the Issue might prove, yet he gives Thanks. *Note*, When God's Favours are coming towards us, we must meet them with our Praises. 3. He blesteth God for Success when he was negotiating for his Master. *Note*, We should be thankful for our Friends Mercies as for our own. 4. He gives Thanks that being in the Way, at a loss what Course to steer, the Lord had led him. *Note*, In doubtful Cases 'tis very Comfortable to see God leading us, as he led *Israel* in the Wilderness by the Pillar of Cloud and Fire. 5. He thinks himself very happy, and owns God in it, that he was led to the *House of his Master's Brethren*, those of them that were come out of *Uz of the Caldees*, tho' they were not come to *Canaan*, but staid in *Haran*. They were not Idolaters but Worshipers of the true God, and inclinable to the Religion of *Abraham's* Family. *Note*, God is to be acknowledg'd in providing suitable Yoke-fellows, especially such as are agreeable in Religion. 6. He acknowledges that God herein had not left his Master destitute of his Mercy and Truth. God had promised to build up *Abraham's* Family, yet it seem'd destitute of the Benefit of that Promise, but now Providence is working towards the Accomplishment of it. *Note*, 1. God's Faithful Ones, how destitute soever they may be of worldly Comforts, shall never be left destitute of God's Mercy and Truth; for God's Mercy is an inexhaustible Fountain, and his Truth an inviolable Foundation. 2. It adds much to the Comfort of any Blessing to see in it the Continuance of God's Mercy and Truth.

29 And *Rebekah* had a brother, and his name was *Laban*: and *Laban* ran out unto the man, unto the well. 30 And it came to pass when he saw the ear-ring and bracelets upon his sisters hands, and when he heard the words of *Rebekah* his sister, saying, Thus spake the man unto me; that he came unto the man, and behold, he stood by the camels at the well. 31 And he said, Come in, thou blessed of the LORD, wherefore standest thou without? for I have prepared the house, and room for the camels. 32 And the man came into the house: and he ungir-

ded his camels, and gave straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet, and the mens feet that were with him. 33 And there was set meat before him to eat: but he said, I will not eat, until I have told mine errand. And he said, Speak on. 34 And he said, I am *Abraham's* servant. 35 And the LORD hath blessed my master greatly, and he is become great: and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and men-servants, and maid-servants, and camels, and asses. 36 And *Sarah* my masters wife bare a son to my master when she was old: and unto him hath he given all that he hath. 37 And my master made me swear, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife to my son of the daughters of the *Canaanites*, in whose land I dwell: 38 But thou shalt go unto my fathers house, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son. 39 And I said unto my master, Peradventure the woman will not follow me. 40 And he said unto me, The LORD before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and prosper thy way; and thou shalt take a wife for my son of my kindred, and of my fathers house. 41 Then shalt thou be clear from this my oath, when thou comest to my kindred; and if they give not thee one, thou shalt be clear from my oath. 42 And I came this day unto the well, and said, O LORD GOD of my master *Abraham*, if now thou do prosper my way which I go: 43 Behold, I stand by the well of water; and it shall come to pass, that when the virgin cometh forth to draw water, and I say to her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water of thy pitcher to drink; 44 And she say to me, both drink thou, and I will also draw for thy camels: let the same be the woman whom the LORD hath appointed out for my masters son. 45 And before I had done speaking in mine heart, behold, *Rebekah* came forth with her pitcher on her shoulder; and she went down unto the well, and drew water: and I said unto her, Let me drink, I pray thee. 46 And she made haste, and let down the pitcher from her shoulder, and said, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: so I drank, and she made the camels drink also. 47 And I asked her, and said, Whose daughter art thou? And she said, the daughter of *Bethuel*, *Nahor's* son, whom *Milcah* bare unto him: and I put the ear-ring upon her face, and the bracelets upon her hands. 48 And I bowed down my head, and worshipped the LORD, and blessed the LORD God of my master *Abraham*, which had led me in the right way to take my masters brothers daughter unto his son. 49 And now if you will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me, and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right-hand, or to the left. 50 Then *Laban* and *Bethuel* answer'd, and said, The thing proceedeth from the LORD: we cannot speak unto thee bad or good. 51 Behold, *Rebekah* is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy masters sons wife, as the LORD hath spoken. 52 And it came to pass, that when *Abraham's* servant heard their words, he worshipped the LORD, bowing himself to the earth. 53 And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to *Rebekah*: He gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things.

We have here the making up of the Marriage between *Isaac* and *Rebekah*: 'Tis related very largely and particularly, even to the minute Circumstances, which, we would think, might

might have been spared : while other things of great Moment and Mystery (as the Story of *Melchizedek*) are related in few Words. Thus God *conceals* that which is curious from the *Wise and Prudent*, and *reveals* to *Babes* that which is common, and level to their Capacity, *Mat. xi. 25.* and rules and *saves the World by the foolishness of Preaching*, *1 Cor. i. 21.* Thus also we are directed to take notice of God's Providence in the little common Occurrences of *Humane Life*, and in them also to exercise our own Prudence, and other Graces : For the Scripture was not intended only for the use of Philosophers and Statesmen, but to make us all *Wise and Vertuous* in the Conduct of our selves and Families.

Here's, 1. The very kind Reception which *Abraham's* Servant had with *Rebekah's* Relations : Her Brother *Laban* went to invite and conduct him in, but not till he saw the *Ear-Rings, and Bracelets upon his Sisters Hands*, *v. 36.* O, thinks *Laban*, here's a Man that there is something to be got by, a Man that's Rich and Generous, we'll be sure to bid him welcome; we know so much of *Laban's* Character, by the following Story, as to think that he would not have been so free of his Entertainment if he had not hoped to be well paid for it, as he was, *v. 53.* Note, *A Man's Gift maketh room for him*, *Prov. xviii. 16.* which way soever it turneth it prospereth, *Prov. xvii. 8.*

(1.) The Invitation was kind, *v. 31.* Come in, thou blessed of the Lord : They saw he was Rich, and therefore pronounced him *Blessed of the Lord*; or, perhaps because they heard from *Rebekah*, *v. 28.* of the gracious Words which proceeded out of his Mouth; they concluded him a Good Man, and therefore *Blessed of the Lord.* Note, Those that are *blessed of God* should be welcome to us, 'Tis good owning those whom God owns.

(2.) The Entertainment was kind, *v. 32, 33.* Both the House and Stable were well furnished, and *Abraham's* Servant was free to both. Particular Care was taken of the Camels, for *A good Man regardeth the Life of his Beast*, *Pr. xii. 10.* If the Ox knows his Owner to serve him, the Owner should know his Ox to provide for him that which is fitting for him.

2. The full Account which he gave them of his Errand, and the Court he makes to them for their Consent with *Rebekah.* Observe, 1. How intent he was upon his Business; tho' he was come off a Journey, and come to a good House, he would not eat till he had told his Errand, *v. 33.* Note, The doing of our Work, and the fulfilling of our Trusts, either for God or Man, should be prefer'd by us before our necessary Food : 'Twas our Saviour's Meat and Drink, *Joh. iv. 34.* 2. How Ingenious he was in the Management of it : He approved himself in this Matter both a Prudent Man, and a Man of Integrity, faithful to his Master, by whom he was trusted, and just to those with whom he now treated.

1. He gives a short Account of the State of his Master's Family, *v. 34, 35, 36.* He was welcome before, but we may suppose him doubly welcome, when he said, *I am Abraham's Servant.* *Abraham's* Name no doubt, was well known among 'em, and respected, and we may suppose 'em not altogether ignorant of his State, for *Abraham* knew theirs, *Chap. xxii. 20.* Two things he suggests to recommend his Proposal, (1.) That his Master *Abraham* had a very good Estate, thro' the Blessing of God, and (2.) That he had settled it all upon *Isaac*, for whom he was now a Suitor.

2. He tells them the Charge his Master had given to fetch a Wife for his Son from among his Kindred, with the Reason of it, *v. 37, 38.* Thus he insinuates a pleasing Hint, that tho' *Abraham* was removed to a Country at so great a distance, yet he still retained the Remembrance of, and a Respect for his Relations that he had left behind : The highest Degrees of Divine Affection must not divest us of Natural Affection. He likewise obviates an Objection, that if *Isaac* were deserving, he needed not send so far off for a Wife, why did he not Marry nearer Home ? For a good reason (saith he) my Master's Son must not match with a *Canaanite.* He further recommends his Proposal, (1.) From the Faith his Master had that it would succeed, *v. 40.* He took Encouragement from the Testimony of his Conscience, that he walked before God in a regular Course of Holy Living, and thence infer'd, that God would prosper him : probably he refers to that Covenant God had made with him, *Chap. xvii. 1.* *I am God All sufficient, walk before me : Therefore (saith he) the God before whom I walk will send his Angel.* Note, While we make Conscience of our Part of the Covenant, we may take the Comfort of God's Part of it ; and we should learn to apply general Promises to particular Cases, as there is Occasion. (2.) From the Care he himself had taken to preserve their Liberty of giving or refusing their Consent, as they should see cause, without incurring the Guilt of Perjury, *v. 39, 41.* which shewed him in general to be a Cautious Man, and particularly careful that their Consent might not be forced, but be either free, or not at all.

3. He relates to them the wonderful Concurrence of Providences to countenance and further the Proposal, plainly shewing the Finger of God in it. (1.) He tells them how he had pray'd for Direction by a Sign, *v. 42, 43, 44.* Note, It's good dealing with those who by Prayer take God along with them in their

Dealings. (2.) How God had answered his Prayer in the very Letter of it. Tho' he did but speak in his Heart, *v. 45.* which perhaps he mentions lest it should be suspected that *Rebekah* had over-heard his Prayer, and designedly humour'd it : No, saith he, I spake it in my Heart, so that none heard it but God, to whom Thoughts are Words, and from him the Answer came, *v. 46, 47.* (3.) How he had immediately acknowledged God's Goodness to him therein, leading him, as he expresses it here, in the right Way. Note, God's Way is always the right Way, *Pf. cvii. 7.* and those are well led whom he leads.

4. He fairly refers the Matter to their Consideration, and waits their Resolution, *v. 49.* If you will deal kindly and truly with my Master, well and good ; if you will be sincerely kind, you will accept the Proposal, and I have what I come for ; if not, do not hold me in suspense. Note, Those who deal fairly have reason to expect fair dealing.

5. They freely and cheerfully close with the Proposal, upon a very good Principle, *v. 50.* The thing proceedeth from the Lord ; Providence smiles upon it, and we have nothing to say against it. They do not object distance of Place, *Abraham's* forsaking them, his having no Land in Possession but personal Estate only, they do not question the Truth of what this Man said, but, (1.) They trust much to his Integrity. 'Twere well if Honesty did so universally prevail among Men, that it might be as much an Act of Prudence, as it is of Good Nature to take a Man's Word. (2.) They trust more to God's Providence, and therefore by Silence give Consent, because it appears to be directed and disposed by Infinite Wisdom. Note, A Marriage is then likely to be comfortable when it appears to proceed from the Lord.

Abraham's Servant makes a thankful Acknowledgment of the good Success he had met with, (1.) To God, *v. 52.* He worshipped the Lord. Observe, (1.) As his good Success went on, he went on to Bless God : Those that Pray without ceasing, should in every thing give Thanks, and own God in every Step of Mercy. (2.) God sent his Angel before him, and so gave him Success, *v. 7, 40.* But when he has the desired Success, he worships God, not the Angel. Whatever Benefit we have by the Ministration of Angels, all the Glory must be given to the Lord of the Angels, *Rev. xxii. 9.* (2.) To the Family also he pays his Respects, and particularly to the Bride, *v. 53.* He presented her and her Mother and Brother with many precious Things : Both to give a real Proof of his Master's Riches, and Generosity, and in Gratitude for their Civility to him, and further to ingratiate himself with them.

54 And they did eat and drink, he and the men that were with him, and tarried all night : and they rose up in the morning, and he said, Send me away unto my master. 55 And her brother and her mother said, Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten ; after that she shall go. 56 And he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing the LORD hath prospered my way : send me away that I may go to my master. 57 And they said, We will call the damsel, and enquire at her mouth. 58 And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man ? And she said, I will go. 59 And they sent away Rebekah their sister, and her nurse, and Abraham's servant, and his men. 60 And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate [of those which hate them. 61 And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man ; and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way.

Rebekah is here taking leave of her Father's House:

1. *Abraham's* Servant makes pressing Instances for a Dismissal ; though he and his Company were very welcome, and very merry there, yet he said, Send me away, *v. 55.* and again, *v. 56.* He knew his Master would expect him Home with some impatience ; he had Business to do at Home which wanted him, and therefore as one that prefer'd his Work before his Pleasure, he was for hastening Home. Note, Lingring and Loitering no ways becomes a Wife and Good Man ; when we have dispatched our Business Abroad, we must not delay to return to our Business at Home, nor be longer from it than needs must : For as the Bird that wanders from his Nest, so is he that wanders from his Place, *Prov. xxvii. 8.*

2. *Rebekah's Relations from Natural Affection*, and according to the usual Expression of Kindness in that Case, sollicite for her stay some time among them, v. 55. They could not think of parting with her on a sudden, especially she being to remove so far off, and it being not likely they should ever see one another again, *Let her stay a few Days, at least Ten*, which makes it as reasonable a Request as the Reading in the Margin seems to make it unreasonable, *a Year, or at least ten Months*. They had consented to the Marriage, and yet were loth to part with her. *Note*, It is an Instance of the Vanity of this World, that there is nothing in it so agreeable but it has its Alloy, *nulla est sine auro Voluptas*. They here were pleased that they had matched a Daughter of their Family so well, and yet when it came to the setting to, it was with great reluctance that they sent her away.

3. *Rebekah herself determin'd the Matter*, to her they appeal'd, as 'twas fit they should, v. 57. *Call the Damsel*, who was retired to her Apartment with a modest Silence, and enquire at her Mouth. *Note*, As Children ought not to Marry without their Parents Consent, so Parents ought not to Marry them without their own. Before the Matter is resolv'd on, ask at the Damsel's Mouth, she is a Party principally concern'd, and therefore ought to be principally consulted. *Rebekah* consented not only to go, but to go presently, v. 58. *I will go*. We may hope that the Observations she had made of the Servant's Piety and Devotion, gave her such an Idea of the prevalency of Religion and Godliness in the Family she was to go to, as made her desirous to hasten thither, and willing to forget her own People, and her Father's House, where Religion had not so much the Ascendant.

4. Hereupon she is sent away with *Abraham's Servant*, we may suppose not the very next Day after, but very quickly: Her Friends see she has a good Heart on it, and so they dismiss her, 1. With suitable Attendants, her Nurse, v. 59. her Damsels, v. 61. It seems then, when she went to the Well for Water, 'twas not because she had not Servants at Command, but because she took a pleasure in the Instances of Humility and Industry. Now she was going among Strangers, 'twas fit she should take those with her whom she was acquainted with. Here's nothing said of her Portion: Her personal Merits were a Portion in her, she needed none with her, nor did that ever come into the Treaty of Marriage. 2. With hearty good Wishes, v. 60. *they blessed Rebekah*. *Note*, When our Relations are entering into a new Condition, we ought by Prayer to recommend them to the Blessing and Grace of God. Now she was going to be a Wife, they prayed she might be a Mother, both of a Numerous and of Victorious Progeny. Perhaps *Abraham's Servant* had told them of the Promise God had lately made his Master, which 'tis likely *Abraham* acquainted his Household with, that God would multiply his Seed as the Stars of Heaven, and that they should possess the Gate of their Enemies, Chap. xxii. 17. to which Promise they had an Eye in this Blessing, *Be thou the Mother of that Seed*.

62 And Isaac came from the way of the well Lahai-roi; for he dwelt in the south-country. 63 And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the even-tide: and he lift up his eyes and saw, and behold, the camels were coming. 64 And Rebekah lift up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel. 65 For she had said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, It is my master: therefore she took a vail and covered herself. 66 And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done. 67 And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

Isaac and Rebekah are at length happily brought together. 1. *Isaac* was well employ'd when he met *Rebekah*, v. 62, 63. He went out to Meditate, or Pray, in the Field, at the Even-Tide. Some think he expected the return of his Servants about this time, and went out on purpose to meet them. But it should seem he went out on another Errand, to take the Advantage of a silent Evening, and a solitary Field for Meditation and Prayer, those Divine Exercises by which we converse with God and our own Hearts. *Note*, (1.) Holy Souls love Retirement; 'twill do us good to be oft left alone, walking alone, and sitting alone; and if we have the Art of improving Solitude, we shall find we are never less alone than when alone. (2.) Meditation and Prayer ought to be both our Business and our Delight when we are alone; while we have a God, a Christ and a Heaven to acquaint ourselves with, and to secure our Interest in, we need not want

Matter either for Meditation and Prayer, which, if they go together, will mutually befriend each other. (3.) Our Walks in the Field are then truly pleasant, when in them we apply our selves to Meditation and Prayer: We there have a free and open Prospect of the Heavens above us, and the Earth around us, and the Hosts and Riches of both, by the View of which, we should be led to the Contemplation of the Maker and Owner of all. (4.) The Exercises of Devotion should be the Refreshment and Entertainment of the Evening, after the Care and Business of the Day, to relieve the Fatigue of that, and before the Repose and Sleep of the Night, to prepare us for that. (5.) Merciful Providences are then doubly comfortable, when they find us well employ'd, and in the Way of our Duty; Some think *Isaac* was now praying for good Success in this Affair that was depending, and meditating upon that which was proper to encourage his Hope in God concerning it; and now when he sees himself, as it were, upon his Watch-Tower, to see what God would answer him, as the Prophet, *Hab. 2. 1. he sees the Camels coming*; sometime God sends in the Mercy prayed for immediately, *Acts xii. 12*.

2. *Rebekah* behaved her self very decently when she met *Isaac*: Understanding who he was, she lighted off her camel, v. 64. and took a Vail and covered her self, v. 65. in token of Humility, Modesty and Subjection; she did not Reproach *Isaac* for not coming himself to fetch her, or, at least, to meet her a Day's Journey or two; did not complain of the tediousness of her Journey, or the Difficulty of leaving her Relations to come into a strange Place; but having seen Providence going before her in the Affair, she accommodates her self with Cheerfulness to her new Relation. Those that by Faith are espoused to Christ, and would be presented as chaste Virgins to him, must, in conformity to his Example, humble themselves, as *Rebekah*, who lighted when she saw *Isaac* on Foot, and must put themselves in Subjection to him who is their Head, *Eph. v. 24. as Rebekah*, signifying it by the Vail she put on, *1 Cor. xi. 10*.

3. They were brought together (probably after some time for Acquaintance) to their mutual Comfort, v. 67. Observe here, 1. What an affectionate Son he was to his Mother: 'Twas about three Years since she died, and yet he was not till now comforted concerning it: The Wound which that Affliction gave to his tender Spirit, bled so long, and was never healed till God brought him into this new Relation: Thus Crosses and Comforts are Balances to each other, (*Ecc. vii. 14.*) and help to keep the Scale even. 2. What an affectionate Husband he was to his Wife. *Note*, Those that have approved themselves well in one Relation, it may be hoped will do so in another. She became his Wife, and he loved her; and all the reason in the World he should, for so ought Men to love their Wives, even as themselves. The Duty of the Relation is then done, and the Comfort of the Relation is then enjoyed, when mutual Love governs, for there the Lord commands the Blessing.

CHAP. XXV.

The Sacred Historian in this Chapter, (1.) takes his Leave of *Abraham* with an Account, (1.) Of his Children by another Wife, v. 1-4. 2. Of his Last Will and Testament, v. 5, 6. 3. Of his Age, Death and Burial, v. 7, 8, 9, 10. (2.) He takes his Leave of *Ishmael*, with a short Account, 1. Of his Children, v. 12-16. 2. Of his Age and Death, v. 17, 18. (3.) He enters upon the History of *Isaac*. 1. His Prosperity, v. 11. 2. The Conception and Birth of his two Sons, with the Oracle of God concerning them, v. 19-26. 3. Their different Character, v. 27, 28. 4. *Esau's* selling his Birth-right to *Jacob*, v. 29-34.

1 **T**HEN again *Abraham* took a wife, and her name was *Keturah*. 2 And she bare him *Zimran*, and *Jokshan*, and *Medan*, and *Midian*, and *Ishbak* and *Shuah*. 3 And *Jokshan* begat *Sheba*, and *Dedan*. And the sons of *Dedan* were *Ashturim*, and *Letushim*, and *Leummim*. 4 And the sons of *Midian*; *Ephah*, and *Epher*, and *Hanoch*, and *Abidah*, and *Eldaah*. All these were the children of *Keturah*. 5 And *Abraham* gave all that he had unto *Isaac*. 6 But unto the sons of the concubines which *Abraham* had, *Abraham* gave gifts, and sent them away from *Isaac* his son (while he yet lived) east-ward, unto the east-country. 7 And these are the days of the years of *Abraham's* life which he lived, an hundred threescore and fifteen years. 8 Then *Abraham* gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years; and was gathered to his people. 9 And his

his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zoar the Hittite, which is before Mamre; 10 The field which Abraham purchased of the sons of Heth: there was Abraham buried, and Sarah his wife.

Five and thirty Years Abraham lived after the Marriage of Isaac, and all that is recorded concerning him during that time, lies here in a very few Verses; we hear no more of God's extraordinary Appearances to him, or Trials of him, for all the Days even of the Best and Greatest Saints are not eminent Days, some slide on silently, and neither come nor go with Observation, such were these last Days of Abraham: We have here,

1. An Account of his Children by Keturah, another Wife which he Married after the Death of Sarah. He had buried Sarah, and Married Isaac, the two dear Companions of his Life and was now Solitary: He wanted a Nurse; his Family wanted a Governess, and it was not good for him to be thus alone; he therefore Marries Keturah, probably the chief of his Maid-servants, born in his House, or bought with Money. Marriage is not forbidden to Old Age. By her he had Six Sons, in whom the Promise made to Abraham, concerning the great Increase of his Posterity, was in part fulfilled, which 'tis likely he had an Eye to in this Marriage. The Strength he received by the Promise still remained in him, to shew how much the Virtue of the Promise exceeds the Power of Nature.

2. The Disposition which Abraham made of his Estate, v. 5. 6. After the Birth of these Sons, he set his House in Order, with Prudence and Justice. 1. He made Isaac his Heir, as he was bound to do in Justice to Sarah his first and principal Wife, and to Rebekah who married Isaac upon the assurance of it, Ch. xxiv. 36. In this All which he settled upon Isaac, perhaps is included the Promise of the Land of Canaan, and the Entail of the Covenant. Or, God having already made him the Heir of the Promise, Abraham therefore made him Heir of his Estate. Our Loves and Gifts should attend God's. 2. He gave Portions to the rest of his Children, both to Ishmael, tho' at first he was sent empty away, and to his Sons by Keturah. 'Twas Justice to provide for them; Parents that do not that are worse than Infidels. 'Twas Prudence to settle them in Places distant from Isaac, that they might not pretend to divide the Inheritance with him, nor be any way a Care or Expence to him. Observe, he did this while he yet lived, lest it should not have been done, or not so well done afterwards. Note, In many Cases, 'tis Wisdom for Men to make their own Hands their Executors, and what they find to do, to do it while they live as far as they can. These Sons of the Concubines were sent into the Country that lay East from Canaan, and their Posterity were called the Children of the East, famous for their Numbers, Jud. vi. 33. comp. v. 5. Their great Increase was the Fruit of the Promise made to Abraham, that God would multiply his Seed. God, in dispensing his Blessings, doth as Abraham did; Common Blessings he gives to the Children of this World, as to the Sons of the Bond-woman, but Covenant Blessings he reserves for the Heirs of Promise. All that he has is theirs, for they are his Isaac's, from whom the rest shall be for ever separated.

3. The Age and Death of Abraham, v. 7, 8. He lived One Hundred Seventy-five Years; just a Hundred Years after he came to Canaan; so long he was a Sojourner in a strange Country. Tho' he lived long, and lived well, tho' he did Good, and could ill be spared, yet he died at last. Observe how his Death is here described. 1. He gave up the Ghost. His Life was not extorted from him, but he cheerfully resign'd it: Into the Hands of the Father of Spirits he committed his Spirit. 2. He died in a good Old Age, an Old Man, so God had promised him. His Death was his Discharge from the Burthens of his Age, an Old Man would not so live always: It was also the Crown of the Glory of his Old Age. 3. He was full of Years, or full of Life, (as it might be supplied) including all the Conveniences and Comforts of Life. He did not live till the World was weary of him, but till he was weary of the World; he had had enough of it, and desired no more, *Vixi quantum satis est*. Sen. a good Man, tho' he should not dye Old, dyes full of Days, satisfied with living here, and longing to live in a better Place.

4. He was gathered to his People. His Body was gathered to the Congregation of the Dead, and his Soul to the Congregation of the Blessed. Note, Death gathers us to our People. Those that are our People while we live, whether the People of God, or the Children of this World, to them Death will gather us.

4. His Burial, v. 9, 10. Here's nothing recorded of the Pomp or Ceremony of his Funeral, only we are told,

1. Who buried him. His Sons Isaac and Ishmael; 'twas the last Office of Respect they had to pay to their Good Father. Some Distances there had formerly been between Isaac and Ishmael, but it seems, either Abraham had himself brought them together while he lived, or at least his Death reconciled them.

2. Where they buried him. In his own Burying-Place which

he had purchased, and in which he had buried Sarah. Note, Those that in Life have been very dear to each other, may not only innocently but laudably desire to be buried together, that in their Deaths they may not be divided, and in token of their Hopes of rising together.

11 And it came to pass after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac: and Isaac dwelt by the well Lahai-roi. 12 Now these are the generations of Ishmael Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's handmaid, bare unto Abraham. 13 And these are the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations: The first-born of Ishmael, Nebajoth; and Kedar and Adbeel, and Mibsam, 14 And Mishma, and Dumah, and Massa, 15 Hadar, and Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. 16 These are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names, by their towns, and by their castles; twelve princes, according to their nations. 17 And these are the years of the life of Ishmael, an hundred and thirty and seven years: and he gave up the ghost and died, and was gathered unto his people. 18 And they dwelt from Havilah unto Shur, that is before Egypt, as thou goest towards Assyria: and he died in the presence of all his brethren.

Immediately after the Account of Abraham's Death, Moses begins the Story of Isaac, v. 11. and tells us where he dwelt, and how remarkably God blessed him. Note, The Blessing of Abraham did not dye with him, but survived to all the Children of the Promise. But he presently digresseth from the Story of Isaac to give a short Account of Ishmael, for as much as he also was a Son of Abraham, and God had made some Promises concerning him, which 'twas requisite we should know the Accomplishment of. Observe here what is said,

1. Concerning his Children. He had Twelve Sons, Twelve Princes they are called, v. 16. Heads of Families, which in process of time became Nations, distinct Tribes, numerous and very considerable. They peopled a very large Continent that lay between Egypt and Assyria, called Arabia. The Names of his Twelve Sons are recorded. Midian and Kedar, we oft read of in Scripture. And some very good Expositors have taken notice of the Signification of those three Names which are put together, v. 14. as containing good Advice to us all. Mishma, Dumah, and Massa, that is, Hear, Keep Silence, and Bear; we have them together in the same Order, Jam. i. 19. Be swift to Hear, slow to Speak, slow to Wrath. The Posterity of Ishmael had not only Tents in the Fields wherein they grew Rich in Times of Peace, but they had Towns and Castles, v. 16. wherein they fortified themselves in time of War. Now the Number and Strength of this Family was the Fruit of the Promise made to Hagar concerning Ishmael, Ch. xvi. 10. and to Abraham, Ch. xvii. 20, 21. 13. Note, Many that are Strangers to the Covenants of Promise, yet are blessed with outward Prosperity for the sake of their Godly Ancestors. Wealth and Riches shall be in their House.

2. Concerning Himself. Here's an Account of his Age, he lived an hundred and thirty and seven Years, v. 17. which is recorded to shew the Efficacy of Abraham's Prayer for him, Chap. xvii. 18. O that Ishmael, might live before thee! And his Death, he also was gathered to his People, but 'tis not said, that he was full of Days, tho' he lived to so great an Age: He was not so weary of the World, nor so willing to leave it as his good Father was. Those Words, he fell in the Presence of all his Brethren, whether they mean, as we take them, he died, or, as others, his Lot fell, they are designed to shew the fulfilling of that Word to Hagar Chap. xvi. 12. He shall dwell in the Presence of all his Brethren, i. e. He shall flourish and be eminent among them, and shall hold his own to the last. Or, he died with his Friends about him, which is comfortable.

19 And these are the generations of Isaac Abraham's son: Abraham begat Isaac. 20 And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan-aram, the sister to Laban the Syrian. 21 And Isaac intreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren: and the LORD was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived. 22 And the children struggled together within her: and she said,

if

if it be so, why am I thus? and she went to enquire of the LORD. 23 And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels: and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger. 24 And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. 25 And the first came out red, all over like an hairy garment: and they called his name Esau. 26 And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob: and Isaac was threescore years old when he bare them. 27 And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man dwelling in tents. 28 And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob.

We have here an Account of the Birth of Jacob and Esau, the twin Sons of Isaac and Rebekah: Their entrance into the World was (which is not usual) one of the most considerable Parts of their Story; nor is much related concerning Isaac, but what had reference to his Father while he lived, and to his Sons afterward. For Isaac seems not to have been a Man of Action, nor much tried, but to have spent his Days in Quietness and Silence.

Now concerning Jacob and Esau we are here told.

1. That they were prayed for: Their Parents, after they had been long Childless, obtained them by Prayer, v. 20, 21. Isaac was Forty Years old, when he was married; though he was an only Son, and from whom the promised Seed was to come, yet he made no haste to Marry. He was Sixty Years Old when his Sons were born, v. 25. so that after he was Married, he had no Child of Twenty Years. Note, Though the Accomplishment of God's Promise is always sure, yet it is often slow, and seems to be crossed and contradicted by Providence: That the Faith of Believers may be tried, their Patience exercised, and Mercies long waited for may be the more welcome when they come. While this Mercy was delayed, Isaac did not approach to a Hand-maid's Bed, as Abraham had done, and Jacob after, for he loved Rebekah, Ch. xxiv. 1. But, (1.) He prayed. He intreated the Lord for his Wife: Though God had promised to multiply his Family, he prayed for it. For God's Promises must not supersede but encourage our Prayers, and be improved as the Ground of our Faith. Though he had prayed for this Mercy very often, and had continued his Supplication many Years, and it was not granted, yet he did not leave off praying for it. For Men ought always to pray, and not to faint, Luke xviii. 1. to Pray without ceasing, and knock till the Door be opened. He prayed for his Wife, some read it, with his Wife: Note, Husbands and Wives should pray together, which is intimated in the Apostle's Caution, that their Prayers be not hindered, 1 Pet. iii. 7. The Jews have a Tradition, That Isaac at length took his Wife with him to Mount Moriah, where God had promised that he would multiply Abraham's Seed, Chap. xxii. 17. and there in his Prayer with her, and for her, pleaded the Promise made in that very Place. (2.) God heard his Prayer, and was intreated of him. Note, Children are the Gift of God: The Key of the Womb is in his Hand. Those that continue instant in Prayer, as Isaac did, shall find at last they did not seek in vain, Isa. xxx. 18.

2. That they were prophesied of before they were born, and great Mysteries were wrapt up in the Prophecies which went before of them, v. 22, 23. Long had Isaac prayed for a Son, and now his Wife's with Child of Two, to recompense him for his long waiting. Thus God oft out-doeth our Prayers, and gives more than we are able to ask or think. Now Rebekah being with Child of these two Sons, Observe here,

(1.) How she was perplexed in her Mind concerning her present Case. The Children struggled together within her. The Commotion she felt was altogether extraordinary, and made her very uneasy; whether she was apprehensive that the Birth would be her Death, or that she was weary of the intestine Tumult, which probably made her very Sick, or that she suspected it to be an ill Omen, it seems she was ready to wish that either she had not been with Child, or that she might die presently, and not bring forth such a struggling Brood. If it be so, or, since it is so, why am I thus? Before, the want of Children was her Trouble, now, the struggle of the Children is no less so. Note, 1. The Comforts we are most desirous of, are sometimes found to bring along with them more Occasion of Trouble and Unea-

siness than we thought of, Vanity being written upon all things under the Sun, God thus teaches us to read it. 2. We are too apt to be discontented with our Comforts, because of the Uneasiness that attends them. We know not when we are pleased, neither how to want, nor how to abound.

This Struggle between Jacob and Esau in the Womb, represents the Struggle that is between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Satan, (1.) In the World. The Seed of the Woman and the Seed of the Serpent have been contending ever since the Enmity was put between them, Gen. iii. 15. and it has occasion'd a constant Uneasiness among Men; Christ himself came to send Fire on Earth, and this Division, Luke xii. 49, 51. But let not this be an Offence to us. A Holy War is better than the Peace of the Devil's Palace. (2.) In the Hearts of Believers; No sooner is Christ formed in the Soul, but presently there begins a Conflict between the Flesh and Spirit, Gal. v. 17. The Stream is not turned without a mighty Struggle, which yet ought not to discourage us. 'Tis better have a Conflict with Sin, than a tame Submission to it.

(2.) What Course she took for her Relief: She went to enquire of the Lord. Some think Melchizedek was now consulted as an Oracle, or, perhaps some Urim or Teraphim were now used to enquire of God by, as afterwards in the Breast-Plate of Judgment. Note, The Word and Prayer, by both which we now enquire of the Lord, give great Relief to those that are upon any account perplexed: 'Tis a mighty Ease to spread our Case before the Lord, and ask Counsel at his Mouth, Go into the Sanctuary, Psal. lxxiii. 17.

(3.) The Information given her upon her Enquiry, which expounded the Mystery. Two Nations are in thy Womb, v. 23. She was now big, not only with two Children, but two Nations, which should not only in their Manners and Dispositions greatly differ from each other, but in their Interests clash and contend with each other, and the Issue of the Contest should be, that the Elder should serve the Younger, which was fulfilled in the Subjection of the Edomites for many Ages to the House of David, till they revolted, 2 Chron. xxi. 8. Observe here, 1. That God is a free Agent in dispensing his Grace: 'Tis his Prerogative to make a Difference between those who have not as yet themselves done either Good or Evil. This the Apostle infers from hence, Rom. ix. 12. 2. That in the Struggle between Grace and Corruption in the Soul, Grace, the Younger, shall certainly get the upper-hand at last.

3. That when they were born there was a great Difference between them, which serv'd to confirm what had been fore-told, v. 23. was a Preface of the Accomplishment of it, and served greatly to illustrate the Type.

1. There was a great Difference in their Bodies, v. 25. Esau, when he was born, was rough and hairy, as if he had been already a grown Man; whence he had his Name Esau, Made, reared already: This was an Indication of a very strong Constitution, and gave cause to expect that he would be a very robust, daring, active Man. But Jacob was smooth and tender as other Children. Note, (1.) The Difference of Men's Capacities, and consequently of their Condition in the World, arises very much from the Difference of their Natural Constitution, some are plainly designed by Nature for Activity and Honour, others as manifestly marked for Obscurity. This Instance of the Divine Sovereignty in the Kingdom of Providence, may, perhaps, help to reconcile us to the Doctrine of the Divine Sovereignty in the Kingdom of Grace. (2.) 'Tis God's usual Way to chuse the weak things of the World, and to pass by the Mighty, 1 Cor. i. 26, 27.

2. There was a manifest Contest in their Births; Esau the stronger came out first, but Jacob's Hand took hold on his Heel, v. 26. This signified, 1. Jacob's pursuit of the Birth-right and Blessing, from the first, he reached forth to have caught hold of it, and, if possible, to have prevented his Brother. 2. His prevailing for it at last: That in process of Time he should undermine his Brother, and gain his Point. This Passage is refer'd to, Hof. xii. 3. and from hence he had his Name Jacob, a Supplanter.

3. They were very unlike in the Temper of their Minds, and the Way of Living they chose, v. 27. They soon appeared to be of a very different Genius. (1.) Esau was a Man for this World; a Man addicted to his Sports, for he was a Hunter, and a Man that knew how to live by his Wits; for he was a cunning Hunter: Recreation was his Business, he study'd the Art of it, and spent all his Time in it. He never loved a Book, nor cared for being within Doors, but he was a Man of the Field; like Nimrod and Ishmael, all for the Game, and never well but when he was upon the Stretch in pursuit of it: In short, he set up for a Gentleman and a Soldier. (2.) Jacob was a Man for another World: He was not cut out for a Statesman, nor did he affect to look great, but he was a plain Man, dwelling in Tents: An honest Man, that always meant well, and dealt fairly; that prefer'd the true Delights of Solitude and Retirement, before all the pretended Pleasure of busie, noisie Sports: He dwelt in Tents, either, 1. As a Shepherd,

herd. He affected that safe and silent Employment of *keeping Sheep*, to which also he bred up his Children, *Gen. xlv. 34.* Or, (2.) As a Student, he frequented the Tents of *Melchizedek* or *Hebor*, as some understand it, to be taught by them Divine Things. And this was that Son of *Isaac* on whom the Covenant was entailed.

4. Their Interest in the Affections of their Parents was likewise different. They had but these Two Children, and it seems one was the Father's Darling, and t'other the Mother's, *v. 28.* 1. *Isaac*, tho' he was not a stirring Man himself, but when he went into the Fields, went to *Meditate and Pray*, not to hunt, yet he loved to have his Son active. *Esau* knew how to please him, and shewed a great Respect for him, by treating him oft with Venison, which gained him the Affections of the good old Man, and won upon him more than one would have thought. 2. *Rebekah* was mindful of the Oracle of God, which had given the Preference to *Jacob*, and therefore she preferred him in her Love. And if it be lawful for Parents to make a difference between their Children upon any Account, doubtless *Rebekah* was in the right that loved him whom God loved.

29 And *Jacob* sold pottage : and *Esau* came from the field, and he was faint. 30 And *Esau* said to *Jacob*, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage ; for I am faint : therefore was his name called *Edom*. 31 And *Jacob* said, Sell me this day thy birth-right. 32 And *Esau* said, Behold, I am at the point to die : and what profit shall this birth-right do to me ? 33 And *Jacob* said, Swear to me this day ; and he swore unto him : and he sold his birth-right unto *Jacob*. 34 Then *Jacob* gave *Esau* bread and pottage of lentiles ; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way : thus *Esau* despised his birth-right.

We have here a Bargain made between *Jacob* and *Esau* about the Birth-right which was *Esau's* by Providence, but *Jacob's* by Promise. 'Twas a spiritual Privilege, including the *Excellency of Dignity* and the *Excellency of Power*, as well as the *Double Portion*, *Gen. xlix. 3.* It seemed to be such a Birth-right as had then the Blessing annexed to it, and the Entail of the Promise. Now see,

(1.) *Jacob's* pious Desire of the Birth-right, which yet he sought to obtain by indirect Courses, not agreeable to his Character as a plain Man. 'Twas not out of Pride or Ambition, that he coveted the Birth right, but with an Eye to Spiritual Blessings, which he had got well acquainted with in his Tents, while *Esau* had lost the Scent of 'em in the Field. For this he is to be commended, that he coveted earnestly the best Gifts, yet in this he cannot be justified, that he took Advantage of his Brother's Necessity to make him a very hard Bargain, *v. 31. Sell me this Day thy Birth-right.* Probably there had formerly been some Communication between them about this Matter, and then it was not so great a Surprise upon *Esau* as here it seems to be ; and it may be *Esau* had sometimes spoke slightly of the Birth-right and its Appurtenances, which encourag'd *Jacob* to make this Proposal to him. And if so, *Jacob* is at least excusable in what he did to gain his Point. Note, Plain Men that have their Conversation in Simplicity and Godly Sincerity, and without worldly Wisdom are oft found wisest of all for their Souls and Eternity. Those are Wife indeed that are Wife for another World. *Jacob's* Wisdom appeared in two Things, (1.) That he nicked his Time ; took the Opportunity when it offer'd it self, and did not let it slip. (2.) That having made the Bargain, he made it sure, and got it confirmed by *Esau's* Oath, *Swear to me this Day, v. 33.* He took *Esau* when he was in the Mind, and would not leave him a Power of Revocation. In a Case of this Nature, 'tis good to be sure.

(2.) *Esau's* profane Contempt of the Birth-right, and the foolish Sale he made of it. He is called *prophane Esau* for it, *Heb. xii. 16.* because for one Morfel of Meat he sold his Birth-right, and as dear a Morfel as ever was eaten since the forbidden Fruit ; and he lived to fore-think it when it was too late. Never was there such a foolish Bargain as this which *Esau* now made ; and yet he valued himself upon his Politicks, and had the Reputation of a cunning Man ; and perhaps had oft banter'd his Brother *Jacob* as a weak and simple Man. Note, There are those that are Penny-wise, and Pound-foolish, cunning Hunters, that can out-wit others, and draw them into their Snares, and yet are themselves imposed upon by Satan's Wiles, and led Captive by him at his Will. 2. God often chuses the foolish things of the World, by them to confound the wise. Plain *Jacob* makes a Fool of cunning *Esau*. Observe the Instances of *Esau's* Folly.

1. His Appetite was very strong, *v. 29, 30.* Poor *Jacob* had got some Bread and Pottage. (*v. 34.*) for his Dinner, and was sitting down to it contentedly enough, without Venison, when

Esau came from Hunting, hungry and weary, and perhaps had caught nothing. And now *Jacob's* Pottage pleased his Eye better than ever his Game had done ; Give me (saith he) some of that red, that rest, as 'tis in the Original : It suited his own Colour, *v. 25.* and in Reproach to him for this, he was ever after called *Edom, Red.* Nay, it should seem he was so faint that he could not feed himself, nor had he a Servant at hand to help him, but bespeaks his Brother to feed him. Note, (1.) Those that addict themselves to Sport, weary themselves for very Vanity, *Hab. ii. 15.* They might do the most needful Business, and gain the greatest Advantages with half the Pains they take, and half the Perils they run in pursuit of their foolish Pleasures. (2.) Those that work with Quietness are more constantly and comfortably provided for than those that hunt with noise : Bread is not always so the Wife, but they that trust in the Lord and do Good, verily they shall be fed, fed with daily Bread, not as *Esau*, sometimes fasting and sometimes fainting. (3.) Gratifying the Sensual Appetite is that which ruins thousands of precious Souls : Surely if *Esau* was hungry and faint, he might have got a Meal's Meat cheaper than at the Expence of his Birth-right, but that he was unaccountably fond of the Colour of this Pottage, and could not deny himself the Satisfaction of a Mefs of it ; whatever it cost him. Never better can come of it when Men's Hearts walk after their Eyes, *Job xxxi. 7.* and when they serve their own Bellies : Therefore look not thou upon the Wine, or, as *Esau* upon the Pottage ; when it is Red, when it gives that Colour in the Cup, in the Dish which is most inviting, *Pr. xxiii. 31.* If we use our selves to deny our selves, we break the Force of most Temptations.

2. His Reasoning was very weak, *v. 32.* Behold, I am at the point to dye : And if he were, would nothing serve to keep him alive but this Pottage ? If the Famine were now in the Land, (*Chap. xxvi. 1.*) as Dr. Lightfoot conjectures, we cannot suppose *Isaac* so poor, or *Rebekah* so ill an House-keeper, but that he might have been supplied with Food convenient other Ways, and might have saved his Birth-right : But his Appetite has the mastery of him, he's in a longing Condition, nothing will please him but this red, this red Pottage ; and to palliate his Desire, he pretends he's at the point to dye : And if he had been so, was it not better for him to dye in Honour, than to live in Disgrace ? Dye under a Blessing, than live under a Curse. The Birth-right was Typical of Spiritual Privileges, those of the Church of the First-born : *Esau* was now try'd how he would value those, and he shews himself sensible only of present Grievances : May he but get Relief against them, he cares not for his Birth-right. *Naboth* was better Principled, who would lose his Life rather than sell his Vine-Yard, because his Part in the earthly *Canaan* signified his Part in the heavenly, *1 King. xxi. 3.* (1.) If we look on *Esau's* Birth-right as only a temporal Advantage, what he said had something of Truth in it, that our worldly Enjoyments, even those we are most fond of, will stand us in no stead in a dying Hour. *Pf. xlix. 6, 7, 8.* They will not put by the Stroke of Death, nor ease the Pangs, nor remove the Sting : Yet *Esau*, who set up for a Gentleman should have had a greater and more noble Spirit than to sell even such an Honour so cheap. (2.) But being of a Spiritual Nature, his undervaluing it was the greatest Prophaneness imaginable. Note, 'Tis egregious Folly to part with our Interest in God, and Christ, and Heaven, for the Riches, Honours and Pleasures of this World, as ill a Bargain as his that sold a Birth-right for a Dish of Broth.

3. Repentance was hid from his Eyes, *v. 34.* He did eat and drink, pleased his Palate, and filled his Belly, and blessed himself what a good Meal's Meat he had, and then carelessly rose up and went his Way, without any serious Reflections upon the ill Bargain he had made, or any shew of Regret ; thus *Esau* despised his Birth-right : He used no Means at all to get the Bargain revoked, made no Appeal to his Father about it, nor Friends to his Brother to Compound the Matter, but the Bargain which his Necessity had made, (supposing it were so) his Prophaneness confirmed *ex post facto*, and by his subsequent Neglect and Contempt he did, as it were, acknowledge a Fine, and by justifying himself in what he had done, he put the Bargain past recall. Note, People are ruined, not so much by doing what is amiss, as by doing it and not repenting of it ; doing it and standing to it.

CHAP. XXVI.

In this Chapter we have, 1. *Isaac* in Adversity, by reason of a Famine in the Land, which, (1.) Obliges him to change his Quarters, *v. 1.* But, (2.) God visits him with Direction and Comfort, *v. 2-5.* (3.) He foolishly denies his Wife, being in Distress, and is reproved for it by Abimelech, *v. 6-11.* 2. *Isaac* in Prosperity, by the Blessing of God upon him, *v. 12-14.* And, 1. The Philistines were envious at him, *v. 14-17.* 2. He continued industrious in his Business, *v. 18-23.* 3. God appeared to him, and encouraged him, and he returned his Duty to God, *v. 24, 25.* 4. The Philistines at length made Court to him, and made a Covenant with him, *v. 26-33.* 5. The disagreeable

agreeable Marriage of his Son Esau, was an Allay to the Comfort of his Prosperity, v. 34, 35.

1 AND there was a famine in the land, besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines, unto Gerar. **2** And the LORD appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt: dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of. **3** Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee: for unto thee and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father. **4** And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries: and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed: **5** Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.

Here, 1. God tried *Isaac* by his Providence: *Isaac* had been trained up in a believing Dependence upon the Divine Grant of the Land of *Canaan* to him and his Heirs; yet now there's a Famine in the Land, v. 1. What shall he think of the Promise, when the Promised Land will not find him Bread? Is such a Grant worth accepting upon such Terms, and after so long a Time? Yes, *Isaac* will still cleave to the Covenant: And the less valuable *Canaan* in it self seems to be, the better he is taught to value it, (1.) As a Token of God's everlasting Kindness to him; and, (2.) As a Type of Heaven's everlasting Blessings. *Note.* The intrinsic Worth of God's Promises cannot be lessen'd in a Believer's Eye by any cross Providences.

2. He directed him under this Trial by his Word. *Isaac* finds himself straitened by the Scarcity of Provisions, some whither he must go for Supply; it should seem he intends for *Egypt*, whither his Father went in the like Strait, but he takes *Gerar* in his Way, full of Thoughts, no doubt, which Way he had best to steer his Course, till God graciously appeared to him, and determin'd him, abundantly to his Satisfaction.

1. God bid him stay where he was, and not go down into *Egypt*, v. 2, 3. *Sojourn in this Land*: There was a Famine in *Jacob's* Days, and God bid him go down into *Egypt*, Gen. xli. 3. 4. A Famine in *Isaac's* Days, and God bid him not go down: A Famine in *Abraham's* Days, and God left him to his Liberty, directing him neither Way, which (considering that *Egypt* was always a Place of Trial and Exercise to God's People) some ground upon the different Characters of these three Patriarchs. *Abraham* was a Man of very high Attainments, and intimate Communion with God, and to him all Places and Conditions were alike. *Isaac* a very good Man, but not cut out for Hardship, therefore he is forbidden to go to *Egypt*; *Jacob* enur'd to Difficulties, Strong and Patient, and therefore he must go down into *Egypt*; that the trial of his Faith might be to Praise, and Honour and Glory. Thus God proportions his People's Trials to their Strength.

2. He promised to be with him, and Bless him, v. 3. As we may go any whither with Comfort when God's Blessing goes with us, so we may stay any where contentedly if that Blessing rest upon us.

3. He renewed the Covenant with him which had so oft been made with *Abraham*, repeating and ratifying the Promises of the Land of *Canaan*, a numerous Issue, and the *Messiah*, v. 3. 4. *Note.* Those that must live by Faith have need often to review, and repeat to themselves the Promises they are to live upon, especially when they are called to any Instance of Suffering or Self-denial.

4. He recommended to him the good Example of his Father's Obedience, as that which had preserved the Entail of the Covenant in his Family, v. 5. *Abraham obeyed my Voice*, do thou do so too, and the Promise shall be sure to thee. *Abraham's* Obedience is here celebrated to his Honour, for by it he obtained a good Report both with God and Men. A great Variety of Words is here used to express the Divine Will, to which *Abraham* was Obedient, *my Voice*, *my Charge*, *my Commandments*, *my Statutes*, and *my Laws*; which may intimate, that *Abraham's* Obedience was universal; he obeyed the original Laws of Nature, the revealed Laws of Divine Worship, particularly that of Circumcision, and all the extraordinary Precepts God gave him, as that of quitting his Country, and that (which some think is more especially refer'd to) the offering up of his Son, which *Isaac* himself had reason enough to remember. *Note.* Those only shall have the Benefit and Comfort of God's Covenant with their godly Parents that tread in the Steps of their Obedience.

6 And Isaac dwelt in Gerar. **7** And the men of the place asked him of his wife; and he said, She is my sister: for he feared to say, She is my wife; lest, said he, the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah, because she was fair to look upon. **8** And it came to pass when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out at a window, and saw, and behold, Isaac was sporting with Rebekah his wife. **9** And Abimelech called Isaac, and said, Behold, of a surety she is thy wife: and how saidst thou, She is my sister? And Isaac said unto him, Because I said, Lest I die for her. **10** And Abimelech said, What is this thou hast done unto us? one of the people might lightly have lien with thy wife, and thou shouldst have brought guiltiness upon us. **11** And Abimelech charged all his people, saying, He that toucheth this man or his wife, shall surely be put to death.

Isaac has now laid aside all Thoughts of going into *Egypt*, and in obedience to the heavenly Vision, sets up his Staff in *Gerar*, the Country in which he was born, v. 6. yet there he enters into Temptation, the same Temptation that his good Father had been once and again surprized and overcome by, viz. to deny his Wife, and to give out, that she was his Sister. Observe, (1.) How he sinned, v. 7. because his Wife was handsome he fancied the *Philistines* would find some Way or other to take him off, that some of them might Marry her, and therefore she must pass for his Sister. 'Tis an unaccountable thing that both these Great and Good Men should be guilty of so odd a Piece of Diffimulation, by which they so much exposed both their own and their Wives Reputation. But we see, (1.) That very good Men have sometimes been guilty of very great Faults and Follies. Let those therefore that stand take heed lest they fall, and those that are fallen not despair of being helped up again: And, (2.) That there is an aptness in us to imitate even the Weaknesses and Infirmities of those we have a value for; we have need therefore to keep our Foot, lest whilst we aim to tread in the Steps of Good Men, we sometimes tread in their By-steps. (2.) How he was detected, and the Cheat discover'd by the King himself; *Abimelech*, not the same that was in *Abraham's* Days, Chap. xx. for this was near 100 Years after that, but that was the common Name of the *Philistine* Kings, as *Cesar* of the Roman Emperors: He saw *Isaac* more familiar and pleasant with *Rebekah* than he knew he would be with his Sister, v. 8. he saw him sporting with her, or laughing, 'tis the same Word with that from which *Isaac* had his Name; he was rejoicing with the Wife of his Youth, Pr. v. 18. It becomes those in that Relation to be pleasant with one another, as those that are pleased with one another. No where may a Man more allow himself to be innocently Merry than with his own Wife and Children. *Abimelech* charged him with the Fraud, v. 9. shewed him how frivolous his Excuse was, and what might have been the ill Consequence of it, v. 10. and then to convince him how groundless and unjust his Jealousy of them was, took him and his Family under his particular Protection, forbidding any Injury to be done to him or his Wife upon pain of Death, v. 11. *Note.* 1. A lying Tongue is but for a Moment: Truth is the Daughter of Time; and in Time it will out. 2. One Sin is oft the Inlet to many, and therefore the beginnings of Sin ought to be avoided. 3. The Sins of Professors shame them before those that are without. 4. God can make those that are incensed against his People, tho' there may be some Colour of Cause for it, to know that it is at their Peril if they do them any Hurt. See *Psal.* cv. 14, 15.

12 Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundred-fold, and the LORD blessed him. **13** And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great. **14** For he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants. And the Philistines envied him. **15** For all the wells which his fathers servants had digged in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines had stopped them, and filled them with earth. **16** And Abimelech said unto Isaac, Go from us: for thou art much mightier than we. **17** And Isaac departed thence, and pitched his tent in the valley of *Gerar*,

rar, and dwelt there. 18 And Isaac digged again the wells of water, which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father; for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham: and he called their names after the names by which his father had called them. 19 And Isaac's servants digged in the valley, and found there a well of springing water. 20 And the herdmen of Gerar did strive with Isaac's herdmen, saying, The water is ours: and he called the name of the well Esek, because they strove with him. 21 And they digged another well, and strove for that also: and he called the name of it Sitnah. 22 And he removed from thence, and digged another well; and for that they strove not: and he called the name of it Rehoboth; and he said, For now the LORD hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land. 23 And he went up from thence to Beer-sheba. 24 And the LORD appeared unto him the same night, and said, I am the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake. 25 And he builded an altar there, and called upon the name of the LORD, and pitched his tent there: and there Isaac's servants digged a well.

Here's, 1. The Tokens of God's Good-Will to Isaac, he blessed him and prospered him, and made all that he had to thrive under his hands. (1.) His Corn multiplied strangely, v. 12. He had no Land of his own, but took Land of the Philistines, and sowed it; and (be it observed for the Encouragement of poor Tenants, that occupy other People's Lands, and are honest and industrious) God blessed him with a great Increase. He reaped a Hundred Fold; and there seems to be an Emphasis laid upon the Time; 'twas that same Year when there was a Famine in the Land; while others scarce reaped at all, he reaped thus plentifully: See Isa. 65. 13. My Servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry. Psal. 37. 19. In the Days of Famine they shall be satisfied. (2.) His Cattle also increased, v. 14. And then, (3.) He had great Store of Servants, whom he employed and maintained. Note, As Goods are increased, they are increased that eat them, Eccl. 5. 11.

2. The Tokens of the Philistines Ill-Will to him: They envied him, v. 14. It is an Instance, 1. Of the Vanity of the World, that the more Men have of it, the more they are envied, and exposed to Censure and Injury, Who can stand before Envy? Prov. 27. 4. See Eccl. 4. 4. 2. Of the Corruption of Nature, for that's an ill Principle indeed which makes Men grieve at the Good of others; as if it must needs be ill with me because it is well with my Neighbour.

1. They had already shewed their Ill-Will to his Family by stopping up the Wells which his Father had digg'd, v. 15. This was spitefully done; because they had not Flocks of their own to water at these Wells, they would not leave them for the use of others; so absurd a thing is Malice. And 'twas perfidiously done, contrary to the Covenant of Friendship they had made with Abraham, Chap. 21. 31, 32. No Bonds will hold Ill-Nature.

2. They expelled him out of their Country, v. 16, 17. The King of Gerar began to look upon him with a jealous Eye. Isaac's House was like a Court, and his Riches and Retinue eclips'd Abimelech's, and therefore he must go further off; they were weary of his Neighbourhood because they saw the Lord blessed him, whereas for that reason they should the rather have courted his Stay, that they also might be blessed for his sake. Isaac doth not insist upon the Bargain he had made with them for the Lands he held, his Occupying and Improvement of them, nor doth he offer to contest with them by force, tho' he was become very great, but very peaceably departs thence further from the royal City, and perhaps to a Part of the Country less fruitful. Note, We should deny our selves both in our Rights and in our Conveniences, rather than quarrel: A Wife and Good Man will rather retire into Obscurity, like Isaac here into a Valley, than sit high to be the Butt of Envy and Ill-Will.

3. His Constancy and Continuance in his Business still. 1. He kept up his Husbandry, and continued Industrious to find Wells of Water, and fit them for his use, v. 18, &c. Tho' he was grown very Rich, yet he was as Sollicitous as ever about the State of his Flocks, and still looked well to his Herds; when Men grow Great, they must take heed of thinking themselves too big and too high for their Business. Tho' he was driven from

the Conveniences he had had, and could not follow his Husbandry with the same Ease and Advantage as before, yet he set himself to make the best of the Country he was come into, which 'tis every Man's Prudence to do. Observe,

(1.) He open'd the Wells that his Father had digg'd, v. 18: and out of Respect to his Father, called them by the same Names that he had given them. Note, In our Searches after Truth, that Fountain of living Water, 'tis good to make use of the Discoveries of former Ages, which have been clouded by the Corruptions of later Times; enquire for the old Way: the Wells which our Fathers digg'd, which the Adversaries of Truth have stopp'd up, Ask thine Elders, and they shall teach thee.

(2.) His Servants digg'd new Wells, v. 19. Note, Tho' we must use the Light of former Ages, it doth not therefore follow that we must rest in it, and make no Advances; we must still be building upon their Foundation, running to and fro, that Knowledge may be increas'd, Dan. 12. 4.

In digging his Wells, 1. He met with much opposition, v. 20, 21. Those that open the Fountains of Truth must expect Contradiction. The two first Wells they digg'd were call'd Esek and Sitnah, Contention and Hatred. See here, (1.) What's the nature of worldly Things; they are Make-bares, and Occasions of Strife. (2.) What is often the Lot even of the most quiet and peaceable Men in this World. Those that avoid striving, yet cannot avoid being striven with, Psal. 120. 7. In this Sense Jeremiah was a Man of Contention, Jer. 15. 10. and Christ himself, tho' he is the Prince of Peace. (3.) What a Mercy it is to have plenty of Water; to have it without striving for it! The more common this Mercy is, the more reason we have to be thankful for it.

2. At length he removed to a quiet Settlement, sticking to his peaceable Principles, rather to fly than fight, and unwilling to dwell with them that hated Peace, Psal. 120. 6. He prefer'd Quietness before Victory, v. 22: he digg'd a Well, and for that they strove not. Note, Those that follow Peace, sooner or later, shall find Peace: Those that study to be quiet, seldom fail of being so. How unlike was Isaac to his Brother Ishmael, who, right or wrong, would hold what he had against all the World, Chap. 16. 12. And which of these would we be found the Followers of? This Well they call'd Rehoboth, Enlargements, Room enough. In the two former Wells we may see what this Earth is, Straitness and Strife; Men cannot thrive for the Throng of their Neighbours: This Well shews us what Heaven is, its Enlargement and Peace; room enough there, for there are many Mansions.

2. He continued firm to his Religion; and kept up his Communion with God.

1. God graciously appeared to him, v. 24. When the Philistines expelled him, forced him to remove from Place to Place, and gave him continual Molestation, then God visited him, and gave him fresh Assurances of his Favour. Note, When Men are found False and Unkind, we may comfort our selves, that God is Faithful and Gracious, and his Time to shew himself so is when we are most disappointed in our Expectations from Men. When Isaac was come to Beer-sheba, v. 23, 'tis probable it troubled him to think of his unsettled Condition, and that he could not be suffer'd to stay long in a Place; and in the multitude of these Thoughts within him, that same Night that he came weary and uneasy to Beer-sheba, God brought him his Comforts to delight his Soul. Probably he was apprehensive that the Philistines would not let him rest there, Fear not, saith God to him, I am with thee, and will bless thee. Those may remove with Comfort that are sure of God's Presence with them where ever they go.

2. He was not wanting in his returns of Duty to God, for there he built an Altar, and called upon the Name of the Lord, v. 25. Note, 1. Where ever we go we must take our Religion along with us. Probably Isaac's Altars and his religious Worship gave Offence to the Philistines, and provoked them to be the more troublesome to him; yet he kept up his Duty, whatever Ill-Will he might be expos'd to by it. 2. The Comforts and Encouragements God gives us by his Word should excite and quicken us to all Instances of Devotion, by which God may be honoured, and our intercourse with Heaven maintained.

26 Then Abimelech went to him from Gerar, and Ahuzzath one of his friends, and Phicol the chief captain of his army. 27 And Isaac said unto them, Wherefore come ye to me, seeing ye hate me, and have sent me away from you? 28 And they said, We saw, certainly, that the LORD was with thee: and we said, Let there be now an oath betwixt us, even betwixt us and thee, and let us make a covenant with thee; 29 That thou wilt do us no hurt, as we have not touched thee, and as we have done un-

to thee nothing but good, and have sent thee away in peace: thou art now the blessed of the LORD. 30 And he made them a feast, and they did eat and drink. 31 And they rose up betimes in the morning, and sware one to another: and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace. 32 And it came to pass the same day, that Isaac's servants came, and told him concerning the well which they had digged, and said unto him, We have found water. 33 And he called it Shebah: therefore the name of this city is Beer-sheba unto this day.

We have here the Contest that had been between Isaac and the Philistines issuing in a happy Peace and Reconciliation.

1. *Abimelech* makes a friendly Visit to Isaac in token of the Respect he had for him, v. 26. *Note*, When a Man's Ways please the Lord, he makes even his Enemies to be at Peace with him, Prov. 16. 7. Kings Hearts are in his Hands, and when he pleaseth he can turn them to favour his People.

2. *Isaac* prudently and cautiously questions his Sincerity in this Visit, v. 27. *Note*, In settling Friendships and Correspondences there's need of the Wisdom of the Serpent as well as the Innocency of the Dove. Nor is it any Transgression of the Law of Meekness and Love, fairly to signify our Resentments of Injuries received, and to stand upon our Guard in dealing with those that have carried it unfairly.

3. *Abimelech* professeth his Sincerity in this Address to Isaac, and earnestly courts his Friendship, v. 28, 29. Some suggest that *Abimelech* pressed for this League with him, because he feared lest Isaac growing Rich, should some time or other revenge himself upon them for the Injuries he had received. However, he professes to do it from a Principle of Love rather. (1.) He makes the best of their Behaviour towards him: *Isaac* complained they had hated him, and sent him away; No, saith *Abimelech*, we sent thee away in Peace. They turned him off from the Land he held of them, but they suffer'd him to take away his Stock, and all his Effects with him. *Note*, The lessening of Injuries is necessary to the preserving of Friendship, for the aggravating of them exasperates and widens Breaches. The Diskindness done to us might have been worse. (2.) He acknowledges the Tokens of God's Favour to him, and makes that the Ground of their Desire to be in League with him: *The Lord is with thee, and thou art the Blessed of the Lord*, q. d. Be persuaded to overlook and pass by the Injuries offer'd thee, for God has abundantly made up to thee the Damage thou receivedst. *Note*, Those whom God blesses and favours have reason enough to forgive those that hate them, since the worst Enemy they have cannot do them any real Hurt. Or, for this Reason we desire thy Friendship, because God is with thee. *Note*, It is good to be in Covenant and Communion with those that are in Covenant and Communion with God, 1 John 1. 3. *Zech.* 8. 23.

(3.) He assures him that their present Address to him was the Result of mature Deliberation; *We said, let there be an Oath betwixt us*; whatever some of his peevish, envious Subjects might mean otherwise, he, and his prime Ministers of State, whom he had now brought with him, designed no other but a cordial Friendship. Perhaps *Abimelech* had received, by Tradition the Warning God gave to his Predecessor not to hurt *Abraham*, Chap. 20. 7. and that made him stand in such Awe of Isaac, who appeared to be as much the Favourite of Heaven as *Abraham* was.

4. *Isaac* entertains him and his Company, and enters into a League of Friendship with him, v. 30, 31. Here see how generous the good Man was. (1.) In giving; he made them a Feast, and bid them Welcome. (2.) In forgiving; he did not insist upon the Diskindnesses they had done him, but freely enter'd into a Covenant of Friendship with them, and bound himself never to do them any Injury. *Note*, Religion teaches us to be neighbourly, and as much as in us lies, to live peaceably with all Men.

5. Providence smiled upon what Isaac did; for, the same Day that he made this Covenant with *Abimelech*, his Servants brought him the Tidings of a Well of Water they had found, v. 32, 33. He had not insisted upon the Restitution of the Wells which the Philistines had unjustly taken from him, lest that should have broke off the Treaty, but sat down silent under the Injury; and, to recompense him for that, immediately he is enriched with a new Well, which, because it suited so well to the Occurrence of the Day, he called by an old Name, *Beer-sheba*, *The Well of the Oath*.

34 And Esau was forty years old when he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hit-

cite: 35 Which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah.

Here's, 1. *Esau's* foolish Marriage; foolish, some think, in marrying two Wives together, for which, perhaps, he is called a Fornicator, Heb. 12. 16. Or rather in marrying *Canaanites*, who were Strangers to the Blessing of *Abraham*, and subject to the Curse of *Noah*, for which he is called *Prophane*; for hereby he intimated, that he neither desired the Blessing, nor dreaded the Curse of God.

2. The Grief and Trouble it created to his tender Parents. (1.) It grieved them that he married without asking, or at least without taking their Advice and Consent: See whose Steps those Children tread in, who either contemn or contradict their Parents in disposing of themselves. (2.) It grieved them that he married to those who had no Religion among them, for Isaac knew what was his Father's Care and Mind concerning him, that he should by no means marry a *Canaanite*. (3.) It should seem the Wives he married were provoking in their Carriage towards Isaac and Rebekah: Those Children have little reason to expect the Blessing of God, who do that which is a Grief of Mind to their good Parents.

C H A P. XXVII.

In this Chapter we return to the Typical Story of the Struggle between Esau and Jacob. Esau had prophaneely sold the Birth-right to Jacob, but Esau hopes he shall be never the Poorer, nor Jacob the Richer for that Bargain, while he preserves his interest in his Father's Affections, and so secures the Blessing: Here therefore we find how he was justly punished for his Contempt of the Birth-right, which he foolishly deprived himself of; with the Loss of the Blessing, which Jacob fraudulently deprives him of. Thus this Story is explained, Heb. 12. 16, 17. Because he sold the Birth-right, when he would have inherited the Blessing he was rejected. For they that make light of the Name and Profession of Religion, and throw away that for a Trifle, thereby forfeit the Powers and Privileges of it. We have here, 1. Isaac's Purpose to entail the Blessing upon Esau, v. 1—4. 2. Rebekah's Plot to procure it for Jacob, v. 6—17. 3. Jacob's successful Management of the Plot, and his obtaining of the Blessing, v. 18—29. 4. Esau's Repentment of this. In which, 1. His great Importunity with his Father to obtain a Blessing, v. 30—40. 2. His great Enmity to his Brother for defrauding him of the first Blessing, v. 41—46.

AND it came to pass, that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see, he called Esau his eldest son, and said unto him, My son: And he said unto him, Behold, here am I. 2 And he said, Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death. 3 Now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me some venison; 4 And make me savoury meat, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I dye. 5 And Rebekah heard when Isaac spake to Esau his son: and Esau went to the field to hunt for venison, and to bring it.

Here's, 1. *Isaac's* Design to make his Will, and to declare Esau his Heir: The Promise of the Messiah, and the Land of *Canaan*, was a great Trust first committed to *Abraham*, inclusive and typical of spiritual and eternal Blessings; this, by Divine Direction, he transmitted to Isaac; Isaac, being now Old, and either not knowing, or not Understanding, or not duly considering the Divine Oracle concerning his two Sons, that the Elder should serve the Younger, resolves to entail all the Honour and Power that was wrapt up in the Promise upon Esau, his eldest Son. In this he was governed more by Natural Affection, and the common Method of Settlements, than he ought to have been, if he knew (as 'tis probable he did) the Inimities God had given of his Mind in this Matter. *Note*, We are very apt to take our Measures rather from our own Reason than from Divine Revelation, and thereby oft miss our Way: We think the Wise and Learned, the Mighty and Noble should inherit the Promise, but God sees not as Man sees: See 1 Sam. 16. 6, 7.

2. The Directions he gave to Esau pursuant to this Design: He calls him to him, v. 1. for Esau, tho married, was not yet removed; and though he had greatly grieved his Parents by his Marriage, yet they had not expelled him, but it seems were pretty well reconciled to him, and made the best of it. *Note*, Parents that are justly offended at their Children, yet must not be implacable towards them. He

He (1.) tells him upon what Considerations he resolved to do this now, *v. 2. I am old*, and therefore must dye shortly; yet *I know not the Day of my Death*; nor when I must dye; I will therefore do that at this time which must be done some time. *Note*, 1. Old People should be minded by the growing Infirmities of Age to do quickly, and with all the little Might they have, what their Hand finds to do: See *Jos. 13. 1. 2.* The consideration of the uncertainty of the Time of our Departure out of the World (which God has wisely kept us in the dark about) should quicken us to do the Work of the Day in its Day: The Heart and House should both be set and kept in Order, because *at such an Hour as we think not, the Son of Man comes*; because we know not the Day of our Death, we are concerned to mind the Business of Life.

(2.) He bids him to get things ready for the Solemnity of executing his last Will and Testament, by which he designed to make him his Heir, *v. 3, 4. Esau must go a Hunting and bring some Venison*, which his Father will eat of, and then bless him. In this he designed not so much the Refreshment of his own Spirits, that he might give the Blessing in a lively manner, as 'tis commonly taken; but rather the receiving a fresh Instance of his Son's filial Duty and Affection to him, before he bestowed this Favour upon him. Perhaps *Esau*, since he was married, had brought his Venison to his Wives, and seldom to his Father, as formerly, *Chap. 25. 28.* and therefore *Isaac*, before he would bless him, would have him shew this Piece of Respect to him. *Note*, 'Tis fit if the less be blessed of the greater, that the greater should be served and honoured by the less. Observe, he saith, *that my Soul may bless thee before I dye.* *Note*, 1. Prayer is the Work of the Soul, and not of the Lips only; as the Soul must be employed in Blessing God, *Pf. 103. 1.* so it must be in Blessing our selves and others. The Blessing will not come to the Heart if it do not come from the Heart. 2. The Work of Life must be done before we dye, for it cannot be done after, *Ecl. 9. 10.* and it is very desirable when we come to dye to have nothing else to do but to dye. *Isaac* lived above forty Years after this; let none therefore think that they shall dye the sooner for making their Wills, and getting ready for Death.

6 And Rebekah spake unto Jacob her son, saying, Behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother, saying, 7 Bring me venison, and make me savoury meat, that I may eat, and bless thee before the LORD before my death. 8 Now therefore, my son, obey my voice, according to that which I command thee. 9 Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two good kids of the goats; and I will make them savoury meat for thy father, such as he loveth. 10 And thou shalt bring it to thy father, that he may eat, and that he may bless thee before his death. 11 And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man. 12 My father peradventure will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver; and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing. 13 And his mother said unto him, Upon me be thy curse, my son: only obey my voice, and go fetch me them. 14 And he went, and fetched, and brought them to his mother: and his mother made savoury meat, such as his father loved. 15 And Rebekah took goodly raiment of her eldest son Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them upon Jacob her younger son. 16 And she put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands, and upon the smooth of his neck. 17 And she gave the savoury meat, and the bread which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob.

Rebekah is here contriving to procure the Blessing for *Jacob*, which was designed for *Esau*. And here, (1.) The End was good, for she was directed in this Intention by the Oracle of God, which in dispensing her Affections she had been governed by; God had said it should be so, that *the Elder should serve the Younger*, and therefore *Rebekah* resolves it shall be so, and cannot bear to see her Husband designing to thwart the Oracle of God. But, (2.) The Means were Bad, and no way Justifiable. If it were not a Wrong to *Esau* to deprive him of the Blessing, he himself having forfeited it by selling the Birth-right; yet it was a Wrong to *Isaac*, taking advantage of his Infirmary to impose upon him: 'Twas a Wrong to *Jacob*, whom she taught to

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deceive, by putting a *Lye* into his Mouth, or at least by putting one into his Right-Hand. It would likewise expose him to endless Scruples about the Blessing, if he should obtain it thus fraudulently, whether it would stand him or his in any stead, especially if his Father should revoke it upon the discovery of the Cheat, and plead, as he might, that it was null'd by the Error of his Person. And which he himself was aware of the Danger of, (*v. 12.*) if he should miss of the Blessing, as he might probably have done, he would bring upon himself his Father's Curse, which he dreaded above any thing, besides that he laid himself open to that Divine Curse which is pronounced upon him that causeth the Blind to wander out of the Way, *Deut. 27. 18.* If *Rebekah*, when she heard *Isaac* promise the Blessing to *Esau* at his return from Hunting, had gone to him, and with Humility and Seriousness put him in remembrance of that which God had said concerning their Sons; if she had further shew'd him how *Esau* had forfeited the Blessing, both by selling his Birth-right; and by marrying of strange Wives, 'tis probable *Isaac* would have been prevail'd with knowingly and wittingly to have conferr'd the Blessing upon *Jacob*, and needed not thus to have been cheated into it. This had been Honourable and Laudable, and would have look'd well in the History; but God left her to her self to take this indirect Course, that he might have the Glory of bringing Good out of Evil, and of serving his own Purposes by the Sins and Follies of Men; and that we might have the Satisfaction of God's Government of the World according to his Will, to his own Praise; tho there is so much Wickedness and Deceit in it: See *Job 12. 16.* With him is Strength and Wisdom, the Deceived and the Deceiver are his: *Isaac* had lost the Sense of Seeing, which in this Case could not have been imposed upon, so admirably well doth Providence order the difference of Features, that no two Faces are exactly alike; Conversation and Commerce could scarce be maintained, if there were not such a Variety: Therefore she endeavours to deceive, (1.) His Sense of Tasting, by dressing some choice Pieces of Kid, seasoning it and serving it up so as to make him believe it was Venison; which was no hard matter to do. See the Folly of those that are Nice and Curious in their Appetites, and take a Pride in Humouring it. 'Tis easy to impose upon them with that which they pretend to despise and dislike, so little perhaps is its difference from that to which they give a mighty Preference. *Solomon* tells us, that *Dainties are deceitful Meat*, for more Ways than one 'tis possible for us to be deceived by them, *Prov. 23. 3.* (2.) His Sense of Feeling and Smelling. She put *Esau's* Clothes upon *Jacob*, his best Clothes, which it might be supposed *Esau* would put on, in token of Joy, and of Respect to his Father when he was to receive the Blessing, those *Isaac* knew by the Stuff, Shape, and Smell of, to be *Esau's*. If we would obtain a Blessing from our heavenly Father, we must come for it in the Garments of our Elder-Brother, clothed with his Righteousness, who is the First-born among many Brethren. Lest the smoothness and softness of *Jacob's* Hands and Neck should betray him, she cover'd them, and probably part of his Face, with the Skins of the Kids that were newly killed, *v. 16.* *Esau* was rough indeed, when nothing less than these would serve to make *Jacob* like him. Those that affect to seem rough and rugged in their Carriage, put the Beast upon the Man, and really shame themselves by thus disguising themselves. And (lastly) 'twas a very rash Word which *Rebekah* spake, when *Jacob* objected the Danger of a Curse, upon me be the Curse, my Son, *v. 13.* Christ indeed, who is mighty to save, because mighty to bear, hath said, upon me be the Curse, only obey my Voice; he has born the Burden of the Curse, the Curse of the Law for all those that will take upon them the Yoke of the Command, the Command of the Gospel. But 'tis too daring for any Creature to say, Upon me be the Curse, unless it be that Curse causeless, which we are sure shall not come, *Prov. 26. 2.*

18 And he came unto his father, and said, My father: And he said, Here am I; who art thou, my son? 19 And Jacob said unto his father, I am Esau thy first-born: I have done according as thou badest me: arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me. 20 And Isaac said unto his son, How is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son? And he said, Because the LORD thy God brought it to me. 21 And Isaac said unto Jacob, Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou be my very son Esau, or not. 22 And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father, and he felt him; and he said, The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau. 23 And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands: So he blessed him. 24 And he said, Art thou my very son Esau? And he said, I am. 25 And he said, Bring

bring it near to me, and I will eat of my sons venison, that my soul may bless thee. And he brought it near to him, and he did eat: and he brought him wine, and he drank. 26 And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son. 27 And he came near, and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field, which the LORD hath blessed. 28 Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine. 29 Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee; be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mothers sons bow down to thee: Cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blest thee.

Observe here, 1. The Art and Assurance with which Jacob managed this Intrigue; Who would have thought that this plain Man could have plaid his Part so well in a Design of this Nature? His Mother having put him in the way of it, and encouraged him in it, he dexterously applies himself to those Methods which he had never accustom'd himself to, but had always conceived an Abhorrence of. Note, Lying is soon learned. The Psalmist speaks of those, who, as soon as they be born, speak Lies, Psal. 58. 3. Jer. 9. 5. I wonder how honest Jacob could so readily turn his Tongue to say, v. 19. I am Esau thy first-born; nor do I see how the Endeavour of some to bring him off with that Equivocation, I am made thy first-born, viz. by Purchase, will do him any Service; for when his Father asked him, v. 24. Art thou my very Son Esau? he said, I am. How could he say, I have done as thou biddest me, when he had received no Command from his Father, but was doing as his Mother bid him? How could he say, eat of my Venison, when he knew it came not from the Field, but from the Fold? But especially I wonder how he could have the Fore-head to father it upon GOD, and to use his Name in the Cheat, v. 20. The Lord thy God brought it to me. Is this Jacob? Is this Israel indeed without Guile? 'Tis certainly written not for our Imitation, but our Admonition; Let him that thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall. Good Men have sometimes failed in the Exercise of those Graces which they have been most eminent for.

2. The Success of this Management: Jacob, with some Difficulty, gained his Point, and got the Blessing.

(1.) Isaac was at first dissatisfied, and had discovered the Fraud, if he could have trusted his own Ears, for the Voice was Jacob's Voice, v. 22. Providence has order'd a strange Variety of Voices as well as Faces, which is also of use to prevent our being imposed upon; and the Voice is a thing not easily disguised or counterfeited. This may be alluded to, to illustrate the Character of an Hypocrite; his Voice is Jacob's Voice, but his Hands are Esau's: He speaks the Language of a Saint, but doth the Works of a Sinner; but the Judgment will be (as here) by the Hands.

(2.) At length he yielded to the Power of the Cheat, because the Hands were hairy, v. 23. not considering how easy it was to counterfeit that; and now Jacob carries it on cleverly enough; sets his Venison before his Father; and waits at Table very officiously, till Dinner is done, and the Blessing comes to be pronounced in the Close of this solemn Feast. That which excuseth both Rebekah and Jacob in this Fraud is, That it was not so much to hasten the fulfilling, as to prevent the thwarting of the Oracle of GOD: The Blessing was just going to be put upon the wrong Head, and it was time to bestir themselves.

Now let us see how Isaac gave Jacob his Blessing.

1. He kissed him, v. 26. in token of a particular Affection to him. Those that are blessed of God, are kissed with the Kisses of his Mouth, and they do by Love and Loyalty kiss the Son, Psal. 2: 12.

2. He praised him, v. 27. Upon occasion of the sweet Smell of his Garments he said, See, the Smell of my Son is as the Smell of a Field which the Lord hath blessed, i. e. like that of the most fragrant Flowers and Spices. It appeared that GOD had blessed him, and therefore Isaac will bless him; compare v. 28.

3. He prayed for him, and therein prophesied concerning him. 'Tis Parents Duty to pray for their Children, and to bless them in the Name of the LORD, and thus as well as by their Baptism to do what they can to preserve and perpetuate the Entail of the Covenant in their Families. But this was an extraordinary Blessing; and Providence so order'd it, that Isaac should bestow it upon Jacob ignorantly, and by mistake, that it might appear he was beholden to God for it, and not to Isaac. Three things Jacob is here blessed with. (1.) Plenty, v. 28. Heaven and Earth concurring to make him Rich. (2.) Power, v. 29. particularly Dominion over his Brethren, viz. Esau and his Poste-

ry. (3.) Prevalency with GOD, and a great Interest in Heaven, Cursed be every one that curseth thee. Let God be a Friend to all thy Friends, and an Enemy to all thine Enemies. Now certainly more is comprized in this Blessing than appears *prima facie*; it must amount to an Entail of the Promise of the Messiah, and the Church: That was in the Patriarchal Dialect the Blessing; something Spiritual doubtless is included in it.

(1.) That from him should come the Messiah, that should have a Sovereign Dominion on Earth. 'Twas that Top-Branch of his Family whom People should serve, and Nations bow down to: See Num. 24. 19. Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have Dominion, the Star and Sceptre, v. 17. Jacob's Dominion over Esau was to be only typical of this, Gen. 49. 10.

(2.) That from him should come the Church, that should be particularly owned and favoured by Heaven. 'Twas part of the Blessing of Abraham when he was first called to be the Father of the Faithful, Gen. 12. 3. I will bless them that bless thee; therefore when Isaac afterwards confirmed the Blessing to Jacob, he called it the Blessing of Abraham, Gen. 28. 4. Balaam explains this too, Num. 24. 9. Note, It is the best and most desirable Blessing to stand in relation to Christ and his Church, and to be interested in Christ's Power, and the Church's Favours.

30 And it came to pass, as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob was yet scarce gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting. 31 And he also had made savoury meat, and brought it unto his father; and said unto his father, Let my father arise, and eat of his sons venison, that thy soul may bless me. 32 And Isaac his father said unto him, Who art thou? And he said, I am thy son, thy first-born Esau. 33 And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who, where is he that hath taken venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him? yea, and he shall be blessed. 34 And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father. 35 And he said, Thy brother came with subtilty, and he hath taken away thy blessing. 36 And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birth-right; and behold, now he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me? 37 And Isaac answered and said unto Esau, Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants; and with corn and wine have I sustained him: and what shall I do now unto thee, my son? 38 And Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, even me also, O my father. And Esau lift up his voice, and wept. 39 And Isaac his father answered, and said unto him, Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above. 40 And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother: and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck.

Here's, 1. The Covenant-Blessing denied to Esau. Now he that had made so light of the Birth-right, would have inherited the Blessing, but he was rejected, and found no place of Repentance, in his Father, tho he sought it carefully with Tears, Heb. 12. 17. Observe, (1.) How carefully he sought it. He prepar'd the savoury Meat, as his Father had directed him, and then begg'd the Blessing which his Father had encourag'd him to expect, v. 31. When he understood that Jacob had got it surreptitiously, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter Cry, v. 34. No Man could have laid the Disappointment more to heart than he did; he made his Father's Tent to ring of his Grief; and again, v. 38. lift up his Voice and wept. Note, The Day is coming, when those that now make light of the Blessings of the Covenant, and sell their Title to them for a thing of nought, will, in vain, be import-

importunate for them. Those that will not so much as ask and seek now, will knock shortly, and cry, Lord, Lord. Slighters of Christ will then be humble Suitors to him. (2.) How he was rejected. Isaac, when first he was aware how he had been imposed upon, trembled exceedingly, v. 33. Those that follow the Choice of their own Affections, rather than the Dictates of the Divine Will, involve themselves in such Perplexities as these. But he soon recovers himself, and ratifies the Blessing he had given to Jacob, *I have blessed him, and he shall be blessed*; he might, upon very good Grounds, have recalled it, but now at last he is sensible he was in an Error when he design'd it for Esau. Either himself recollecting the Divine Oracle, or rather having found himself more than ordinarily filled with the Holy Ghost when he gave the Blessing to Jacob, he perceived that God did as it were say Amen to it.

Now, (1.) Jacob was hereby confirmed in his Possession of the Blessing, and abundantly satisfied in the Validity of it, tho he obtained it fraudulently; and had reason to hope that God graciously over-looked and pardoned his Mismanagement.

(2.) Isaac hereby acquiesced in the Will of God, though it contradicted his own Apprehension and Affection: he had a mind to give Esau the Blessing, but when he perceived the Will of God was otherwise, he submitted; and this he did by Faith, Heb. 11. 20. as Abraham before him when he had solicited for Ishmael. May not God do what he will with his own?

(3.) Esau hereby was cut off from the expectation of that special Blessing, which he thought to have preserved to himself when he sold his Birth-right: And we by this Instance are taught, 1. That it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth Mercy, Rom. 9. 16. He seems to allude to this Story. Esau had a good Will to the Blessing, and run for it; but God that shewed Mercy designed it for Jacob, that the Purpose of God according to Election might stand, v. 11. The Jews, like Esau, hunted after the Law of Righteousness, v. 31. yet missed of the Blessing of Righteousness, because they sought it by the Works of the Law, v. 32. while the Gentiles, who, like Jacob, sought it by Faith in the Oracle of God, obtained it by Force, with that Violence which the Kingdom of Heaven suffers: See Mat. 11. 12. 2. That those who undervalue their Spiritual Birth-right, and can afford to sell it for a morsel of Meat, forfeit Spiritual Blessings, and 'tis just with God to deny them those Favours they were careless of. Those that will part with their Wisdom and Grace, with their Faith and a good Conscience for the Honours, Wealth, or Pleasures of this World, however they pretend a Zeal for the Blessing, have already judged themselves unworthy of it, and so shall their Doom be. (3.) Those who lift up Hands in Wrath, lift them up in vain. Esau, instead of repenting of his own Folly, reproached his Brother, unjustly charged him with taking away the Birth-right, which he had fairly sold to him, v. 36. and conceived Malice against him for what he had now done, v. 41. Those are not likely to speed in Prayer, who turn those Resentments upon their Brethren which they should turn upon themselves; and lay the Blame of their Miscarriages upon others, when they should take Shame to themselves. 4. Those who seek not till it is too late, will be rejected. This was the Ruin of Esau, he did not come in time: As there is an accepted Time, a Time when God will be found, so there is a Time when he will not answer those that call upon him, because they slip their Season: See Prov. 1. 28. The Time of God's Patience and our Probation will not last always; the Day of Grace will come to an end, and the Door be shut: Then many that now despise the Blessing will seek it carefully, for then they will know how to value it, and will see themselves undone, for ever undone without it, but to no purpose, Luke 13. 25, 26, 27. O that we would therefore in this our Day know the things that belong to our Peace!

2. Here's a common Blessing bestowed upon Esau.

1. This he desired: *Bless me also*, v. 34. *Hast thou not reserved a Blessing for me?* v. 36. Note, (1.) The worst of Men know how to wish well to themselves, and even those who prophaneely sell their Birth-right, seem piously to desire the Blessing: Faint Desires of Happiness, without a right Choice of the End, and a right Use of the Means, deceive many into their own Ruin: Multitudes go to Hell with their Mouths full of good Wishes. The Desire of the Slothful and Unbelieving kills them. Many will seek to enter in as Esau, who shall not be able because they do not strive, Luke 13. 24. (2.) It is the Folly of the most of Men, that they are willing to take up with any Good, Psal. 4. 6. as Esau here, who desired but a second-rate Blessing, a Blessing separated from the Birth-right. Prophane Hearts think any Blessing as good as that from God's Oracle: *Hast thou but one?* q. d. I'll take up with any: Though I have not the Blessing of the Church, yet let me have some Blessing.

2. This he had, and let him make his best of it, v. 39, 40.

1. It was a good Thing, and better than he deserved. 'Twas promised him, 1. That he should have a competent Livelihood; the Fattest of the Earth, and the Dew of Heaven. Note, Those that come short of the Blessings of the Covenant, may yet have a

very good Share of outward Blessings. God gives good Ground and good Weather to many that reject his Covenant, and have no Part or Lot in it. 2. That by degrees he should recover his Liberty; if Jacob must rule, (v. 29.) Esau must serve: But he has this to comfort him, he shall live by his Sword; he shall serve, but he shall not starve; and, at length, after much Picquering, he shall break the Yoke of Bondage, and wear the Marks of Freedom. This was fulfilled, 2 Kings 8. 20, 22. when the Edomites revolted.

2. Yet it was far short of Jacob's Blessing, for him God had reserved some better thing. (1.) In Jacob's Blessing, the Dew of Heaven is put first, as that which he most valued and desired, and depended upon: In Esau's, the Fattest of the Earth is put first, for that was it which he had the first and principal Regard to. (2.) Esau hath these, but Jacob hath them from God's Hand. God gives thee the Dew of Heaven, v. 28. 'Twas enough to Esau to have the Possession, but Jacob desired it by Promise, and to have it from Covenant-Love. (3.) Jacob shall have Dominion over his Brethren, for the Israelites oft ruled over the Edomites: Esau shall have Dominion, i. e. he shall gain some Power and Interest, but shall never have Dominion over his Brother; we never find that the Jews were sold into the Hands of the Edomites, or that they oppressed them. But the great difference is, that there is nothing in Esau's Blessing that points at Christ, nothing that brings him or his into the Church and Covenant of God; and without that, the Fattest of the Earth, and the Plunder of the Field will stand him in little stead. Thus Isaac by Faith blessed them both according as their Lot should be. Some observe that Jacob was blessed with a Kiss, v. 27. so was not Esau.

41 And Esau hated Jacob, because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand, then will I slay my brother Jacob. 42 And these words of Esau her elder son were told to Rebekah: and she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said unto him, Behold, thy brother Esau, as touching thee, doth comfort himself, purposing to kill thee. 43 Now therefore my son, obey my voice; and arise, flee thou to Laban my brother, to Haran. 44 And tarry with him a few days, until thy brothers fury turn away; 45 Until thy brothers anger turn away from thee, and he forget that which thou hast done to him: then I will send, and fetch thee from thence. Why should I be deprived also of you both in one day? 46 And Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life, because of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which are of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?

Here's, 1. The Malice Esau bore to Jacob upon the Account of the Blessing which he had obtained, v. 41. Thus he went in the Way of Cain, who therefore slew his Brother, because he had gained that Acceptance with God which he had render'd himself unworthy of. Esau's Hatred of Jacob was, (1.) A causeless Hatred: he hated him for no other reason, but because his Father blessed him, and God loved him. Note, The Happiness of Saints is the Envy of Sinners. Whom Heaven blesses, Hell curseth. (2.) 'Twas a cruel hatred; nothing less would satisfy him than to slay his Brother. 'Tis the Blood of the Saints that Persecutors thirst after. I will slay my Brother; how could he say that Word without horror? Call him Brother, and yet vow his Death. Note, The Rage of Persecutors will not be tied up by any Bonds, no not the strongest, and most sacred. (3.) 'Twas a politic Hatred; he expected his Father would be dead quickly, and then Titles must be tried, and Interest contested between the Brothers, which would give him a fair Opportunity for Revenge. He thinks it not enough to live by his Sword himself, v. 40. unless his Brother die by it. He is loth to grieve his Father while he lives, and therefore puts off the intended Murder till his Death, not caring how much he then grieved his surviving Mother. Note, (1.) Those are ill Children to whom their good Parents are a Burden, and who upon any Account long for the Days of Mourning for them. (2.) Bad Men are long held in by external Restraints from doing the Mischief they would do, and so their wicked Purposes come to nought. (3.) Those who think to defeat God's Purposes, will undoubtedly be disappointed themselves. Esau aimed to prevent Jacob or his Seed from having the Dominion, by taking a way

way his Life before he was married, but who can *disannul* what God has spoken? Men may fret at God's Counsels, but cannot change them.

2. The Method *Rebekah* took to prevent the Mischief.

1. She gave *Jacob* Warning of his Danger, and advised him to withdraw for a while, and shift for his own Safety. She tells him what she heard of *Esau's* Design, that he comforted himself with the Hopes of an Opportunity to kill his Brother, v. 42. Would one think that such a bloody barbarous Thought as this could be a *Comfort* to a Man? If *Esau* could have kept his Design to himself, his Mother had not suspected it: But Men's Impudence in Sin is oft their Infatuation; and they cannot accomplish their Wickedness, because their Rage is too violent to be concealed, and a Bird of the Air carries the Voice. Observe here, (1.) What *Rebekah* feared; lest she should be deprived of them both in one Day, v. 45. not only of the Murdered, but of the Murderer, who either by the Magistrate, or by the immediate Hand of God, would be sacrificed to Justice; which she herself must acquiesce in, and not obstruct: Or, if not so, yet from thence-forward she would be deprived of all Joy and Comfort in him. Those that are *lost to Virtue*, are in a manner *lost to all their Friends*. With what Pleasure can a Child be looked upon, that can be looked upon as no other but a Child of the Devil? (2.) What *Rebekah* hoped; That if *Jacob* for a while kept out of Sight, the Affront which his Brother resented so heinously, would by degrees go out of Mind. The Strength of Passions is weakened and taken off by the Distances both of Time and Place. She promised herself that his Brother's Anger would turn away. Note, *Yielding pacifies great Offences*; and even those that have a good Cause, and God on their side, yet must use that with other prudent Expedients for their own Preservation.

2. She possessed *Isaac* with an Apprehension of the Necessity of *Jacob's* going among her Relations upon another Account, which was to get him a Wife, v. 46. She would not tell him of *Esau's* wicked Design against the Life of *Jacob*, lest it should trouble him, but prudently took another way to gain her Point. *Isaac* was as uneasy as she was at *Esau's* being unequally yoked with *Hittites*; and therefore, with a very good Colour of Reason, she moves to have *Jacob* married to one that was better principled. Note, One Miscarriage should serve as a Warning to prevent another: Those are careless indeed that stumble twice at the same Stone: Yet *Rebekah* seems to have expressed herself somewhat too warmly in the Matter when she said, *What good will my Life do me, if Jacob marry a Canaanite?* For thanks be to God all our Comfort is not lodged in one Hand; we may do the Work of Life, and enjoy the Comforts of Life, tho every thing do not fall out to our Mind, and tho our Relations be not in all Respects agreeable to us. Perhaps *Rebekah* spoke with this Concern, because she saw it necessary for the quickening of *Isaac* to give speedy Orders in this Matter. Observe, Tho *Jacob* was himself very towardsly, and well fixed in his Religion, yet he has need to be put out of the way of Temptation. Even he was in Danger both of following the ill Example of his Brother, and of being drawn into a Snare by it. We must not presume too far upon the Wisdom and Resolution, no not of those Children that are most hopeful and promising, but Care must be taken to keep them out of Harms way.

CHAP. XXVIII.

We have here, (1.) *Jacob's* parting with his Parents to go to *Padan-aram*: The Charge his Father gave him, v. 1, 2. The Blessing he sent him away with, v. 3, 4. His Obedience to the Orders given him, v. 5—10. And the Influence this had upon *Esau*, v. 6. (2.) *Jacob's* meeting with God, and his Communion with him by the way. And there, 1. His Vision of the Ladder, v. 11, 12. 2. The gracious Promises God made him, v. 13, 14, 15. 3. The Impression this made upon him, v. 16—19. 4. The Vow he made to God upon this Occasion, v. 20, 21, 22.

AND *Isaac* called *Jacob*, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of *Canaan*. 2 Arise, go to *Padan-aram*, to the house of *Bethuel* thy mothers father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of *Laban* thy mothers brother. 3 And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people: 4 And give thee the blessing of *Abraham*, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto *Abraham*. 5 And *Isaac* sent away *Jacob*, and he went to *Padan-aram*, unto *Laban* son of *Bethuel* the Syrian, the brother of *Rebekah*, *Jacob's* and *Esau's* mother.

Jacob had no sooner obtained the Blessing, but immediately he was forced to run his Country; and as if it were not enough that he was a Stranger and a Sojourner there, he must go to be more so, and no better than an Exile in another Country. Now *Jacob* fled into *Syria*, Hof. 12. 13. He was blest with Plenty of Corn and Wine, and yet he goes away poor; was blest with Government, and yet goes out to Service, a hard Service. This was, 1. Perhaps to correct him for his dealing fraudulently with his Father. The Blessing shall be confirmed to him, and yet he shall smart for the indirect Course he takes to obtain it. While there is such an Allay as there is of Sin in our Duties, we must expect an Allay of Trouble in our Comforts. However, 2. It was to teach us, That they who inherit the Blessing must expect Persecution. Those that have Peace in Christ, in the World shall have Tribulation, John 16. 33. We must neither think it strange, being told of it before, nor think it hard, being assured of a Recompence for it hereafter. We may observe likewise, That God's Providences often seem to contradict his Promises, and to go cross to them: And yet when the Mystery of God shall be finished, we shall see that all was for the best, and that cross Providences did but render the Promises and the Accomplishment of 'em the more illustrious.

Now *Jacob* is here dismissed by his Father,

1. With a solemn Charge, v. 1, 2. He blessed him, and charged him. Note, Those that have the Blessing must keep the Charge annexed to it, and not think to separate what God has joined. The Charge is like that, 2 Cor. 6. 14. Be not unequally yoked with Unbelievers: And all that inherit the Promises of the Remission of Sins, and the Gift of the Holy Ghost, must keep this Charge which follows those Promises, Save your selves from the untoward Generation, Acts 2. 38, 39, 40. Those that are entitled to peculiar Favours, must be a peculiar People. If *Jacob* be an Heir of Promise, he must not take a Wife of the Daughters of *Canaan*: Those that profess Religion should not marry with those that are Irreligious.

2. With a solemn Blessing, v. 3, 4. He had before blessed him unwittingly, now he doth it designedly, for the greater Encouragement of *Jacob* in that melancholy Condition to which he was now removing. This Blessing is more express and full than the former; tis an Entail of the Blessing of *Abraham*, that Blessing which was poured on the Head of *Abraham* like the anointing Oil, thence to run down to his chosen Seed, as the Skirts of his Garments. 'Tis a Gospel Blessing, the Blessing of Church Privileges, that's the Blessing of *Abraham* which comes upon the Gentiles thro Faith, Gal. 3. 14. 'Tis a Blessing from God Almighty, by which Name God appeared to the Patriarchs, Exod. 6. 3. Those are blessed indeed whom God Almighty blesseth, for he commands and effects the Blessing. Two great Promises *Abraham* was blessed with, and *Isaac* here entails them both upon *Jacob*.

(1.) The Promise of Heirs, v. 3. God make thee fruitful, and multiply thee. (1.) Thro his Loins that People should descend from *Abraham*, which should be numerous as the Stars of Heaven, and the Sand of the Sea, and which should increase more than the rest of the Nations, so as to be an Assembly of People, as the Margin reads it. And never was such a Multitude of People so oft gathered into one Assembly as the Tribes of *Israel* were in the Wilderness, and afterwards. (2.) Thro his Loins should descend from *Abraham* that Person in whom all the Families of the Earth should be blessed, and to whom the gathering of the People should be. *Jacob* was in him a Multitude of People indeed, for all things in Heaven and Earth are united in Christ, Eph. 1. 10. all center in him; that Corn of Wheat which falling to the Ground produced much Fruit, John 2. 24.

(2.) The Promise of an Inheritance for those Heirs, v. 4. that thou mayest inherit the Land of thy Sojournings. *Canaan* was hereby entailed upon the Seed of *Jacob*, exclusive of the Seed of *Esau*. *Isaac* was now sending *Jacob* away into a distant Country, to settle there for some time; and lest this should look like disinheriting him, he here confirms the Settlement of it upon him, that he might be assured that the Discontinuance of his Possession should be no Defeatance of his Right. Observe, He is here told, that he should inherit the Land wherein he Sojourned. Those that are Sojourners now, shall be Heirs for ever: And even now those do most inherit the Earth (tho they do not inherit most of it) that are most as Strangers in it: Those have the best Enjoyment of present Things, that sit most loose to them. This Promise looks as high as Heaven, of which *Canaan* was a Type. That was the better Country which *Jacob* with other the Patriarchs had in his Eye, when he confessed himself a Stranger and Pilgrim on the Earth, Heb. 11. 16.

Jacob having taken leave of his Father, was hastened away with all speed, lest his Brother should find an Opportunity to do him a Mischief; and away he went to *Padan-aram*, v. 5. How unlike was his taking a Wife from thence to his Father's? *Isaac* had Servants and Camels sent to fetch his, *Jacob* must go himself, go alone, and go afoot to fetch his; and go away in a Fright from his Father's House, not knowing when he might return. Note, If God in his Providence disable us, we must be content, tho we cannot keep up the State and Grandeur of our Ancestors.

We should be more in care to maintain their Piety than to maintain their Port, and to be as Good as they, than to be as Great. *Rebekah* is here called *Jacob's and Esau's Mother*: *Jacob* is named first, not only because he had always been his Mother's Darling, but because he was now made his Father's Heir, and *Esau* was postpond'd. *Note*, The time will come when Piety will have Precedency, whatever it has now.

6 When *Esau* saw that *Isaac* had blessed *Jacob*, and sent him away to *Padan-aram*, to take him a wife from thence; and that as he blessed him, he gave him a charge, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of *Canaan*: 7 And that *Jacob* obeyed his father, and his mother, and was gone to *Padan-aram*: 8 And *Esau* seeing that the daughters of *Canaan* pleased not *Isaac* his father: 9 Then went *Esau* unto *Ishmael*, and took unto the wives which he had, *Mahalath* the daughter of *Ishmael*, *Abraham's* son, the sister of *Nebajoth*, to be his wife.

This Passage concerning *Esau* comes in in the midst of *Jacob's* Story; either, 1. To shew the Influence of a good Example. *Esau*, tho the bigger Man, now begins to think *Jacob* the better Man, and disdains not to take him for his Pattern in this particular Instance of marrying with a Daughter of *Abraham*. The Elder Children should give to the Younger an Example of Tractableness and Obedience, 'tis bad if they do not; but it mends the Matter pretty well if they take the Example of it from them, as *Esau* here did from *Jacob*. Or, 2. To shew the Folly of an After-Wit; *Esau* did well, but he did it when it was too late. He saw that the Daughters of *Canaan* pleased not his Father, and might he not have seen that long ago, if he had consulted his Father's Judgment as much as he did his Palate? And how did he now mend the Matter? Why truly, so as to make ill worse. 1. He married a Daughter of *Ishmael*, the Son of the Bond-woman, who was cast out, and was not to inherit with *Isaac* and his Seed, thus joining with a Family which God had rejected, and seeking to strengthen his own Pretensions by the Aids of another Pretender. 2. He took a third Wife, while, for ought appears, his other two were neither dead nor divorced. 3. He did it only to please his Father, not to please God: now *Jacob* was sent into a far Country, *Esau* would be all in all at Home, and he hoped so to humour his Father, as to prevail with him to make a new Will, and entail the Promise upon him, revoking the Settlement lately made upon *Jacob*. And thus, (1.) He was wise when it was too late; like *Israel*, that would venture when the Decree was gone forth against them; *Num.* 14. 40. and the foolish Virgins, *Mat.* 24. 10. (2.) He rested in a partial Reformation, and thought by pleasing his Parents in one thing to atone for all his other Miscalriages. It is not said that when he saw how obedient *Jacob* was, and how willing to please his Parents, he repented of his malicious Design against him, no, it appeared afterwards, that he persisted in that, and retained his Malice. *Note*, Carnal Hearts are apt to think themselves as good as they should be, because perhaps in some one particular Instance they are not so bad as they have been. Thus *Micah* retains his Idols, but thinks himself happy in having a *Levite* to be his Priest, *Jud.* 17. 13.

10 And *Jacob* went out from *Beer-sheba*, and went toward *Haran*. 11 And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set: and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. 12 And he dreamed, and behold, a ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it. 13 And behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of *Abraham* thy father, and the God of *Isaac*: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed. 14 And thy seed shall be as the dust of the Earth; and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. 15 And behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land: for I

will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.

We have here *Jacob* upon his Journey towards *Syria*, in a very desolate Condition, like one that was sent to seek his Fortune; but we find that tho he was alone, yet he was not alone, for the Father was with him, *John* 16. 32. If this here recorded happened (as it should seem it did) the first Night, he had made a long Day's Journey from *Beer-sheba* to *Bethel*, above 40 miles; Providence brought him to a convenient Place, probably shaded with Trees, to rest him in that Night; and there he had,

1. A hard Lodging, *v.* 11. The Stones for his Pillow, and the Heavens for his Canopy and Curtains. As the Usage then was, perhaps this was not so bad as it seems now to us, but we would think; (1.) He lay very cold; the cold Ground for his Bed, and which, one would think, made the Matter worse, a cold Stone for his Pillow, and in the cold Air. (2.) Very uneasy; if his Bones were sore with his Day's Journey, his Night's Rest would make 'em sorer. (3.) Very much exposed: He forgot that he was fleeing for his Life; for had his Brother in his Rage pursued, or sent a Murderer after him, here he lay ready to be sacrificed, and destitute of Shelter and Defence: We cannot think it was by reason of his Poverty that he was so ill accommodated; but, (1.) It was owing to the Plainness and Simplicity of those Times, when Men did not take so much State, and consult their Ease so much as in these latter Times of Softness and Effeminacy. (2.) *Jacob* had been particularly used to Hardship, as a plain Man dwelling in Tents, and designing now to go to Service, he was the more willing to inure himself to it. And, as it proved, 'twas well, *Chap.* 31. 40. (3.) His Comfort in the Divine Blessing, and his Confidence in the Divine Protection, made him easy, even then when he lay thus exposed: being sure that his God made him to dwell in Safety, he could lie down and sleep upon a Stone.

2. A pleasant Dream he had in his hard Lodging; and any *Israelite* indeed would be willing to take up with *Jacob's* Pillow, provided he might but have *Jacob's* Dream. Then and there he heard the Words of God, and saw the Visions of the Almighty: 'Twas the best Night's Sleep he ever had in his Life. *Note*, God's Time to visit his People with his Comforts, is, when they are most destitute of other Comforts, and other Comforters: When Afflictions in the way of Duty, (as these here were) do abound, then shall Consolations so much the more abound. Now observe here,

1. The encouraging Vision *Jacob* saw, *v.* 12. He saw a Ladder which reached from Earth to Heaven, the Angels ascending and descending upon it, and God himself at the Head of it. Now this represents the two things that are very comfortable to good People at all Times, and in all Conditions.

(1.) The Providence of God, by which there is a constant Correspondence kept up between Heaven and Earth. The Counsels of Heaven are executed on Earth, and the Actions and Affairs of this Earth are all known in Heaven, and judged there. Providence doth it's Work gradually, and by Steps: Angels are employ'd as ministering Spirits, to serve all the Purposes and Designs of Providence, and the Wisdom of God is at the upper end of the Ladder, directing all the Motions of second Causes to the Glory of the first Cause. The Angels are active Spirits, continually ascending and descending; they rest not Day nor Night from Service, according to the Posts assigned them. They ascend to give Account of what they have done, and to receive Orders, and then descend to execute the Orders they have received. Thus we should always abound in the Work of the Lord, that we may do it as the Angels do it, *Pf.* 103. 20, 21. This Vision gave very seasonable Comfort to *Jacob*, letting him know that he had both a good Guide and a good Guard in his going out and coming in; that tho he was made to wander from his Father's House, yet still he was the Care of a kind Providence, and the Charge of the holy Angels. This is Comfort enough, tho we should not admit the Notion which some have, that the Tutelar Angels of *Canaan* were ascending, having guarded *Jacob* out of their Land, and the Angels of *Syria* descending, to take him into their Custody. *Jacob* was now the Type and Representative of the whole Church, which the Angels are intrusted with the Guardianship of.

2. The Mediation of Christ: He is this Ladder, the Foot on Earth in his Humane Nature, the Top in Heaven in his Divine Nature: Or, the former in his Humiliation, the latter in his Exaltation. All the Intercourse between Heaven and Earth, since the Fall, is by this Ladder. Christ is the Way. All God's Favours come to us, and all our Services come to him by Christ. If God dwell with us, and we with him, 'tis by Christ: We have no Way of getting to Heaven but by this Ladder; if we climb up any other Way, we are Thieves and Robbers. This Vision our Saviour alludes to, when he speaks of the Angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man, *John* 1. 51. For the kind Offices the Angels do us, and the Benefits we receive by their Ministration, are all owing to Christ, who hath reconciled

conciled things on Earth, and things in Heaven, Col. 1. 20. and made them all meet in himself, Eph. 1. 10.

3. The encouraging Words Jacob heard: God now brought him into the Wilderness, and spake comfortably to him; spake from the Head of the Ladder, for all the glad Tidings we receive from Heaven comes through Jesus Christ.

1. The former Promises made to his Father, are repeated and ratified to him, v. 13, 14. In general, God intimates to him, that he would be the same to him that he had been to Abraham and Isaac. Those that tread in the Steps of their godly Parents, are interested in their Covenant, and intitled to their Privileges. Particularly, (1.) The Land of Canaan is settled upon him, *the Land whereon thou liest*; as if by his lying so contentedly upon the bare Ground, he had taken Livery and Seisin of the whole Land. (2.) 'Tis promised him that his Posterity should multiply exceedingly, as *the Dust of the Earth*, that though he seemed now to be plucked off as a wither'd Branch, yet he should become a flourishing Tree that should send out his Boughs unto the Sea. These were the Blessings wherewith his Father had blessed him, v. 3, 4. and God here said Amen to them, that he might have strong Consolation. (3.) 'Tis added, that the Messiah should come from his Loins, in whom all the Families of the Earth should be blessed: Christ is the great Blessing of the World: All that are blessed, whatever Family they are of, are blessed in him, and none of any Family are excluded from Blessedness in him, but those that exclude themselves.

2. Fresh Promises were made him, accommodated to his present Condition, v. 15. (1.) Jacob was apprehensive of Danger from his Brother Esau, but God promiseth to keep him. Note, Those are safe whom God protects, whoever pursues them. (2.) He had now a long Journey before him, was to travel alone, in an unknown Road, to an unknown Country: but behold I am with thee, faith God. Note, Wherever we are we are safe, and may be easy if we have God's favourable Presence with us. (3.) He knew not, but God foresaw what Hardships he would meet with in his Uncle's Service, and therefore promiseth to preserve him in all Places. Note, God knows how to give his People Graces and Comforts accommodated to the Events that shall be, as well as to those that are. (4.) He was now going as an Exile into a Place far distant, but God promiseth him to bring him back again to this Land. Note, He that preserves his People's going out, will also take care of their coming in, Psal. 121. 8. (5.) He seemed to be forsaken of all his Friends, but God here gives him this Assurance, *I will not leave thee*. Note, Whom God loves, he never leaves. This Promise is sure to all the Seed, Heb. 13. 5. (6.) Providences seemed to contradict the Promises, he is therefore assured of the Performance of them in their Season: All shall be done that I have spoken to thee of. Note, Saying and doing are not two things with God, whatever they are with us.

16 And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not. 17 And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. 18 And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oyl upon the top of it. 19 And he called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first. 20 And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on; 21 So that I come again to my fathers house in peace: then shall the Lord be my God. 22 And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

God manifested himself and his Favour to Jacob when he was asleep, and purely passive: for the Spirit, like the Wind, blows when and where he listeth, and God's Grace, like the Dew, tarrieth not for the Sons of Men, Mic. 5. 7. But Jacob applied himself to the Improvement of the Visit God had made him, when he was awake; and we may well think he awaked as the Prophet did, Jer. 31. 26. and behold his sleep was sweet to him. Here's much of Jacob's Devotion on this Occasion.

1. He expresses a great Surprise at the Tokens he had of God's special Presence with him in that Place, v. 16. *Surely the Lord is in this Place, and I knew it not*. Note, 1. God's Manifestations of himself to his People, carry their own Evidence along with them. God can give undeniable Demonstrations of his Presence, such as give abundant Satisfaction to the Souls of the

Faithful, that God is with them of a Truth; Satisfaction not communicable to others, but convincing to themselves. 2. We sometimes meet with God there, where we little thought of meeting with him. He is there where we did not think he had been, is found there where we asked not for him. No Place excludes Divine Visits, Gen. 16. 13. here also. Wherever we are, in the City, or in the Desert; in the House, or in the Field; in the Shop, or in the Street; we may keep up our Intercourse with Heaven, if it be not our own Fault.

2. It struck an Awe upon him, v. 27. *He was afraid*; so far was he from being puffed up, and exalted above measure with the abundance of the Revelations, (2 Cor. 12. 7.) that he was afraid. Note, The more we see of God, the more Cause we see for holy Trembling and Blushing before him. Those whom God is pleased to manifest himself to, are thereby laid and kept very low in their own Eyes, and see Cause to fear even the Lord and his Goodness, Hof. 3. 5. He said, *How dreadful is this Place! i. e.* The Appearance of God in this Place, is never to be thought of but with an holy Awe and Reverence. I shall have a Respect for this Place, and remember it by this Token as long as I live: Not that he thought the Place itself any nearer the divine Visions than other Places; but what he saw there at this time, was, as it were, the House of God, the Residence of the divine Majesty, and the Gate of Heaven, i. e. the general Rendezvous of the Inhabitants of the upper World; as the Meetings of a City were in their Gates. Or, the Angels ascending and descending were like Travellers passing and repassing thro the Gates of a City. Note, (1.) God is in a special manner present, there where his Grace is revealed, and his Covenants published and sealed, as of old by the Ministry of Angels, so now by instituted Ordinances, Mat. 28. 1.

(2.) There where God meets us with his special Presence, we ought to meet him with the most humble Reverence, remembering his Justice and Holiness, and our own Meanness and Vileness.

3. He took care to preserve the Memorial of it two ways.

(1.) He set up the Stone for a Pillar, v. 18. Not as if he thought the Visions of his Head were any way owing to the Stone on which it lay; but thus he would mark the Place against he came back, and erect a lasting Monument of God's Favour to him: And because he had not time now to build an Altar here, as Abraham did in the Places where God appeared to him, Gen. 12. 7. he therefore poured Oil on the Top of this Stone, which probably was the Ceremony then used in dedicating their Altars, as an Earnest of his building an Altar when he should have Conveniences for it, as afterwards he did in Gratitude to God for this Vision, Chap. 35. 7. Note, Grants of Mercy call for Returns of Duty; and the sweet Communion we have with God, ought ever to be remembered.

(2.) He gave a new Name to the Place, v. 19. It had been called Luz, an Almond-Tree, but he will have it hence-forward called Bethel, the House of God. This gracious Appearance of God to him, put a greater Honour and Lustre, and made it more remarkable than all the Almond-Trees that flourish there. This is that Bethel where long after it is said, *God found Jacob; and there, in what he said to him, he spake with us*, Hof. 12. 4. In process of Time this Bethel, the House of God, became Bethaven, a House of Vanity and Iniquity, when Jeroboam set up one of his Calves there.

4. He made a solemn Vow upon this Occasion, v. 20, 21, 22. By religious Vows we give Glory to God, and own our Dependance upon him; and we lay a Bond upon our own Souls, to engage and quicken our Obedience to him. Jacob was now in Fear and Distress, and in Times of Trouble 'tis seasonable to make Vows, or when we are in pursuit of any special Mercy, Jon. 1. 16. Psal. 66. 13, 14. 1 Sam. 1. 11. Num. 21. 1, 2, 3. Jacob had now had a gracious Visit from Heaven, God had renewed his Covenant with him: and the Covenant is mutual; when God ratifies his Promise to us, 'tis proper for us to repeat our Promises to him. Now in this Vow observe,

1. Jacob's Faith: God had said, v. 15. *I am with thee, and will keep thee*; Jacob takes hold of that, and infers, *seeing God will be with me, and will keep me*, as he hath said, and (which is implied in that Promise) will provide comfortably for me; and seeing he hath promised to bring me again to this Land, that is, to my Father's House, whom I hope to find alive at my return (so unlike was he to Esau, who longed for the Days of Mourning for his Father) in Peace, I depend upon it. Note, God's Promises are to be the Guide and Measure of our Desires and Expectations.

2. Jacob's Modesty and great Moderation in his Desires: He will cheerfully content himself with Bread to eat, and Raiment to put on; and tho God's Promise had now made him Heir to a very great Estate, yet he indents not for soft Clothing and dainty Meat. Agur's Wish is his, *feed me with food convenient for me*; and see 1 Tim. 6. 8. Nature is content with a little, and Grace with less. Those that have most, in effect have no more for themselves but Food and Raiment, the Overplus they have only either the keeping of, or the giving of, not the enjoyment of: If God gives us more, we are bound to be thankful.

ful, and to use it for him, if he give us but *this*, we are bound to be content, and cheerfully to enjoy him in it.

(3.) *Jacob's Piety*, and his Regard to God, which appears here,

1. In *what he Desired*: That God would be *with him and keep him*. *Note*, We need desire no more to make us easy and happy, where-ever we are, but to have God's Presence with us, and to be under his Protection: 'Tis comfortable in a Journey to have a Guide in an *unknown Way*, a Guard in a *dangerous Way*, to be well carried, well provided for, and to have good Company in *any Way*; and they that have God with them have all this in the best manner.

2. In *what he Designed*: His Resolution is, (1.) In general to cleave to the Lord, as his God in Covenant, *Then shall the Lord be my God*. Not as if he would disown him and cast him off, if he should want Food and Raiment; no, though he slay us we must stick to him: but then I will rejoice in him as my God; then I will be the more strongly engaged to abide with him. *Note*, Every Mercy we receive from God, should be improved as an additional Obligation upon us to walk closely with him as *our God*. (2.) In particular, that he would perform some special Acts of Devotion in token of his Gratitude. (1.) This Pillar shall keep Possession here till I come back in Peace, and then it shall be *God's House*, i. e. an Altar shall be erected here to the Honour of God. (2.) The House of God shall not be Unfurnished, nor his Altar without a Sacrifice; *Of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the Tenth unto thee*, to be spent either upon God's Altars, or upon his Poor, which are both his Receivers in the World. Probably 'twas according to some general Instructions received from Heaven that *Abraham and Jacob* offer'd the Tenth (in proportion) of their Achievements to God. *Note*, 1. God must be honour'd with our Estates, and must have his Dues out of them: When we receive more than ordinary Mercy from God, we should study to give some signal Instances of Gratitude to him. 2. The Tenth is a very fit Proportion to be devoted to God, and employed for him; though as Circumstances vary, it may be more or less, as God prospers us, 2 Cor. 9. 7.

C H A P. XXIX.

This Chapter gives us an Account of God's Providences concerning Jacob, pursuant to the Promises made him in the foregoing Chapter. 1. *How he was brought in safety to his Journey's end, and directed to his Relations there, who bid him Welcome*, v. 1-14. 2. *How he was comfortably disposed of in Marriage*, v. 15-30. 3. *How his Family was built up in the Birth of Four Sons*, v. 31, ad fin. *The Affairs of Princes and Mighty Nations that were then in being, are not recorded in the Book of God, but are left to be buried in Oblivion, while these small Domestic Concerns of holy Jacob are particularly recorded with their minute Circumstances, that they may be in everlasting Remembrance. For the Memory of the Just is blessed.*

THEN Jacob went on his journey, and came into the land of the people of the east. 2 And he looked, and behold, a well in the field, and lo, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it; for out of that well they watered the flocks; and a great stone was upon the wells mouth. 3 And thither were all the flocks gathered: and they rolled the stone from the wells mouth, and watered the sheep, and put the stone again upon the wells mouth in his place. 4 And Jacob said unto them, My brethren, whence be ye? And they said, Of Haran are we. 5 And he said unto them, Know ye Laban the son of Nahor? And they said, We know him. 6 And he said unto them, Is he well? And they said, He is well: and behold, Rachel his daughter cometh with the sheep. 7 And he said, Lo, it is yet high-day, neither is it time that the cattel should be gathered together: water ye the sheep, and go and feed them. 8 And they said, We cannot, until all the flocks be gathered together, and till they roll the stone from the wells mouth; then we water the sheep.

No particular Journal is kept of Jacob's Expedition further than *Bethel*, as there is of all the Stages of *Israel's* March to *Canaan*: no, he had no more such happy Nights as he had at *Bethel*, no more such Visions of the Almighty; that was intended for a Feast, he must not expect it to be his daily Bread.

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But, 1. We are here told how cheerfully he proceeded in his Journey after that sweet Communion he had with God at *Bethel*: *Then Jacob lift up his Feet*; so the Margin reads it, v. 1. Then he went on with Cheerfulness and Alacrity, not burden'd with his Cares, nor cramp't with his Fears, being assured of God's gracious Presence with him. *Note*, After the Visions we have had of God, and the Vows we have made to him in solemn Ordinances, we should run the way of his Commandments with enlarged Hearts, *Heb. 12. 1*.

2. How happily he arrived at his Journey's end; Providence brought him to the very Field where his Uncle's Flocks were to be watered, and there he met with *Rachel* that was to be his Wife. Observe, 1. The Divine Providence is to be acknowledged in all the little Circumstances which concur to make a Journey, or other Undertaking, comfortable and successful. If, when we are at a loss, we meet with those seasonably that can direct us; if we meet with a Disaster, and those are at hand that will help us, we must not say it was by Chance, or, that Fortune therein favoured us, but it was by Providence, and God therein favoured us: Our Ways are Ways of Pleasantness, if we continually acknowledge God in them. 2. Those that have Flocks must look well to them, and be diligent to know their State, *Prov. 27. 23*. What is here said of the constant Care of the Shepherds concerning their Sheep, (v. 2, 3, 7, 8.) may serve to illustrate the tender Concern which our Lord Jesus, the Great Shepherd of the Sheep, hath for his Flock the Church; for he is the Good Shepherd that knows his Sheep, and is known of them, *John 10. 14*. The Stone at the Well's Mouth, which is so often mentioned here, was either to secure their Property in it, for Water was scarce; 'twas not there *usus communis aquarum*; or 'twas to save the Well from receiving Damage from the Heat of the Sun, or from any spiteful Hand; or to prevent the Lambs of the Flock from being drowned in it. 3. Separate Interests should not take us off from joint and mutual Help; when all the Shepherds came together with their Flocks, then like loving Neighbours at Watering-Time, they watered their Flocks together. 4. It becomes us to speak civilly and respectfully to Strangers. Tho Jacob was no Courtier, but a plain Man dwelling in Tents, and a Stranger to Compliment, yet he addresseth himself very obligingly to those People he met with, and calls them *his Brethren*, v. 4. The Law of Kindness in the Tongue has a commanding Power, *Prov. 31. 26*. Some think he calls them *Brethren*, because they were of the same Trade, Shepherds like him. Tho he was now upon his Preferment, he was not ashamed of his Occupation. 5. Those that shew Respect, ordinarily have Respect shewed them. As Jacob was civil to these Strangers, so he found them civil to him. When he undertook to teach them how to dispatch their Business, v. 7. they did not bid him meddle with his own Concerns, and let them alone, but tho he were a Stranger, gave him the Reason of their Delay, v. 8. Those that are Neighbourly and Friendly, shall have Neighbourly and Friendly Usage.

9 And while he yet spake with them, Rachel came with her fathers sheep: for she kept them. 10 And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mothers brother, and the sheep of Laban his mothers brother, that Jacob went near, and rolled the stone from the wells mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mothers brother. 11 And Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice, and wept. 12 And Jacob told Rachel that he was her fathers brother, and that he was Rebekah's son: and she ran and told her father. 13 And it came to pass, when Laban heard the tidings of Jacob his sisters son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house. And he told Laban all these things. 14 And Laban said to him, Surely thou art my bone and my flesh: and he abode with him the space of a month.

Here we see, 1. *Rachel's Humility and Industry*: She kept her Father's Sheep, v. 9. i. e. she took the Care of them, having Servants under her that were employed about them; *Rachel's* Name signifies a *Sheep*. *Note*, Honest useful Labour is that which no body needs to be ashamed of, nor ought it to be a Balk to any one's Preferment. 2. *Jacob's Tendernefs and Affection*: When he understood that this was his Kinswoman (probably he had heard of her Name before) knowing what his Errand was into that Country, we may suppose it struck into his Mind

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immediately, that this must be his Wife, as one already smitten with an honest, comely Face (though 'tis likely, Sun-burnt, and she in the homely Drefs of a Shepherdess) he is wonderful officious, and ready to serve her, v. 10. addresses himself to her with Tears of Joy, and Kisses of Love, v. 11. she runs with all haste to tell her Father, for she will by no means entertain her Kinsman's Address without her Father's Knowledge and Approbation, v. 12. These mutual Respects at their first Interview were good Prefages of their being a happy Couple. 3. Providence made that which seemed Contingent and Fortuitous, to give speedy Satisfaction to Jacob's Mind, as soon as ever he came to the Place he was bound for. Abraham's Servant, when he came upon a like Errand, met with the like Encouragement. Thus God guides his People with his Eye, Psal. 32. 8. 'Tis a groundless Conceit which some of the Jewish Writers have, that Jacob, when he kissed Rachel, wept because he had been set upon in his Journey by Eliphaz, the eldest Son of Esau, at the Command of his Father, and robb'd of all his Money and Jewels, which his Mother had given him when she sent him away: 'Tis plain, 'twas his Passion for Rachel, and the Surprise of this happy Meeting that drew these Tears from his Eyes. 4. Laban, though none of the best humour'd Men, bid him Welcome; was satisfied in the Account he gave of himself, and of the Reason of his coming in such poor Circumstances: While we avoid the Extreme on the one hand of being foolishly Credulous, we must take heed of falling into the other Extreme of being uncharitably Jealous and Suspicious. Laban owned him for his Kinsman, v. 14. *Thou art my Bone and my Flesh.* Note, Those are hard-hearted indeed that are unkind to their Relations, and that *hide themselves from their own Flesh*, Isa. 58. 7.

15 And Laban said unto Jacob, Because thou art my brother, shouldest thou therefore serve me for nought? tell me, what shall thy wages be? 16 And Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. 17 Leah was tender-eyed, but Rachel was beautiful and well-favoured. 18 And Jacob loved Rachel; and said, I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter. 19 And Laban said, It is better that I give her to thee, than that I should give her to another man: abide with me. 20 And Jacob served seven years for Rachel: and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her. 21 And Jacob said unto Laban, Give me my wife (for my days are fulfilled) that I may go in unto her. 22 And Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast. 23 And it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him: and he went in unto her. 24 And Laban gave unto his daughter Leah, Zilpah his maid for an handmaid. 25 And it came to pass, that in the morning, behold it was Leah: and he said to Laban, What is this thou hast done unto me? did not I serve with thee for Rachel? Wherefore then hast thou beguiled me? 26 And Laban said, It must not so be done in our country, to give the younger before the first-born. 27 Fulfill her week, and we will give thee this also, for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years. 28 And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week: and he gave him Rachel his daughter to wife also. 29 And Laban gave to Rachel his daughter Bilhah his handmaid, to be her maid. 30 And he went in also unto Rachel, and he loved also Rachel more than Leah, and served with him yet seven other years.

Here's, 1. The fair Contract made between Laban and Jacob during the Month that Jacob spent there as a Guest, v. 14. It seems he was not idle, nor did he spend his Time in Sport and Pastime, but like a Man of Business; tho he had no Stock of his own, he applied himself to serve his Uncle, as he had begun, v. 10. when he watered his Flock. Note, Where-ever we are, 'tis good to be employing ourselves in some useful Business,

which will turn to a good Account to our selves or others. Laban, it seems, was so taken with Jacob's Ingenuity and Industry about his Flocks, that he was desirous he should continue with him; and very fairly reasons thus, v. 15. *Because thou art my Brother, shouldest thou therefore serve me for nought?* No, what reason for that? If Jacob be so respectful to his Uncle, as to give him his Service without demanding any Consideration for it, yet Laban will not be so unjust to his Nephew, as to take Advantage either of his Necessity, or of his good Nature. Note, Inferiour Relations must not be imposed upon; if it be their Duty to Serve us, 'tis our Duty to Reward them. Now had Jacob a fair Opportunity to make known to Laban the Affection he had for his Daughter Rachel; and having no worldly Goods in his Hand wherewith to endow her, he promises him seven Years Service, upon Condition that at the end of the seven Years he would bestow her upon him for his Wife. It appears by Computation, that Jacob was now Seventy-Seven Years old when he bound himself Apprentice for a Wife, and for a Wife he kept sheep, Hof. 12. 12. His Posterity are there minded of it long after, as an Instance of the Meanness of their Original; probably Rachel was Young, and scarce Marriageable when Jacob came first, which made him the more willing to stay for her till his seven Years Service were expired.

2. Jacob's honest Performance of his Part of the Bargain, v. 20. He served seven Years for Rachel; and if Rachel still continued to keep her Father's Sheep, as she did, v. 9. his innocent and religious Conversation with her while they kept the Flocks could not but increase their mutual Acquaintance and Affection. Solomon's Song of Love is a Pastoral. If she now left it off, his easing her of that Care was very obliging: Jacob honestly served out his seven Years, tho he was old, and did not forfeit his Indentures; nay, he served them cheerfully, *they seemed to him but a few Days for the Love he had to her*: As if it was more his Desire to earn her, than to enjoy her. Note, Love makes long and hard Services short and easy; hence we read of the Labour of Love, Heb. 6. 10. If we know how to value the Happiness of Heaven, the Sufferings of this present Time will be as nothing to us, in comparison of it. An Age of Work will be but as a few Days to those that love God, and long for Christ's appearing.

3. The base Cheat which Laban put upon him when he was out of his Time: He put Leah into his Arms instead of Rachel, v. 23. This was Laban's Sin, he wronged both Jacob and Rachel, whose Affections, doubtless, were engaged to each other; and if (as some say) Leah was herein no better than an Adulteress, it was no small Wrong to her too. But it was Jacob's Affliction, a Damp to the Mirth of the Marriage Feast, when in the Morning behold it was Leah, v. 25. 'Tis easy to observe here how Jacob was paid in his own Coin. He had cheated his own Father when he pretended to be Esau, and now his Father-in-Law cheated him. Herein how unrighteous soever Laban was, the Lord was righteous, as Judg. 1. 7. Even the Righteous, if they take a false Step, are sometimes thus recompensed in the Earth. Many that are not like Jacob, disappointed in Person, soon find themselves as much, to their Grief, disappointed in the Character. The Choice of that Relation therefore on both Sides, ought to be made with good Advice and Consideration, that if there should be a Disappointment, it may not be aggravated by a Consciousness of Mismanagement.

4. The Excuse and Atonement Laban made for the Cheat. (1.) The Excuse was frivolous, v. 26. *It must not so be done in our Country.* We have reason to think there was no such Custom of his Country, as he pretends, only he banters Jacob with it, and laughs at his Mistake. Note, Those that can do an ill Thing, and then think to turn it off with a Jest, though they may deceive themselves and others, will find at last that God is not mocked. But if there were such a Custom, and that he resolved to observe it, he should have told Jacob so, when he undertook to serve him for his younger Daughter. Note, As saith the Proverb of the Ancients, *Wickedness proceedeth from the Wicked*, 1 Sam. 24. 13. Those that deal with Treacherous Men, must expect to be dealt Treacherously with. (2.) His Compounding of the Matter did but make ill worse, *we will give thee this also*, v. 27. Hereby he drew Jacob into the Sin and Snare, and Disquiet of multiplying Wives, which remains a Blot in his Escutcheon, and will be so to the end of the World. Honest Jacob did not design it, but to have kept as true to Rachel as his Father had done to Rebekah; he that had lived without a Wife to the 84th Year of his Age, could then have been very well content with one: But Laban, to dispose of his two Daughters without Portions, and to get seven Years Service more out of Jacob, thus imposeth upon him, and draws him into such a Strait by his Fraud, that (the Matter not being yet settled, as it was afterwards by the Divine Law, Lev. 18. 18. and more fully since by our Saviour, Mat. 19. 5.) he had some colourable Reason of Marrying them both. He could not refuse Rachel, for he had Wedded her; he could not refuse Leah, for he had Bedded her, and therefore Jacob must be content

and take two Talents, *allu. 2 Kings 5. 23.* Note, One Sin is commonly the inlet of another. They that go in by one Door of Wickedness, commonly cannot find the Way out but by another. The Polygamy of the Patriarchs was excusable in them, because tho there was a Reason against it as ancient as Adam's Marriage, *Mal. 2. 15.* yet there was no express Command against it; 'twas in them a Sin of Ignorance, 'twas not the Product of any sinful Lust, but for the building up of the Church, which was the Good that Providence brought out of it, but it will by no means justify the like Practice now, when God's Will is plainly made known, that *one Man and one Woman* only must be joined together, *1 Cor. 7. 2.* The having of many Wives suits well enough with the carnal sensual Spirit of the Mahometan Imposture which allows it, but *we have not so learned Christ.* Dr. Lightfoot makes Leah and Rachel to be Figures of the two Churches, the Jews under the Law, and the Gentiles under the Gospel: The younger the more Beautiful, and more in the Thoughts of Christ, when he came in the Form of a Servant, but the other, like Leah, first embraced; yet in this the Allegory doth not hold, that the Gentiles, the younger, were more fruitful, *Gal. 4. 27.*

31 And when the LORD saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb: but Rachel was barren. 32 And Leah conceived and bare a son, and she called his name Reuben: for she said, Surely the LORD hath looked upon my affliction; now therefore my husband will love me. 33 And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, Because the LORD hath heard that I was hated, he hath therefore given me this son also: and she called his name Simeon. 34 And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, Now this time will my husband be joined unto me, because I have born him three sons: therefore was his name called Levi. 35 And she conceived again, and bare a son; and she said, Now will I praise the LORD: therefore she called his name Judah, and left bearing.

We have here the Birth of four of Jacob's Sons, all by Leah. Observe, 1. That Leah, who was less beloved, was blessed with Children, when Rachel was denied that Blessing, *v. 31.* See how Providence, in dispensing its Gifts, observes a Proportion, to keep the Balance even, setting Crosses and Comforts one over against another, that none may be either too much elevated, or too much depressed: Rachel wants Children, but she is blessed with her Husband's Love; Leah wants that, but she is fruitful. Thus it was between Elkanah's two Wives, *1 Sam. 1. 5.* for the Lord is wise and righteous; When the Lord saw that Leah was hated, i. e. loved less than Rachel, in which Sense 'tis required that we hate Father and Mother, in Comparison with Christ, *Luke 14. 26.* then the Lord granted her a Child; which was a Rebuke to Jacob for making so great a Difference between those that he was equally related to, a Check to Rachel, who, perhaps, insulted over her Sister upon that account; and a Comfort to Leah, that she might not be overwhelmed with the Contempt put upon her: Thus God giveth abundant Honour to that which lacked, *1 Cor. 12. 24.*

2. That the Names she gave her Children were expressive of her respectful Regards both to God and to her Husband. (1.) She appears very ambitious of her Husband's Love; she reckon'd the want of it her Affliction, *v. 32.* not upbraiding him with it as his Fault, nor reproaching him for it, and so making her self uneasy to him; but laying it to heart as her Grief, which she had reason to bear with the more Patience, because she her self was consenting to the Fraud by which she became his Wife: And we may well bear that Trouble with Patience, which we bring upon our selves by our own Sin and Folly. She promised her self that the Children she bore him would gain her the Interest she desired in his Affections: She called her first-born Reuben, *see a Son*, with this pleasant Thought, *Now will my Husband love me:* And her third Son, Levi, joined, with this Expectation, *Now will my Husband be joined unto me*, *v. 34.* Mutual Affection is both the Duty and Comfort of that Relation; and Yoke-fellows should study to recommend themselves to each other, *1 Cor. 7. 33, 34.* (2.) She thankfully acknowledgeth the kind Providence of God in it, *The Lord hath looked upon mine Affliction*, *v. 32.* *The Lord hath heard*, i. e. taken notice of it, that I was hated, (for our Afflictions, as they are before God's Eyes, so they have a Cry in his Ears) *He hath therefore given me this Son.* Note, Whatever we have that contributes either to our Support and Comfort under our Afflictions, or to our Deliverance from them, God must be own'd in it, especially his Pity and tender Mercy. Her fourth she called

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Judah, Praise, saying, *Now will I praise the Lord*, *v. 35.* And this was he, of whom, as concerning the Flesh, Christ came. Note, 1. Whatever is the Matter of our Rejoicing, ought to be the Matter of our Thanksgiving: Fresh Favours should quicken us to praise God for former Favours, *Now will I praise the Lord* more and better than I have done. 2. All our Praises must center in Christ, both as the Matter of them, and as the Mediator of them. He descended from him whose Name was Praise, for he is our Praise. Is Christ formed in my Heart? *Now will I praise the Lord.*

C H A P. XXX.

In this Chapter we have an Account of the Increase, 1. Of Jacob's Family; eight Children more we find register'd in this Chapter, Dan and Naphtali by Bilhah, Rachel's Maid, *v. 1-8.* Gad and Asher by Zilpah, Leah's Maid, *v. 9-13.* Issachar, Zebulon, and Dinah, by Leah, *v. 14-21.* and last of all, Joseph by Rachel, *v. 22-24.* 2. Of Jacob's Estate. He comes upon a new Bargain with Laban, *v. 25-34.* And in the six Years further Service he did to Laban, God wonderfully blessed him, so that his Stock of Cattle became very considerable, *v. 35-43.* And herein was fulfilled the Blessing which Isaac dismissed him with, *Chap. 28. 3.* God make thee fruitful and multiply thee. Even these small Matters concerning Jacob's House and Field, tho they seem inconsiderable, are improvable for our Learning: For the Scriptures were not written for Princes and Statesmen, to instruct them in Politicks; but for all People, even the meanest, to direct them in their Families and Callings: Yet some things are here recorded concerning Jacob, not for Imitation, but for Admonition.

AND when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister; and said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I dye. 2 And Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel; and he said, Am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb? 3 And she said, Behold, my maid Bilhah, go in unto her; and she shall bear upon my knees, that I may also have children by her. 4 And she gave him Bilhah her hand-maid to wife: and Jacob went in unto her. 5 And Bilhah conceived, and bare Jacob a son. 6 And Rachel said, God hath judged me, and hath also heard my voice, and hath given me a son; therefore called she his name Dan. 7 And Bilhah Rachels maid conceived again, and bare Jacob a second son. 8 And Rachel said, With great wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister, and I have prevailed: and she called his name Naphtali. 9 When Leah saw that she had left bearing, she took Zilpah her maid, and gave her Jacob to wife. 10 And Zilpah Leahs maid bare Jacob a son. 11 And Leah said, A troop cometh: and she called his name Gad. 12 And Zilpah Leahs maid bare Jacob a second son. 13 And Leah said, Happy am I, for the daughters will call me blessed; and she called his name Asher.

We have here the ill Consequences of that odd Marriage which Jacob made with the two Sisters. Here,

1. An unhappy Disagreement between him and Rachel, *v. 1.* occasioned not so much by her own Barrenness, as by her Sister's Fruitfulness. Rebekah, the only Wife of Isaac, was long Childless, and yet we find no Uneasiness between her and Isaac; but here because Leah bears Children, Rachel cannot live peaceably with Jacob. 1. Rachel frets, *v. 1.* she envied her Sister; Envy is grieving at the Good of another, than which no Sin is more injurious both to God, our Neighbour, and our selves. She considered not that it was God that made the Difference; and that tho in this single Instance, her Sister was preferred before her, yet in other things she had the Advantage. Let us carefully watch against all the Risings and Workings of this Passion in our Minds. Let not our Eye be evil towards any of our Fellow-Servants, because our Master's is good. But this was not all, she said to Jacob, Give me Children, or else I dye. Note, We are very apt to mix in our Desires of temporal Mercies, as Rachel here, (1.) A Child would not content her; but because Leah has more than

one, she must have more too, *Give me Children.* (2.) Her Heart is inordinately set upon it, and if she have not what she would have, she will throw away her Life, and all the Comforts of it. Give them me, or else I die, i. e. I shall fret my self to Death: The want of this Satisfaction will shorten my Days. Some think she threatens Jacob to lay violent Hands upon her self if she could not obtain this Mercy. (3.) She did not apply her self to God by Prayer, but to Jacob only, forgetting that Children are a Heritage of the Lord, Psal. 127. 3. We wrong both God and our selves when our Eye is more to Men, the Instruments of our Crosses and Comforts, than to God the Author. Observe a difference between Rachel's asking for this Mercy, and Hannah's, 1 Sam. 1. 10, &c. Rachel envied, Hannah wept; Rachel must have Children, and she died of the second; Hannah prayed for this Child, and she had four more. Rachel is importunate and peremptory, Hannah is submissive and devout, *If thou wilt give me a Child, I will give him to the Lord.* Let Hannah be imitated, and not Rachel; and let our Desires be always under the Conduct and Check of Reason and Religion. 2. Jacob chides, and most justly, v. 2. he loved Rachel, and therefore reproved her for what she said amiss. Note, Faithful Reproofs are Products and Instances of true Affection, Ps. 141. 3. Pr. 27. 3, 6. Job reproved his Wife when she spake the Language of the foolish Woman, Job 2. 10. See 1 Cor. 7. 16. He was angry, not at the Person, but at the Sin; he expressed himself so as to shew his Displeasure. Note, Sometimes 'tis requisite that a Reproof should be given warm, like a physical Potion, not too hot, lest it scald the Patient, yet not cold, lest it do not work. 'Twas a very grave and pious Reply which Jacob gave to Rachel's peevish Demand: *Am I in God's stead?* The Chaldees paraphrase it well, *Dost thou ask Sons of me? Oughtest thou not to ask them from before the Lord?* The Arabick reads it, *Am I above God?* Can I give thee that which God denies thee? This was said like a plain Man. Observe,

(1.) He acknowledges the Hand of God in the Affliction, which he was a sharer with her in: *He hath withheld the Fruit of the Womb.* Note, Whatever we want, 'tis God that withholds it, a sovereign Lord, most wise, holy, and just, that may do what he will with his own, and is Debtor to no Man; that never did, nor ever can do any Wrong to any of his Creatures. The Key of the Clouds, of the Heart, of the Grave, and of the Womb, are four Keys which God has in his Hand, and which (the Rabbins say) he intrusts neither with Angel nor Seraphim. See Rev. 3. 7. Job 11. 10.-12. 14.

(2.) He acknowledgeth his own Inability to alter what God had appointed, *Am I in God's stead?* What, dost thou make a God of me? *Deus qui rogat, ille facit.* Note, 1. There is no Creature that is, or can be, to us in God's stead. God may be to us instead of any Creature, as the Sun, instead of the Moon and Stars; but the Moon and all the Stars will not be to us instead of the Sun. No Creature's Wisdom, Power and Love will be to us instead of God's. 2. It is therefore our Sin and Folly to place any Creature in God's stead, and to place that Confidence in any Creature, which is to be placed in God only.

2. An unhappy Agreement between him and the two Hand-maids. 1. At the Persuasion of Rachel he took Bilhah her Hand-maid to Wife, that according to the usage of those Times, his Children by her might be adopted and owned as her Mistress's Children, v. 3, &c. She would rather have Children by Reputation than none at all; Children that she might fancy to be her own, and call her own, tho they were not so. One would think her own Sister's Children were nearer a-kin to her than her Maid's, and she might with more Satisfaction have made them her own, if she had so pleas'd; but (so natural is it to us all to be fond of Power) Children that she had a right to rule were more desirable to her than Children that she had more reason to love: And as an early Instance of her Dominion over the Children born in her Apartment, she takes a pleasure in giving them Names, that carry in them nothing but Marks of Emulation with her Sister. As if she had overcome her, (1.) At Law, she calls the first Son of her Hand-maid, Dan, Judgment, saying, *God hath judged me,* v. 6. i. e. given Sentence in my Favour. (2.) In Battle: she calls the next Naphthali, Wrestlings, saying, *I have wrestled with my Sister, and have prevailed,* v. 8. as if all Jacob's must be born Men of Contention: See what Roots of Bitterness Envy and Strife are, and what Mischief they make among Relations. 2. At the Persuasion of Leah he took Zilpah her Hand-maid to Wife also, v. 9. Rachel had done that absurd and preposterous Thing of putting her Maid into her Husband's Bed, in emulation with Leah; and now Leah (because she missed one Year in bearing Children) doth the same to be even with her, or rather to keep before her. See the Power of Jealousy and Rivalship, and admire the Wisdom of the divine Appointment, which joins together one Man and one Woman only, for God has called us to Peace, and Purity, 1 Cor. 7. 15. Two Sons Zilpah bare to Jacob, whom Leah looked upon her self as entitled to, in token of which she called one Gad, v. 11. promising her self a little Troop of Children,

and Children are the Militia of a Family, they fill the Quiver, Ps. 127. 4, 5. The other she called Asher, happy, thinking her self happy in him; and promising her self that her Neighbours would think so too, v. 13. *the Daughters will call me blessed.* Note, It is an Instance of the Vanity of the World, and the Foolishness bound up in our Hearts, that most People value themselves and govern themselves more by Reputation than either by Reason or Religion; they think themselves *Blessed*, if the Daughters do but call *em so*. Much amiss there was in the Contest and Competition that was between these two Sisters; yet God brought Good out of this Evil, the Time being now at hand when the Seed of Abraham must begin to increase and multiply: Thus Jacob's Family was replenished with twelve Sons, Heads of the Thousands of Israel, from whom the celebrated twelve Tribes descended and were named.

14 And Reuben went in the days of wheat-harvest, and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them unto his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, Give me, I pray thee, of thy sons mandrakes. 15 And she said unto her, Is it a small matter that thou hast taken my husband? and wouldst thou take away my sons mandrakes also? And Rachel said, Therefore he shall lie with thee to night for thy sons mandrakes. 16 And Jacob came out of the field in the evening, and Leah went out to meet him, and said, Thou must come in unto me, for surely I have hired thee with my sons mandrakes. And he lay with her that night. 17 And God hearkened unto Leah, and she conceived, and bear Jacob the fifth son. 18 And Leah said, God hath given me mine hire, because I have given my maiden to my husband: and she called his name Issachar. 19 And Leah conceived again, and bare Jacob the sixth son. 20 And Leah said, God hath ended me with a good dowry; now will my husband dwell with me, because I have born him six sons: and she called his name Zebulun. 21 And afterwards she bare a daughter, and called her name Dinah. And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and opened her womb. 23 And she conceived and bare a son; and said, God hath taken away my reproach. 24 And she called his name Joseph; and said, The LORD shall add to me another son.

Here's, 1. Leah fruitful again, after she had, for some time, left bearing: Jacob, it should seem, associated more with Rachel than with Leah. The Law of Moses supposes it a common Case, That if a Man had two Wives, one would be beloved, and the other hated, Deut. 21. 15. But at length Rachel's strong Passions betrayed her into a Bargain with Leah, that Jacob should return to her Apartment. Reuben, a little Lad of five or six Years old, playing in the field, found Mandrakes, Dudaism. 'Tis uncertain what they were, the Critics are not agreed about them; we are sure they were some Rarities, either Fruits or Flowers, that were very pleasant to the Smell, Cant. 7. 13. Note, The God of Nature has provided not only for our Necessities, but for our Delights: There are Products of the Earth in the exposed Fields, as well as in the planted protected Gardens, that are very valuable and useful. How plentifully is Nature's House furnished, and her Table spread? Her precious Fruits offer themselves to be gathered by the Hands of little Children. 'Tis a laudable Custom of the devout Jews, when they delighted themselves, suppose in eating of an Apple, to lift up their Hearts and say, Blessed be he that made this Fruit pleasant! Or, in smelling of a Flower, Blessed be he that made this Flower sweet! Some think these Mandrakes were Jessamin Flowers; whatever they were, Rachel could not see them in Leah's Hands, whither the Child had brought them, but she must covet them: She cannot bear the want of these pretty Flowers, but at any rate she'll purchase 'em. Note, There may be great Sin and Folly in the inordinate Desire of a small Thing. Leah takes this Advantage, (as Jacob had of Esau's coveting his red Pottage) to obtain that which was justly due to her, but which Rachel would not otherwise have consented to. Note, Strong Passions oft thwart one another, and those cannot but be continually uneasy, that are hurried by them. Leah is overjoy'd that she shall have her

her Husband's Company again, that her Family might yet further be built up, which is the Blessing she desires and devoutly prays for, as is intimated, *v. 17.* where 'tis said, *God hearkened unto Leah.* The learned Bishop Patrick very well suggests here, that the true Reason of this Contest between Jacob's Wives for his Company, and their giving him their Maids to be his Wives, was the earnest Desire they had to fulfil the Promise made to Abraham, (and now lately renewed to Jacob) that his Seed should be as the Stars of Heaven for Multitude, and that in one Seed of his, the Messiah, all the Nations of the Earth should be blessed. And he thinks it had been below the Dignity of this Sacred History to take such particular notice of these Things, if there had not been some such great Consideration in them. Two Sons *Leah* was now blessed with; the first she called *Issachar*, a Hire, *v. 18.* reckoning her self well repaid for her Man-drakes; nay (which is a strange Construction of the Providence) rewarded for giving her Maid to her Husband. Note, We abuse God's Mercy when we reckon that his Favours countenance and patronize our Follies. The other she called *Zebulun*; dwelling, *v. 20.* owning God's Bounty to her, *God has endued me with a good Dowry*: Jacob had not endowed her when he married her; nor had he wherewithal in Possession; but she reckons a Family of Children, not a Bill of Charges, but a good Dowry, *Psal. 113. 9.* She promises her self more, her Husband's Company, now she had born him six Sons; and that in love to his Children at least he would oft visit her Lodgings. Mention is made, *v. 21.* of the Birth of a Daughter *Dinah*, because of the following Story concerning her, *Chap. 34.* Perhaps Jacob had other Daughters, tho not register'd.

2. *Rachel*, fruitful at last, *v. 22.* God remember'd Rachel, whom he seemed to have forgotten, and hearkened to her, whose Prayers had been long denied, and then she bare a Son. Note, As God justly denies the Mercy we have been inordinately desirous of, so sometimes he graciously grants at length that which we have long waited for. He corrects our Folly, and yet considers our Frame, and doth not contend for ever. *Rachel* called her Son *Joseph*, which, in Hebrew, is akin to two Words of a contrary Signification, *Asaph*, *abstulit*, he has taken away my Reproach, as if the greatest Mercy she had in this Son were, that he had saved her Credit. And *Jasaph*, *addidit*, the Lord shall add to me another Son; which may be looked upon either as the Language of her inordinate Desire, she scarce knows how to be thankful for one, unless she may be sure of another: Or of her Faith, she takes this Mercy as an Earnest of further Mercy. Hath God given me his Grace? I may call it *Joseph*, and say, he shall add more Grace: Hath he given me his Joy? I may call it *Joseph*, and say, he will give more Joy. Hath he begun, and shall he not make an end?

25 And it came to pass, when Rachel had born Joseph, that Jacob said unto Laban, Send me away, that I may go unto mine own place, and to my country. 26 Give me my wives and my children, for whom I have served thee, and let me go: for thou knowest my service which I have done thee. 27 And Laban said unto him, I pray thee, if I have found favour in thine eyes, tarry: for I have learned by experience, that the LORD hath blessed me for thy sake. 28 And he said, Appoint me thy wages, and I will give it. 29 And he said unto him, Thou knowest how I have served thee, and how thy cattel was with me. 30 For it was little which thou hadst before I came, and it is now increased unto a multitude; and the LORD hath blessed thee since my coming: and now when shall I provide for mine own house also? 31 And he said, What shall I give thee? And Jacob said, Thou shalt not give me any thing; if thou wilt do this thing for me, I will again feed and keep thy flock: 32 I will pass through all thy flock to day, removing from thence all the speckled and spotted cattel, and all the brown cattle among the sheep, and the spotted and speckled among the goats: and of such shall be my hire. 33 So shall my righteousness answer for me in time to come, when it shall come for my hire before thy face: every one that is not speckled and spotted amongst the goats, and brown amongst the sheep, that shall be accounted stolen with me. 34 And Laban said, Behold, I would it might be according to thy word. 35 And he removed that day the he goats,

that were ring-straked, and spotted, and all the she-goats that were speckled and spotted, and every one that had some white in it, and all the brown among the sheep, and gave them into the hands of his sons. 36 And he set three days journey betwixt himself and Jacob: and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks.

Here's, 1. *Jacob's Thoughts of Home.* He faithfully served his Time out with Laban, even his second Apprenticeship, tho he was an old Man, had a growing Family, to provide for which, it was high time for him to set up for himself; tho Laban's Service was hard, and he had cheated him in the first Bargain he had made, yet Jacob honestly performs his Engagements. Note, A good Man, tho he swears to his own Hurt, will not change. And tho others have deceived us, that will not justify us in deceiving them. Our Rule is to do as we would be done by, not as we are done by. Jacob's Term being expired, he begs leave to be gone, *v. 25.* Observe, 1. He retained his Affection for the Land of Canaan, not only because it was the Land of his Nativity, and his Father and Mother were there whom he long'd to see; but because it was the Land of Promise, and in token of his Dependence upon the Promise of it, tho he sojourn'd in Haran, he can by no means think of settling there. Thus should we be affected towards our heavenly Country, looking upon our selves as Strangers here, and that as our Home, and longing to be there as soon as the Days of our Service upon Earth are number'd and finished. We must not think of taking Root here, for this is not our *Plaza* and Country, *Heb. 13. 14.* 2. He was desirous to go to Canaan, tho he had a great Family to take with him, and no Provision yet made for them. He had got Wives and Children with Laban, but nothing else, yet he doth not solicit Laban to give him either a Portion with his Wives, or the keeping of some of his Children: No; all his Request is, Give me my Wives and my Children, and send me away, *v. 25, 26.* Note, Those that trust in God, and in his Providence and Promise, tho they have great Families, and small Incomes, can cheerfully hope that he that feeds Mouths will send Meat. He that feeds the Brood of the Ravens, will not starve the Seed of the Righteous.

2. *Laban's Desire of his Stay, v. 27.* In love to himself, not to Jacob, or to his Wives or Children, he speaks him very fair to continue his Chief Shepherd, praying him of all love not to leave him; *If I have found favour in thine eyes, tarry.* Note, Churlish, selfish Men know how to give good Words when it is to serve their own Ends. Laban found that his Stock had wonderfully increased with Jacob's good Management, and he owns it with very good Expressions of Respect both to God and Jacob: *I have learned by Experience that the Lord has blessed me for thy sake.* Observe, 1. *Laban's Learning*: I have learned by Experience. Note, There's many a profitable good Lesson to be learned by Experience. We are very unapt Scholars if we have not learned by Experience the Evil of Sin, the Treachery of our own Hearts, the Vanity of the World, the Goodness of God, the Gains of Godliness, and the like. 2. *Laban's Lesson*: He owns, 1. That his Prosperity was owing to God's Blessing; *The Lord has blessed me.* Note, Worldly Men, that choose their Portion in this Life, are oft blessed with an abundance of this World's Goods. Common Blessings are given plentifully to many that have no Title to Covenant Blessings. 2. That Jacob's Piety had brought that Blessing upon him: *The Lord has blessed me* (not for my own sake; Let not such a Man as Laban that lives without God in the World, think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord, *Jam. 1. 7.*) but for thy sake. Note, 1. Good Men are Blessings to the Places where they live, even there where they live meanly and obscurely, as Jacob in the Field, and Joseph in the Prison, *Gen. 39. 23.* 2. God often blesteth bad Men with outward Mercies for the sake of their godly Relations, tho it is seldom that they have either the Wit to see it, or the Grace to own it, as Laban did here.

3. The new Bargain they came upon. Laban's Craft and Covetousness took advantage of Jacob's Plainness, Honesty, and good Nature; and perceiving that Jacob began to be won upon by his fair Speeches, instead of making him a generous Offer, and bidding high as he ought to have done, all things considered, he put it upon him to make his Demands, *v. 28.* Appoint me thy Wages, knowing he would be very modest in them, and would ask less than he could for shame offer. Jacob accordingly makes a Proposal to him, in which, 1. He shews what Reason he had to insist upon so much, considering, (1.) That Laban was bound in Gratitude to do well for him, because he had not only served him faithfully, but very successfully, *v. 30.* Yet here observe, how he speaks like himself, very modestly: Laban had said, *The Lord hath blessed me*

me for thy sake; Jacob will not say so, but the Lord hath blessed thee since my coming. *Note*, Humble Saints take more Pleasure in doing Good than in hearing of it again. (2.) That he himself was bound in Duty to take Care of his own Family. Now when shall I provide for my own House also? *Note*, Faith and Charity, tho they are excellent things, must not take us off from making necessary Provisions for our own support, and the support of our Families. We must, like Jacob, trust in the Lord, and do Good, and yet we must, like him, provide for our own Houses also; he that doth not, is worse than an Infidel, 1 Tim. 5. 8.

2. He is willing to refer himself to the Providence of God, which he knew extends it self to the smallest things, even the Colour of the Cattle, and he will be content to have for his Wages, the Sheep and Goats of such and such a Colour, Speckled, Spotted, and Brown, which should hereafter be brought forth, v. 32, 33. This he thinks will be a most effectual Way both to prevent Laban's cheating him, and to secure himself from being suspected of cheating Laban. Some think he chose this Colour, because in Canaan it was generally most affected and delighted in: Their Shepherds in Canaan are called *Nekodim*, *Amos* 1. 1. the same Word here used for *speckled*: And Laban was willing to consent to this Bargain, because he thought if those few he had that were now *speckled and spotted*, were separated from the rest, which by Agreement was to be done immediately, the Body of the Flock which Jacob was to tend, being of one Colour, either all Black, or all White, would produce few or none of mixt Colours, and so he should have Jacob's Service for nothing, or next to nothing. According to this Bargain, those few that were Party-colour'd, were separated, and put into the Hands of Laban's Sons, and sent three days Journey off; so great was Laban's Jealousy, lest any of those should mix with the rest of the Flock to the Advantage of Jacob. And now a fine Bargain Jacob has made for himself! Is this his providing for his own House, to put it upon such an Uncertainty? If these Cattle bring forth, as usually Cattle do, young ones of the same Colour with themselves, he must still serve for nothing, and be a Drudge and a Beggar all the Days of his Life; but he knows whom he has trusted, and the Event shewed, 1. That he took the best Way that could be with Laban, who otherwise would certainly have been too hard for him. And, 2. That it was not in vain to rely upon the divine Providence, which owns and blesses honest humble Diligence. Those that find Men whom they deal with unjust and unkind, shall not find God so, but that some Way or other he will right the injured, and be a good Pay-master to those that commit their Cause to him.

37 And Jacob took him rods of green poplar, and of the hasel and chestnut-tree; and pilled white strakes in them, and made the white appear which was in the rods. 38 And he set the rods which he had pilled before the flocks in the gutters in the watering-troughs, when the flocks came to drink; that they should conceive when they came to drink. 39 And the flocks conceived before the rods, and brought forth cattle ring-straked, speckled, and spotted. 40 And Jacob did separate the lambs, and set the faces of the flocks towards the ring-straked, and all the brown in the flock of Laban: and he put his own flocks by themselves; and put them not unto Laban's cattle. 41 And it came to pass whensoever the stronger cattle did conceive, that Jacob laid the rods before the eyes of the cattle in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods. 42 But when the cattle were feeble, he put them not in: so the feeble were Laban's, and the stronger Jacob's. 43 And the man increased exceedingly, and had much cattle, and maid-servants, and men-servants, and camels, and asses.

Here's Jacob's honest Policy to make his Bargain more advantageous to himself than it was likely to be: And if he had not taken some Course to help himself, it would have been an ill Bargain indeed, which he knew Laban would never have considered, but would have been well pleased to see him a loser, so little did he consult any one's Interest but his own. Now Jacob's Contrivances were,

1. To set pilled Sticks before the Cattle where they were watered, that looking much at those unusual party-coloured Sticks, by the Power of Imagination they might bring forth young

ones in like manner party-colour'd, v. 37, 38, 39. Probably this Custom was commonly used by the Shepherds of Canaan who coveted to have their Cattle of this motly Colour. *Note*, It becomes a Man to be Master of his Trade, whatever it is, and to be not only industrious but ingenious in it, and to be vers'd in all its lawful Arts and Mysteries; for what's a Man but his Trade? There is a Discretion which God teaches the Husbandman (as plain a Trade as that is) and which he ought to learn, *Isa*. 28. 26.

2. When he began to have a Stock of ring-straked, and brown, he contrived to set them first, and to put the Faces of the rest towards them, with the same Design as he did the former; but would not let his own that were motly-colour'd, look at Laban's that were self-colour'd, v. 40. Strong impressions it seems are made by the Eye, with which therefore we have need to make a Covenant,

3. When he found his Project succeeded, through the special Blessing of God upon it, he contrived, by using it only with the stronger Cattle, to secure to himself those that were most valuable, leaving the feeble to Laban, v. 41, 42. Thus Jacob increased exceedingly, v. 43, and grew very Rich in a little time. This Success of his Policy, 'tis true, was not sufficient to justify it, if there had been any thing fraudulent or unjust in it, which we are sure there was not, for he did it by divine Direction, *Chap*. 31. 12. Nor was there any thing in the Thing it self, but the honest Improvement of a fair Bargain, which the divine Providence wonderfully prospered, both in Justice to Jacob whom Laban had wronged, and dealt hardly with, and in pursuance of the particular Promises made to him of the Tokens of the divine Favour. *Note*, Those who while their Beginning is small are humble and honest, contented and industrious, are in a likely Way to see their latter End greatly increasing: He that is faithful in a little shall be intrusted with more; that is faithful in that which is another Man's, shall be intrusted with something of his own. Jacob that had been a just Servant, became a rich Master.

C H A P. XXXI.

Jacob was a very honest, good Man, a Man of great Devotion and Integrity, and yet he had more Trouble and Vexation than any of the Patriarchs. He had left his Father's House in a Fright, came to his Uncle in Distress, very hard Usage he had met with there, and now is going back surrounded with Fears. Here's, 1. His Resolution to return, v. 1—16. 2. His clandestine Departure, v. 17—21. 3. Laban's pursuit of him in Displeasure, v. 22—25. The hot Words that passed between them, v. 26—42. 5. Their amicable Agreement at last, v. 43, ad fin.

AND he heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, Jacob hath taken away all that was our fathers; and of that which was our fathers hath he gotten all this glory. 2 And Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban, and behold, it was not toward him as before. 3 And the LORD said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee. 4 And Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field unto his flock, 5 And said unto them, I see your fathers countenance, that it is not toward me as before: but the God of my father hath been with me. 6 And ye know that with all my power I have served your father. 7 And your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times: but God suffered him not to hurt me. 8 If he said thus, The speckled shall be thy wages; then all the cattle bare speckled: and if he said thus, The ring-straked shall be thy hire; then bare all the cattle ring-straked. 9 Thus God hath taken away the cattle of your father, and given them to me. 10 And it came to pass at the time that the cattle conceived, that I lifted up mine eyes, and saw in a dream, and behold, the rams which leaped upon the cattle were ring-straked, speckled, and griffled. 11 And the angel of God spake unto me in a dream, saying, Jacob; And I said, Here am I. 12 And he said, Lift up now thine eyes and see, all the rams which leap upon the cattle are ring-straked, speck-

speckled, and grissled: for I have seen all that Laban doth unto thee. I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred. 14 And Rachel and Leah answered, and said unto him, *Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our fathers house?* 15 Are we not counted of him strangers? for he hath sold us, and hath quite devoured also our money. 16 For all the riches which God hath taken from our father, that is ours, and our childrens: now then whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do.

Jacob is here taking up a Resolution presently to quit his Uncle's Service, to take what he had and go back to Canaan. And his Resolution he took up upon a just Provocation, by Divine Direction, and with the Advice and Consent of his Wives.

1. Upon a just Provocation, for Laban and his Sons were become very cross and ill-natur'd towards him, so that he could not stay among them with Safety and Satisfaction.

(1.) Laban's Sons shewed it in what they said, v. 1. it should seem they said it in Jacob's hearing with a Design to vex him. The last Chapter began with Rachel's envying Leah, this begins with Laban's Sons envying Jacob. Observe, (1.) How greedily they magnify Jacob's Prosperity. He has gotten all this Glory. And what is this Glory that they make so much ado about? 'Twas a parcel of brown Sheep, and speckled Goats, (and perhaps the fine Colours made them seem more glorious) and some Camels and Asses, and such like Trading, and that was all this Glory. Note, Riches are glorious Things in the Eyes of carnal People, while to all those that are conversant with heavenly Things, they have no Glory in comparison with the Glory which excelleth. Mens over-valuing worldly Wealth, is that fundamental Error which is the Root of Covetousness, Envy, and all Evil. (2.) How basely they reflect upon Jacob's Fidelity, as if what he had, he had not gotten honestly. Jacob has taken away all that was our Father's. Not all sure: What was become of those Cattle which were committed to the Custody of Laban's Sons, and sent three Days Journey off? Chap. 30. 35, 36. They mean all that was committed to him, but speaking invidiously, they express themselves thus generally. Note, 1. Those that are never so careful to keep a good Conscience, yet cannot always be sure of a Good Name. 2. This is one of the Vanities and Vexations which attend outward Prosperity, that it makes a Man to be envied of his Neighbours, Eccl. 4. 4. And, Who can stand before Envy? Pr. 27. 4. Whom Heaven blesses, Hell curses, and all its Children on Earth.

(2.) Laban himself said little, but his Countenance was not towards Jacob, as it used to be, and Jacob could not but take notice of it, v. 2, 5. He was but a Churl at the best, but now he was more churlish than formerly. Note, Envy is a Sin that often appears in the Countenance; hence we read of an Evil Eye, Pr. 23. 6. Sour Looks may do a great deal towards the Ruin of Peace and Love in a Family, and the making of those uneasy, whose Comfort we ought to be tender of. Laban's angry Countenance lost him the greatest Blessing his Family ever had, and justly.

2. He resolved it by Divine Direction, and under the Convoy of a Promise, v. 3. The Lord said unto Jacob, Return, and I will be with thee. Tho Jacob had met with very hard Usage here, yet he would not quit his Place till God bid him: He came thither by Orders from Heaven, and there he would stay till he was order'd back. Note, It is our Duty to set ourselves, and 'twill be our Comfort to see our selves under God's Guidance, both in our going out, and in our coming in. The Direction he had from Heaven is more fully related in the Account he gives of it to his Wives, v. 10, 11, 12, 13. where he tells them of the Dream he had about the Cattle, and the wonderful Increase of those of his Colour; and how the Angel of God, in that Dream (for I suppose the Dream spoken of, v. 10. and that, v. 11. to be the same) took notice of the Workings of his Fancy in his Sleep, and instructed him, that it was not by chance, nor by his own Policy that he obtained that great Advantage: but, (1.) By the Providence of God, who had taken notice of the Hardships Laban had put upon him, and took this Way to right him: For I have seen all that Laban doth unto thee, and herein I have an Eye to that. Note, There is more of Equity in the Distributions of the Divine Providence than we are aware of, and by them the Wronged are righted really, tho perhaps insensibly. Nor was it only by the Justice of Providence that Jacob was thus enriched, but, (2.) In Performance of the Promise, intimated in that, v. 13. I am the God of Bethel. That was the Place where the Covenant was renewed with him. Note, Worldly Prosperity and Success is then doubly sweet and comfortable, when we see it flowing not from common Providence, but from Cove-

nant Love; to perform the Mercy promised; when we have it from God as the God of Bethel, from those Promises of the Life which now is, that belongs to Godliness: even when he had this hopeful Prospect of growing Rich with Laban, he must think of returning. When the World begins to smile upon us, we must remember it is not our Home. Now arise (v. 13.) and return; (1.) To thy Devotions in Canaan, the Solemnities of which had perhaps been much intermitted while he was with Laban. The Times of this Servitude God had winked at, but now return to the Place where thou anointedst the Pillar, and vowedst the Vow. Now thou beginnest to grow Rich, it's time to think of an Altar and Sacrifices again. (2.) To thy Comforts in Canaan, Return to the Land of thy Kindred. He was here among his near Kindred; but those only he must look upon as his Kindred, the Kindred he must live and die with, to whom pertained the Covenant. Note, The Heirs of Canaan must never reckon themselves at home till they come thither, however they may seem to take root here.

3. He resolved it with the Knowledge and Consent of his Wives. He sent for Rachel and Leah to him to the Field, v. 4. either that he might discourse them more privately; or because one would not come to the other's Apartment, and he would willingly talk with them together, or because he had Work to do in the Field which he would not leave. Note, Husbands that love their Wives will communicate their Purposes and Intentions to them. When there is a mutual Affection, there will be a mutual Confidence. And the Prudence of the Wife should engage the Heart of her Husband safely to trust in her, Prov. 31. 11. He told his Wives, 1. How Faithfully he had served their Father, v. 6. Note, If others do not do their Duty to us, yet we shall have the Comfort of having done ours to them. 2. How Unfaithfully their Father had dealt with him, v. 7. He would never stick to any Bargain that he made with him, but after the first Year, still as he saw Providence favour Jacob with the Colour agreed on, every half Year of the remaining Five, he changed it for some other Colour, which made it ten times; as if he thought not only to deceive Jacob, but to deceive the Divine Providence which manifestly smiled upon him. Note, Those that deal honestly, are not always honestly dealt with. 3. How God had owned him notwithstanding; not only protecting him from Laban's Ill-Will, (God suffered him not to hurt me: Note, Those that keep close to God shall be kept safe by him) but providing plentifully for him, notwithstanding Laban's Design to ruin him, v. 9. God has taken away the Cattle of your Father, and given them to me. Thus the righteous God paid Jacob for his hard Service out of Laban's Estate; as afterwards he paid the Seed of Jacob for their Service of the Egyptians, with their Spoils. Note, 1. God is not unrighteous to forget his People's Work and Labour of Love, tho Men be so, Heb. 6. 10. Providence has Ways of making those Honest in the Event, that are not so in their Design. 2. The Wealth of the Sinner is laid up for the Just, Pro. 13. 22. 4. He told them of the Command God had given him in a Dream to return to his own Country, (v. 13.) that they might not suspect his Resolution to arise from Inconstancy, or any Disaffection to their Country or Family, but might see it to proceed from a Principle of Obedience to his God, and Dependence on him. Lastly, His Wives cheerfully consented to his Resolution. They also remonstrated their Grievances, complaining that their Father had been not only unkind but unjust to them, v. 14, 15, 16. That he looked upon them as Strangers, and was without Natural Affection towards them: and whereas Jacob had looked upon the Wealth which God had passed over from Laban to him as his Wages, they look upon it as their Portions; so that both Ways God forced Laban to pay his Debts, both to his Servant, and to his Daughters. So then it seemed, (1.) They were weary of their own People, and their Fathers House, and could easily forget them. Note, This good Use we should make of the unkind Usage we meet with from the World, we should fit the more loose to it, and be willing to leave it, and desirous to be at Home. (2.) They were willing to go along with their Husband, and to put themselves with him under the Divine Conduct; Whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do. Note, Those Wives that are their Husbands meet Helps, will never be their Hindrances in doing that which God calls 'em to.

17 Then Jacob rose up, and set his sons and his wives upon camels. 18 And he carried away all his cattle, and all his goods which he had gotten, the cattle of his getting, which he had gotten in Padan-aram; for to go to Isaac his father in the land of Canaan. 19 And Laban went to shear his sheep: and Rachel had stolen the images that were her fathers. 20 And Jacob stole away unawares to Laban the Syrian, in that he told him not that he fled. 21 So he fled with all that he had, and rose up, and passed over the river, and set his

his face toward the mount Gilead. 22 And it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob was fled. 23 And he took his brethren with him, and pursued after him seven days journey; and they overtook him in the mount Gilead. 24 And God came to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and said unto him, Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad.

Here's, 1. *Jacob's Flight from Laban.* We may suppose he had been long considering of it, and casting for it; but when now at last God had given him positive Orders to go, he made no Delay, nor was he *disobedient to the heavenly Vision*. The first Opportunity that offer'd it self, he laid hold on, when Laban was shearing his Sheep, v. 19. that Part of his Flock which was in the Hands of his Sons *three Days Journey* off. Now, 1. 'Tis certain 'twas lawful for Jacob to leave his Service suddenly, without giving a Quarter's Warning. 'Twas not only justified by the particular Instructions God gave him, but warranted by the Fundamental Law of Self-Preservation, which directs us when we are in Danger to shift for our own Safety, as far as we can do it without wronging our Consciences. 2. It was his Prudence to *steal away unawares to Laban*, lest if Laban had known he should have hinder'd him, or plunder'd him. 3. 'Twas honestly done to take no more than *his own* with him, the *Cattle of his getting*, v. 18. He took what Providence gave him, and was content with that, and would not take the Repair of his Damages into his own Hands. Yet Rachel was not so honest as her Husband, she stole *her Father's Images*, (v. 19.) and carried them away with her. The Hebrew calls them *Teraphim*. Some think they were only little Representations of the Ancestors of the Family in Statue or Picture, which Rachel had a particular Fondness for, and was desirous to have with her now she was going into another Country. It should rather seem they were Images for a Religious Use; *Penates*, Household-Gods, either worshipped, or consulted as Oracles; and we are willing to hope (with Bishop Patrick) that she took them away (not out of Covetousness of the rich Metal they were made of, much less for her own Use, or out of any superstitious Fear left Laban, by consulting his *Teraphim*, might know which Way they were gone; Jacob, no doubt dealt with his Wives as a *Man of Knowledge*, and they were better taught than so) but with a Design to convince her Father of the Folly of his Regard to those as Gods which could not secure themselves, *Isa. 46. 1, 2.*

2. *Laban's Pursuit of Jacob.* Tidings were brought him on the third Day that Jacob was fled; he immediately raises the whole Clan, takes his Brethren, i. e. the Relations of his Family that were all in his Interests, and he pursues Jacob (as Pharaoh and his Egyptians afterwards pursue the Seed of Jacob) to bring him back into Bondage again, or with Design to strip him of what he had. Seven Days Journey he marched in Pursuit of him, v. 23. He would not have taken half that Pains to have visited his best Friends. But the truth is, Bad Men will do more to serve their sinful Passions than Good Men will to serve their just Affections, and are more vehement in their Anger than in their Love.

Well, at length Laban overtook him, and the very Night before he came up with him, God interposed in the Quarrel, rebuked Laban, and shelter'd Jacob, charging Laban not to speak unto him either bad or good, v. 24. i. e. say nothing against his going on with his Journey, for the thing proceedeth from the Lord. The same *Hebraism* we have, *Gen. 24. 50.* Laban, during his seven Days March, had been full of Rage against Jacob, and was now full of Hopes that his Lust should be satisfied upon him, (*Exod. 15. 9.*) But God comes to him, and with one Word ties his Hands, tho he do not turn his Heart. Note, 1. In a Dream, and in *Slumberings upon the Bed*, God has Ways of opening the Ears of Men, and sealing their Instruction, *Job 33. 15, 16.* Thus he admonisheth Men by their Consciences, in secret Whispers, which the Man of Wisdom will hear and heed. 2. The Safety of Good Men is very much owing to the Hold God has of the Consciences of Bad Men, and the Access he has to them. 3. God sometimes appears wonderfully for the Deliverance of his People, then when they are upon the very Brink of Ruin. The Jews were saved from Haman's Plot when the King's Decree drew near to be put in Execution, *Esth. 9. 1.*

25 Then Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the mount: and Laban with his brethren pitched in the mount of Gilead. 26 And Laban said to Jacob, What hast thou done, that thou hast stolen away unawares to me, and carried away my daughters, as captives taken with the sword? 27 Wherefore didst thou flee away

secretly, and steal away from me? and didst not tell me, that I might have sent thee away with mirth, and with songs, with tabret, and with harp? 28 And hast not suffered me to kiss my sons and my daughters? thou hast now done foolishly in so doing. 29 It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt: but the God of your father spake unto me yesternight, saying, Take thou heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad. 30 And now *though* thou wouldst needs be gone, because thou sore longedst after thy fathers house; yet wherefore hast thou stolen my gods? 31 And Jacob answered and said to Laban, Because I was afraid: for I said, Peradventure thou wouldst take by force thy daughters from me. 32 With whomsoever thou findest thy gods, let him not live: before our brethren discern thou what is thine with me, and take it to thee: for Jacob knew not that Rachel had stolen them. 33 And Laban went into Jacobs tent, and into Leahs tent, and into the two maid-servants tents; but he found them not. Then went he out of Leahs tent, and entred into Rachels tent. 34 Now Rachel had taken the images, and put them in the camels furniture, and sat upon them: and Laban searched all the tent, but found them not. 35 And she said to her father, Let it not displease my lord that I cannot rise up before thee; for the custom of women is upon me: and he searched, but found not the images.

We have here the Reasoning, not to say the Rallying that was between Laban and Jacob, at their meeting in that Mountain which was afterward called Gilead, v. 25. Here's,

1. The High Charge which Laban exhibited against him. He accuses him, 1. As a Runagate, that had unjustly deserted his Service: To represent him as a Criminal, he will have it thought that he intended Kindness to his Daughters, v. 27, 28. that he would have dismissed them with all the Marks of Love and Honour that could be, that he would have made a solemn Business of it, would have kissed his little Grand-Children (and that was all he would have given them) and according to the foolish Custom of the Country, would have sent them away with *Mirth and with Songs, with Tabret and with Harp*. Not as Rebekah was sent away out of the same Family above One Hundred and Twenty Years before, with Prayers and Blessings, *Chap. 24. 60.* but with Sport and Merriment; which was a Sign that Religion was very much decayed in the Family, and they had lost their Seriousness. However, he pretends they should have been treated with Respect at parting. Note, It is common for ill Men, when they are disappointed in their malicious Projects, to pretend that they designed nothing but what was kind and fair. When they cannot do the Mischief they intended, they are loth it should be thought that ever they intended it. When they have not done what they should have done, they come off with this Excuse, that they would have done it. Men may thus be deceived, but God cannot. He likewise suggests that Jacob had some ill Design in stealing away thus, (v. 26.) that he took his Wives away as Captives. Note, Those that mean ill themselves, are most apt to put the worst Construction upon what others do innocently. The insinuating and aggravating of Faults, are the Artifices of a Designing Malice; and those must be represented (though never so unjustly) as intending ill against whom ill is intended. Upon the whole Matter, 1. He boasts of his own Power, v. 29. *It is in the Power of my Hand to do you Hurt*: He supposeth that he had both Right on his side, a good Action (as we say) against Jacob, and Strength on his side, either to revenge the Wrong, or recover the Right. Note, Ill People commonly value themselves much upon their Power to do Hurt, whereas a Power to do Good is much more valuable. And those that will do nothing to make themselves amiable, love to be thought formidable. And yet, 2. He owns himself under the Check and Restraint of God's Power; and though it redounded much to the Credit and Comfort of Jacob, he cannot avoid telling him the Caution God had given him the Night before in a Dream, *Speak not to Jacob good or bad*. Note, As God has all wicked Instruments in a Chain, so when he pleases he can make them sensible of it, and force them to own it to his Praise, as Protector of the Good, as Balaam did. Or we may look upon this as an Instance of some Conscience Laban made of God's express Prohi-

Prohibitions. As bad as he was, he durst not injure one whom he saw to be the particular Care of Heaven. *Note*, A Great deal of Mischief would be prevented if Men would but attend to the Caveats which their own Consciences give them in Slumberings upon the Bed, and regard the Voice of God in them.

2. He accuses him as a Thief, v. 30. Rather than own that he had given him any Colour of Provocation to depart, he is willing to impute it to a foolish Fondness he had for his Father's House, which made him that he would needs be gone, but then (saith he) *wherefore hast thou stolen my Gods?* Foolish Man! to call those his Gods that could be stolen! Could he expect Protection from them that could neither resist nor discover their Invaders? Happy are they who have the Lord for their God, for they have a God that they cannot be robbed of. Enemies may steal our Goods, but not our God. Here *Laban* lays to *Jacob's* Charge things that he knew not, the common Distress of oppressed Innocency.

2. *Jacob's* Apology for himself. Those that commit their Cause to God, yet are not forbidden to plead it themselves with meekness and fear.

1. As to the Charge of stealing away his own Wives, he clears himself by giving the true Reason why he went away unknown to *Laban*, v. 31. he feared lest *Laban* would by Force take away his Daughters, and so oblige him by the Bond of his Affection to his Wives to continue in his Service. *Note*, Those that are unjust in the least, it may be suspected will be unjust also in much, *Luke* xvi. 10. If *Laban* deceived *Jacob* in his Wages, its likely he will make no Conscience of Robbing him of his Wives, and putting those asunder whom God had joined together. What may not be feared from Men that have no Principle of Honesty?

2. As to the Charge of stealing *Laban's* Gods, he pleads not Guilty, v. 32. He not only did not take them himself (he was not so fond of 'em) but he did not know that they were taken. Yet perhaps he spoke too hastily and inconsiderately when he said, Whoever has taken them, *Let him not live*; and might reflect upon it with some bitterness, when not long after *Rachel* who had taken them died suddenly in Travail. How just soever we think ourselves to be, 'tis best to forbear Imprecations lest they fall heavier than we imagine.

3. The diligent Search *Laban* made for his Gods, v. 33, 34, 35. partly out of hatred to *Jacob*, whom he would gladly have an Occasion to quarrel with, partly out of Love to his Idols, which he was loth to part with. We do not find that he searched *Jacob's* Flocks for stolen Cattle; but he searched his Furniture for stolen Gods. He was of *Micah's* Mind, *Ye have taken away my Gods, and what have I more?* *Jud.* xviii. 24. Were the Worshipers of false Gods so set upon their Idols, did they thus walk in the Name of their Gods? and shall not we be as Sollicitous in our Enquiries after the true God? when he is justly departed from us, how carefully should we ask, where is God my Maker? O that I knew where I might find him? *Job* xxiii. 3. *Laban* after all his Searches missed of finding his Gods, and was baffled in his Enquiry with a Sham, but our God will not only be found of those that seek him, but they shall find him their Bountiful Rewarder.

36 And *Jacob* was wroth, and chode with *Laban*: and *Jacob* answered, and said to *Laban*, What is my trespass? What is my sin that thou hast so hotly pursued after me? 37 Whereas thou hast searched all my stuff, what hast thou found of all thy household-stuff? set it here before my brethren and thy brethren, that they may judge betwixt us both. 38 This twenty years have I been with thee; thy ewes and thy she-goats have not cast their young, and the rams of thy flock have I not eaten. 39 That which was torn of beasts, I brought not unto thee, I bare the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day, or stolen by night. 40 Thus I was, in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes. 41 Thus have I been twenty years in thy house; I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy cattle: and thou hast changed my wages ten times. 42 Except the God of my father, the God of *Abraham*, and the fear of *Isaac* had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away now empty: God hath seen mine affliction and the labour of my hands, and rebuked thee yesterday.

See in these Verses, (1.) The Power of Provocation: *Jacob's* Natural Temper was mild and calm, and Grace had improved it; he was a smooth Man, and a plain Man, and yet *Laban's* unreasonable Carriage towards him put him into a Heat that transported him into some Indecency, v. 36, 37. His Chiding with *Laban* was excusable, but not justifiable, nor is it written for our Imitation. Grievous Words stir up Anger, and commonly do but make ill worse. 'Tis a very great Affront to one that bears an honest Mind to be charged with Dishonesty, and yet even that we must learn to bear with Patience, committing our Cause to God. (2.) The Comfort of a Good Conscience. This was *Jacob's* rejoicing, that when *Laban* accused him, his own Conscience acquitted him, and witnessed for him that he had been in all things willing and careful to live honestly, *Heb.* xiii. 18. *Note*, Those that in any Employment have dealt faithfully, if they cannot obtain the Credit of it with Men, yet shall have the Comfort of it in their own Bosoms. (3.) The Character of a Good Servant; and particularly of a faithful Shepherd: *Jacob* had approved himself such a one, v. 38, 40. (1.) He was very careful, so that through his Oversight or Neglect, the Ewes did not cast their Young: His Piety also procured a Blessing upon his Master's Effects that were under his Hands. *Note*, Servants should take no less Care of what they are intrusted with for their Master's, than if they were intrusted to it as their own. (2.) He was very Honest; and took none of that for his own eating which was not allowed him. He contented himself with mean Fare, and coveted not to feast upon the Rams of the Flock. *Note*, Servants must not be dainty in their Food, nor covet what is forbidden them, but in that and other Instances shew all good Fidelity. (3.) He was very laborious: v. 40. He stuck to his Business all Weathers; and bore both Heat and Cold with invincible Patience. *Note*, Men of Business that intend to make something of it, must resolve to endure Hardness. *Jacob* is here an Example to Ministers; They also are Shepherds, of whom it is required that they be true to their Trust, and willing to take Pains. (4.) The Character of a hard Master: *Laban* had been such a one to *Jacob*. Those are ill Masters, (1.) Who exact from their Servants that which is unjust, by obliging them to make good that which is not damaged by any Default of theirs. This *Laban* did, v. 39. Nay, If there have been a Neglect, yet 'tis unjust to punish above the Proportion of the Fault. That may be an inconsiderable Damage to the Master, which would go near to ruin a Poor Servant. (2.) Those also are ill Masters who deny to their Servants that which is just and equal. This *Laban* did, v. 41. 'Twas unreasonable for him to make *Jacob* serve for his Daughters when he had in Reversion so great an Estate secured to him by the Promise of God himself: As it was also to give him his Daughters without Portions, when it was in the Power of his Hands to do well for them. Thus he robbed the Poor because he was poor, as he did also by changing his Wages. (5.) The Care of Providence for the Protection of injured Innocency, v. 42. God took Cognizance of the Wrong done to *Jacob*, and repaid him whom *Laban* would otherwise have sent empty away, and rebuked *Laban* who otherwise would have swallowed him up. *Note*, God is the Patron of the oppressed: And those who are wronged and yet not ruined, cast down and yet not destroyed, must acknowledge him in their Preservation, and give him the Glory of it. Observe, 1. *Jacob* speaks of God as the God of his Father, intimating that he thought himself unworthy to be thus regarded, but was beloved for his Father's sake. 2. He calls him the God of *Abraham* and the Fear of *Isaac*: for *Abraham* was dead, and gone to that World where perfect Love casts out Fear, but *Isaac* was yet alive, Sanctifying the Lord in his Heart as his Fear and his Dread.

43 And *Laban* answered, and said unto *Jacob*, These daughters are my daughters, and these children are my children, and these cattle are my cattle, and all that thou seest is mine: and what can I do this day unto these my daughters, or unto their children which they have born? 44 Now therefore come thou, let us make a covenant, I and thou; and let it be for a witness between me and thee. 45 And *Jacob* took a stone, and set it up for a pillar. 46 And *Jacob* said unto his brethren, Gather stones; and they took stones, and made an heap: and they did eat there upon the heap. 47 And *Laban* called it *Jegar sahadutha*: but *Jacob* called it *Galeed*. 48 And *Laban* said, This heap is a witness between me and thee this day. Therefore was the name of it called *Galeed*: 49 And *Mizpah*; for he said, The LORD watch between me and thee,

thee, when we are absent one from another. 50 If thou shalt afflict my daughters, or if thou shalt take other wives besides my daughters, no man is with us; See, God is witness betwixt me and thee. 51 And Laban said to Jacob, Behold this heap, and behold this pillar, which I have cast betwixt me and thee; 52 This heap be witness, and this pillar be witness, that I will not pass over this heap to thee, and that thou shalt not pass over this heap and this pillar unto me, for harm. 53 The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge betwixt us. And Jacob sware by the fear of his father Isaac. 54 Then Jacob offered sacrifice upon the mount, and called his brethren to eat bread: and they did eat bread, and tarried all night in the mount. 55 And early in the morning Laban rose up, and kissed his sons and his daughters, and blessed them, and Laban departed, and returned unto his place.

We have here the Comprising of the Matter between Laban and Jacob. Laban had nothing to say in Reply to Jacob's Remonstrance, he could neither justify himself nor condemn Jacob, but was convicted by his own Conscience of the Wrong he had done him. And therefore desires to hear no more of that Matter. He is not willing to own himself in a Fault, nor to ask Jacob forgiveness, and make him Satisfaction, as he ought to have done. But, 1. He turns it off with a Profession of Kindness for Jacob's Wives and Children, v. 43. *These Daughters are my Daughters.* When he cannot excuse what he has done, he doth in effect own what he should have done: He should have treated them as his own, but he had counted them Strangers, v. 15. Note, It is common for those who are without natural Affection to pretend much to it when it will serve a turn. Or perhaps Laban said this in a vain-glorious way, as one that loved to talk big, great swelling Words of Vanity; all that thou seest is mine: 'Twas not so, 'twas all Jacob's, and he had paid dear for it, yet Jacob let him have his saying, perceiving him coming into a better Humour. Note, Property lies near the Hearts of Worldly People. They love to brag of it, this is mine, and t'other is mine, as Nabal, 1 Sam. xxv. 11. *my bread and my water.*

2. He proposeth a Covenant of Friendship between them, which Jacob readily agrees to, without insisting upon Laban's submission, much less his Restitution. Note, When Quarrels happen, we should be willing to be Friends again upon any Terms: Peace and Love are such valuable Jewels that we can scarce buy them too dear. Better sit down losers than go on in Strife. Now observe here,

1. The Substance of this Covenant. Jacob left it wholly to Laban to settle it. The Tenor of it was, (1.) That Jacob should be a good Husband to his Wives, that he should not afflict 'em, nor Marry other Wives besides them, v. 50. Jacob had never given him any Cause to suspect that he would be any other than a kind Husband, yet as if he had he was willing to come under this Engagement. Tho' Laban had afflicted them himself, yet he will bind Jacob that he shall not afflict them. Note, Those that are injurious themselves, are commonly most jealous of others. And those that do not do their own Duty are most peremptory in demanding Duty from others. (2.) That he should never be an ill Neighbour to Laban, v. 52. 'Twas agreed that no Act of Hostility should ever pass between them, that Jacob should forgive and forget all the Wrongs he had received, and not remember them against Laban or his Family in aftertimes. Note, We may resent an Injury which yet we may not revenge.

2. The Ceremony of this Covenant, 'twas made and ratified with great Solemnity, according to the Usages of those times. 1. A Pillar was erected, v. 45. and a Heap of Stones raised, v. 46. to perpetuate the Memory of the thing, the way of recording Agreements by Writing being then either not known or not used. 2. A Sacrifice was offered, v. 54. a Sacrifice of Peace-offerings. Note, Our Peace with God is that which puts true Comfort into our Peace with our Friends. If Parties contend, the Reconciliation of both to him will facilitate their Reconciliations one with another. 3. They did eat Bread together, v. 46. jointly partaking of the Feast upon the Sacrifice, v. 54. This was in token of a hearty Reconciliation. Covenants of Friendship were anciently ratified, by the Parties eating and drinking together. It was in the nature of a Love-Feast. 4. They solemnly appealed to God concerning their Sincerity herein. (1.) As a Witness, v. 49. *The Lord watch between me and thee, i. e. The Lord take Cognizance of every thing that shall be done on either side in Violation of this League.* When we are out of one anothers Sight, let this be a restraint upon us, that where-ever we are we are under God's

Eye. This Appeal is convertible into a Prayer. Friends at a Distance from each other may take the Comfort of this, that when they cannot know nor Succor one another, God watcheth between them, and hath his Eye on them both. (2.) As a Judge, v. 53. *The God of Abraham* from whom Jacob was descended, and *The God of Nahor* from whom Laban was descended, the God of their Father, the common Ancestor from whom they were both descended, judge betwixt us. God's Relation to them is thus expressed to intimate that they worshipped one and the same God, upon which Consideration there ought to be no Enmity betwixt them. Note, Those that have one God should have one Heart: They that agree in Religion should strive to agree in every thing else. God is Judge between contending Parties, and he will judge Righteously, whoever doth wrong it is at their peril. 5. They gave a new Name to the Place, v. 47, 48. Laban called it in Syriac, and Jacob in Hebrew, *The Heap of Witness.* And v. 49. 'twas called Mizpah, A Watch-Tower. Posterity being included in the League, care was taken that thus the Memory of it should be preserved. These Names are applicable to the Seals of the Gospel-Covenant which are Witnesses to us if we be faithful, but Witnesses against us, if we be false. The Name Jacob gave this Heap stuck by it, Galeded, not the Name Laban gave it: In all this encounter Laban was noisy, and full of Words, affecting to say much, Jacob was silent and said little; when Laban appealed to God under many Titles, Jacob only sware by the Fear of his Father Isaac, i. e. the God whom his Father Isaac feared, who had never served other Gods, as Abraham and Nahor had done. Two Words of Jacob's were more memorable than all Laban's Speeches and vain Repetitions. For the Words of Wisemen are heard in quiet more than the Cry of him that ruleth among Fools, Eccl. ix. 17. Lastly, After all this angry Parley they part Friends, v. 55. Laban very lovingly kissed his Sons and his Daughters, and blessed them; and then went back in Peace. Note, God is oftentimes better to us than our Fears, and strangely overrules the Spirits of Men in our Favours, beyond what we could have expected, for it is not in vain to trust in him.

CHAP. XXXII.

We have here Jacob still upon his Journey towards Canaan. Never did so many memorable things occur in any March, as in this of Jacob's little Family. By the Way he meets, 1. with Good Tidings from his God, v. 1, 2. 2. With bad Tidings from his Brother, to whom he sent a Message to notify his Return, v. 2--7. In his distress 1. He divides his Company, v. 7, 8. 2. He makes his Prayer to God, v. 9--12. 3. He sends a Present to his Brother, v. 13--23. 4. He wrestles with the Angel, v. 24--32.

1 AND Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. 2 And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is Gods host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim.

Jacob is here got clear of Laban, and pursuing his Journey homewards, towards Canaan; when God has helped us thro' Difficulties we should go on our way Heavenward with so much the more cheerfulness and Resolution.

Now, 1. Here's Jacob's Convoy in this Journey, v. 1. *the Angels of God met him*, in a visible Appearance, whether in a Vision by Day, or in a Dream by Night, as when he saw them upon the Ladder, Chap. xxviii. 12. is uncertain. Note, Those that keep in a good Way have always a good Guard: Angels themselves are ministering Spirits, for their Safety, Heb. i. 14. Where Jacob pitched his Tents they pitched theirs about him, Ps. xxxiv. 7. They met him to bid him welcome to Canaan again; a more honourable Reception this was than ever any Prince had that was met by the Magistrates of a City in their Formalities. They met him to Congratulate his Arrival, and his Escape from Laban, for they have pleasure in the Prosperity of God's Servants. They had invisibly attended him all along, but now they appeared to him, because he had greater Dangers before him than those he had hitherto encountered. Note, When God designs his People for extraordinary Trials, he prepares them by extraordinary Comforts. We would think it had been more seasonable for these Angels to have appeared to him just in the Heat of his Engagement either with Laban before or Esau after, than in this calm and quiet Interval when he saw not himself in any imminent Peril; But God will have us when we are in Peace to provide for Trouble, and when Trouble comes, to live upon former Observations and Experiences, for we walk by Faith, not by Sight. God's People at Death are returning to Canaan to their Father's House, and then the Angels of God will meet them, to congratulate the happy finishing of their Servitude, and to carry them to their Rest.

2. The Comfortable Notice he took of this Convoy, v. 2. *This is God's Host*, and therefore, 1. It is a powerful Host: very great is he that is thus attended, and very safe that is thus guarded. 2. God must have the Praise of this Protection: This I may thank God for, for it is his Host. A good Man may with an Eye of Faith see the same that Jacob saw with his bodily Eyes, by believing that Promise, Ps. xci. 11. *He shall give his Angels charge over thee*. What need we dispute whether every particular Saint has a Guardian Angel, when we are sure he has a Guard of Angels about him. To preserve the Remembrance of this Favour Jacob gave a Name to the Place from it, *Mahanaim, Two Hosts, or Two Camps*. That is, say some of the Rabbins, one Host of the Guardian Angels of *Mesopotamia*, who conducted Jacob thence, and delivered him safe to the other Host of the Angels of *Canaan*, who met him upon the Borders where he now was. Rather they appeared to him in *Two Hosts*, one on either side, or one in the Front, and the other in the Rere, to protect him from *Laban* behind, and *Esau* before, that they might be a compleat Guard. Thus with God's Favour he is compassed. Perhaps in allusion to this the Church is called *Mahanaim, Two Armies, Cant. 6. 13*. Here was Jacob's Family that made one Army representing the Church Militant and Itinerant on Earth; and the Angels another Army representing the Church Triumphant, and at Rest in Heaven.

3 And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother, unto the land of Seir, the country of Edom. 4 And he commanded them, saying, Thus shall ye speak unto my lord Esau; Thy servant Jacob saith thus, I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed there until now. 5 And I have oxen, and asses, flocks, and men-servants, and women-servants: and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find grace in thy sight. 6 And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him. 7 Then Jacob was greatly afraid, and distressed: and he divided the people that was with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels into two bands; 8 And said, If Esau come to the one company and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape.

Now Jacob was re-entring *Canaan*, God by the Vision of Angels minded him of the Friends he had when he left it, and thence he takes occasion to mind himself of the Enemies he had, particularly *Esau*. 'Tis likely *Rebekah* had sent him word of *Esau's* Settlement in *Seir*, and of the Continuance of his Enmity to him, What shall poor Jacob do? He longs to see his Father, and yet he dreads to see his Brother: He rejoices to see *Canaan* again, and yet cannot but rejoice with trembling, because of *Esau*. 1. He sends a very kind and humble Message to *Esau*. It doth not appear that his way lay through *Esau's* Country, or that he needed to ask his leave for a Passage, but his way lay near it, and he would not go by him without paying him the respects due to a Brother, a Twin-brother, an only Brother, an elder Brother, a Brother, offended. Note, (1.) Tho' our Relations fail in their Duty to us, yet we must make Conscience of doing our Duty to them. (2.) It is a piece of Friendship and Brotherly Love to acquaint our Friends with our State and enquire into theirs. Acts of Civility may help to slay Enmities. Jacob's Message to him is very obliging, v. 4. 6. (3.) He calls *Esau* his Lord, himself his Servant, to intimate that he did not insist upon the Prerogatives of the Birthright and Blessing he had obtained for himself, but left it to God to fulfil his own Purpose in his Seed. Note, *Yielding pacifies great Offences*, Eccl. x. 4. we must not grudge to speak in the most respectful submissive Manner to those that are never so unjustly exasperated against us. (4.) He gives him a short account of himself. That he was not a Fugitive and a Vagabond, but tho' long absent had had a certain dwelling Place, with his own Relations, *I have sojourned with Laban, and stay'd there till now*. And that he was not a Beggar, nor did he come Home as the Prodigal Son destitute of Necessaries, and likely to be a Charge to his Relations; no, *I have Oxen and Asses*. This he knew would (if any thing) recommend him to *Esau's* good Affection. And, (5.) He courts his Favour; *I have sent that I may find Grace in thy sight*. Note, It is no Disparagement to those that have the better Cause to become Petitioners for Reconciliation, and to sue for Peace as well as Right.

2. He receives a very formidable Account of *Esau's* warlike Preparations against him, v. 6. not a Word but a Blow; a very coarse Return to his kind Message, and a sorry welcome Home VOL. I.

to a poor Brother. *He comes to meet thee, and Four hundred Men with him*. He is now weary of waiting for the Days of Mourning for his good Father, and even before those come he resolves to slay his Brother. 1. He remembers the old Quarrel, and will now be revenged on him for the Birth-right and Blessing, and if possible defeat Jacob's Expectations from both. Note, Malice harboured will last long, and find an occasion to break out with Violence a great while after the Provocations given. Angry Men have good Memories. 2. He envies Jacob what little Estate he had, and tho' he himself was now possessed of a much better, yet nothing will serve him but to feed his Eyes upon Jacob's Ruins and fill his Fields with Jacob's Spoils. Perhaps the Account Jacob sent him of his Wealth did but provoke him the more. 3. He concludes it easy to destroy him now he was upon the Road, a poor weary Traveller, unfixed and (as he thinks) unguarded. They that have the Serpents Poison have commonly the Serpents Policy to take the first and fairest Opportunity that offers it self for Revenge. 4. He resolves to do it suddenly, and before Jacob was come to his Father, lest he should interpose and mediate between them. *Esau* was one of those that *hated Peace*, when Jacob speaks, speaks peaceably, he is for War, Psal. cxx. 6, 7. Out he marches, spurred on with Rage, and big with Blood and Murthers, *Four hundred Men* he had with him, probably such as us'd to hunt with him, armed no doubt, Rough and cruel like their Leader, ready to execute the Word of Command tho' never so barbarous, and now breathing nothing but Threatnings and Slaughter. The tenth part of these were enough to cut off poor Jacob and his Guileless, Helpless Family, Root and Branch. No marvel therefore that it follows, v. 7. *Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed*, perhaps the more so, having scarce recovered the Fright *Laban* had put him in. Note, Many are the Troubles of the Righteous in this World, and sometimes the end of one is but the beginning of another. The Clouds return after the Rain. Jacob, tho' a Man of great Faith, yet was now greatly afraid. Note, A lively Apprehension of Danger, and a quickning Fear arising from it, may very well consist with an humble Confidence in God's Power and Promise. Christ himself in his Agony was sore amazed.

3. He puts himself into the best Posture of Defence that his present Circumstances would admit of. 'Twas Nonsense to think of making resistance, all his Contrivance is to make an escape, v. 7, 8. He thinks it prudence not to venture all in one Bottom, and therefore divides what he had into two Companies, that if one were smitten, the other might escape. Like a tender careful Master of a Family, he is more solicitous for their Safety than for his own. He divided his Company not as *Abraham*, Ch. xiv. 15. for Fight but for Flight.

9 And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the LORD which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee: 10 I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands. 11 Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children. 12 And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.

Our Rule is to call upon God in the time of Trouble, and we have here an Example to that Rule, and the Success encourageth us to follow that Example; *It was now even a time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it*, and here we have him praying for that Salvation, (Jer. xxx. 7.) In his Distress he sought the Lord, and he heard him. Note, Times of Fear should be Times of Prayer; whatever frightens us should drive us to our Knees to our God. Jacob had newly seen his Guard of Angels, but in this Distress he applied himself to God, not to them, he knew they were his Fellow Servants, Rev. xxii. 9. nor did he consult *Laban's* Teraphim, 'twas enough to him that he had a God to go to. And to him he addresseth himself with all possible Solemnity, so running for safety into the Name of the Lord as a strong Tower, Pr. xviii. 10. This Prayer is the more remarkable because it won him the Honour of being an *Israel, a Prince with God*, and the Father of the Praying Remnant, who, from hence are called the *Seed of Jacob*, to whom he never said, *Seek ye me in vain*. Now 'tis worth while to enquire what there was extraordinary in this Prayer, that it should gain the Petitioner all this Honour.

1. The Request it self is one, and very Express, *v. 11. Deliver me from the Hand of my Brother*: 'Tho' there was no Humane probability on his side, yet he believed the Power of God could rescue him, as a Lamb out of the Bloody Jaws of the Lion. *Note*, (1.) We have leave to be particular in our Addresses to God, to mention the particular Straits and Difficulties we are in, for the God with whom we have to do is one we may be free with; we have *Liberty of Speech* (*παρρησία*) at the Throne of Grace. (2.) When our Brethren aim to be our Destroyers, 'tis our Comfort that we have a Father to whom we may apply our selves as our Deliverer.

2. The Pleas are many, and very powerful; never was *cause better ordered*, Job xxiii. 4. He offers up his Request with great Faith, Fervency and Humility. How earnestly doth he beg, *v. 11. Deliver me, I pray thee*. His Fear made him importunate; with what holy Logick doth he argue, with what Divine Eloquence doth he plead? Here's a noble Copy to write after.

1. He addresseth himself to God as the God of his Fathers, *v. 9.* such was the humble self-denying sense he had of his own Unworthiness that he did not call God *his own God*, but a God in Covenant with his Ancestors, *O God of my Father Abraham, and God of my Father Isaac*; and this he could the better plead, because the Covenant by Divine Designation was entailed upon him. *Note*, God's Covenant with our Fathers may be a Comfort to us when we are in Distress. It has oft been so to the Lord's People, *Psal. xxii. 4, 5.* Being born in God's House we are taken under his special Protection.

2. He produceth his Warrant, *Thou saidst unto me, return unto thy Country*. He did not rashly leave his Place with *Laban*, nor undertake this Journey out of a fickle Humour, or a foolish Fondness for his Native Country, but in obedience to God's Command. *Note*, 1. We may be in the way of our Duty, and yet may meet with Trouble and Distress in that way. As Prosperity will not prove us in the right, so cross Events will not prove us in the wrong; we may be going whither God calls us, and yet may think our way *hedged up with Thorns*. 2. We may comfortably trust God with our Safety while we carefully keep to our Duty: If God be our Guide he will be our Guard.

3. He humbly acknowledgeth his own Unworthiness to receive any Favour from God, *v. 10. I am not worthy*: 'Tis a surprizing Plea. One would think he should have pleaded that what was now in Danger was *his own* against all the World, and that he had earned it dear enough; no, he pleads, *Lord, I am not worthy of it*. *Note*, Self-denial and Self-abasement will become us in all our Addresses to the Throne of Grace. Christ never commended any of his Petitioners so much as him who said, *Lord, I am not worthy*. *Matt. 8. 8.* and her who said, *Truth, Lord, Matt. xv. 26.* Now observe here, 1. How *Magnificently* and *Honourably* he speaks of the Mercies of God to him. Here's *Mercies* in the plural Number, an inexhaustible Spring, and innumerable Streams: *Mercies and Truth, &c.* past Mercies given according to the Promise, and further Mercies secured by the Promise. *Note*, What's laid up in God's *Truth*, as well as what's laid out in God's *Mercies*, is the matter both of the Comforts and the Praises of active Believers. Nay, observe, 'tis *all* the Mercies, and *all* the Truth, the manner of Expression is copious, and speaks his Heart full of God's Goodness. 2. How *meanly* and *humbly* he speaks of himself, disclaiming all Thought of his own Merit, *I am not worthy of the least of all the Mercies*, much less am I worthy of so great a Favour as this I am now suing for. *Jacob* was a considerable Man, and upon many accounts very deserving; and intreating with *Laban* had justly insisted on his Merits, but not before God. *I am less than all the Mercies*; so the Word is. *Note*, The best and greatest of Men are utterly unworthy of the least Favour from God, and must be ready to own it upon all Occasions, 'Twas the Excellent Mr. *Herbert's* Motto, *Less than the least of all God's Mercies*. Those are best prepared for the greatest Mercies that see themselves unworthy of the least.

4. He thankfully owns God's Goodness to him in his Banishment, and how much it had out-done his Expectations, *with my Staff I passed over this Jordan*, Poor and Desolate like a forlorn and despised Pilgrim; he had no Guides, no Companions, no Attendants, no Conveniences for Travel, but his Staff only, nothing else to stay himself upon; and now *I am become two Bands*, now I am surrounded with a numerous and comfortable Retinue of Children and Servants: 'Tho' it was his Distress that had now obliged him to divide his Family into *two Bands*, yet he makes use of that for the magnifying of the Mercy of his Increase. *Note*, 1. The Increase of our Families is then comfortable indeed to us when we see God's *Mercies*, and his *Truth* in it. 2. Those whose latter end doth greatly Increase, ought with Humility and Thankfulness to remember how *small* their beginning was. *Jacob* pleads, *Lord, thou kept'st me when I went out only with my Staff*, and had but one Life to lose, wilt not thou keep me now so many are embarked with me?

5. He urges the extremity of the Peril he was in, *Lord, deliver me from Esau, for I fear him, v. 11.* The People of God have not been shy of telling God their Fears; for they know he takes cognizance of them, and considers them. The Fear that quickens Prayer is it self Pleadable. 'Twas not a Robber but a Murderer

that he was afraid of: Nor was it his own Life only that lay at stake, but the *Mothers*, and the *Children*, that had left their native Soil to go along with him. *Note*, Natural Affection may furnish us with allowable acceptable Pleas in Prayer.

6. He insists especially upon the Promise God had made him, *v. 9. thou saidst, I will deal well with thee*, and again, in the close, *v. 12. thou saidst, I will surely do thee Good*. *Note*, 1. The best we can say to God in Prayer is, what he hath said to us. God's Promises as they are the surest Guide of our Desires in Prayer and furnish us with the best Petitions, so they are the firmest ground of our Hopes, and furnish us with the best Pleas. *Lord, thou saidst so and so, and wilt not thou be as good as thy Word*, the Word upon which thou hast *caused me to hope*? *Pf. cxix. 49.* 2. The most general Promises are applicable to particular Cases. *Thou saidst, I will do thee good, Lord, do me good in this matter*. He pleads also a particular Promise, that of the *multiplying of his Seed*. *Lord, what will become of that Promise if they be all cut off?* *Note*, (1.) There are Promises to the Families of Good People which are improveable in Prayer for Family Mercies ordinary and extraordinary, *Gen. xvii. 7. Pf. cxii. 2.--- cii. 28.* (2.) The World's Threatnings should drive us to God's Promises.

13 And he lodged there that same night; and took of that which came to his hand, a present for Esau his brother; 14 Two hundred she-goats and twenty he-goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, 15 Thirty milch camels with their colts, forty kine and ten bulls, twenty she-asses and ten soles. 16 And he delivered them into the hand of his servants, every drove by themselves; and said unto his servants, Pass over before me, and put a space betwixt drove and drove. 17 And he commanded the foremost, saying, When Esau my brother meeteth thee, and asketh thee, saying, Whose art thou, and whither goest thou? and whose are these before thee? 18 Then thou shalt say, They be thy servant Jacobs; it is a present sent unto my lord Esau: and behold also he is behind us. 19 And so commanded he the second, and the third, and all that followed the droves, saying, On this manner shall you speak unto Esau, when you find him. 20 And say ye moreover, Behold, thy servant Jacob is behind us: for he said, I will appease him with the present that goeth before me, and afterward I will see his face; peradventure he will accept of me. 21 So went the present over before him: and himself lodged that night in the company. 22 And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two women-servants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford Jabbok. 23 And he took them, and sent them over the brook, and sent over that he had.

Jacob having piously made God his Friend by a Prayer, is here prudently endeavouring to make *Esau* his Friend by a present. He had prayed to God to deliver him from the Hand of *Esau*, for he feared him, but neither did his fear sink into such Despairs as dispirits for the use of means, nor did his Prayer make him presume upon God's Mercy, without the use of means. *Note*, when we have prayed to God for any Mercy, we must second our Prayers with our Endeavours, else instead of trusting God we tempt him; we must so depend upon God's Providence as to make use of our own Prudence. Help thy self, and God will help thee: God answers our Prayers by teaching us to order our Affairs with Discretion. To pacify *Esau*,

1. *Jacob* sent him a very noble Present, not of Jewels or fine Garments, he had them not, but of Cattle, to the number of 580 in all, *v. 13, 14, 15.* Now, 1. It was an Evidence of the great Increase with which God had blessed *Jacob*, that he could spare such a number of Cattle out of his Stock. 2. 'Twas an Evidence of his Wisdom that he would willingly part with some to secure the rest; some Men's Covetousness loses them more than ever it got them, and by grudging them a little Expence, they expose themselves to great Damage, *Skin for Skin, and all that a Man has*, if he be a Wife Man, he will give for his Life. 3. 'Twas a Present that he thought would be acceptable to *Esau*, who had traded so much in Hunting Wild Beasts, that perhaps he was but ill furnished with tame Cattle wherewith to stock his new Conquests. And we may suppose that the mixt Colours of *Jacob's* Cattle,

ring-shraked, speckled, and spotted would please Esau's Fancy. 4. He promised himself that by this Present he should gain Esau's Favour, for a Gift commonly prospers which way soever it turns, Pr. 17. 8. and makes room for a Man, Pr. 18. 16. nay, it pacifies Anger, and strong Wrath, Pr. 21. 14. Note, (1.) We must not despair of reconciling our selves, no not to those that have been most exasperated against us; we ought not to judge Men unappeasable till we have tried to appease them. (2.) Peace and Love, tho' purchased dear, will prove a good Bargain to the Purchaser. Many a Morose Ill-natured Man would have said in Jacob's case, Esau has vow'd my Death without cause, and he shall never be a Farthing the better for me, I'll see him far enough before I'll send him a Present, but Jacob forgives and forgets.

2. He sent him a very humble Message, which he ordered his Servants to deliver in the best manner, v. 17. 18. They must call Esau their Lord, and Jacob his Servants: They must tell him the Cattle they had was a small present which Jacob had sent him, as a taste of his Improvements while he was abroad. The Cattle he sent were to be disposed of in several Drovers, and the Servants that attended each Drove, were to deliver the same Message, that the Present might appear the more valuable, and his Submission so oft repeated might be the more likely to influence Esau. They must especially take care to tell him that Jacob was coming after, v. 18. 20. that he might not suspect him; fled for the same. Note, A Friendly Confidence in Men's Goodness may help to prevent the mischief designed us by their Badness: If Jacob will seem not to be afraid of Esau, Esau it might be hoped will not be a Terror to Jacob.

24 And Jacob was left alone: and there wrestled a man with him, until the breaking of the day. 25 And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh: and the hollow of Jacobs thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. 26 And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh: And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou blest me. 27 And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. 28 And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. 29 And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name: And he said, Wherefore is it, that thou dost ask after my name? and he blessed him there. 30 And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved. 31 And as he passed over Peniel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh. 32 Therefore the children of Israel eat not of the sinew which shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day: because he touched the hollow of Jacobs thigh, in the sinew that shrank.

We have here that famous Story of Jacob's wrestling with the Angel, and prevailing, which is refer'd to Hos. 12. 4. Very early in the Morning, a great while before day, Jacob had helped his Wives and Children over the River, and he desired to be private, and was left alone, that he might again more fully spread his Cares and Fears before God in Prayer. Note, We ought to continue instant in Prayer, always to Pray and not to faint: Frequency and Importunity in Prayer prepare us for Mercy. While Jacob was earnest in Prayer, stirring up himself to take Hold on God, an Angel takes hold on him. Some think this was a created Angel, the Angel of his Presence, (Isa. 63. 9) one of those that always behold the Face of our Father, and attend on the Shechinah; or Divine Majesty, which probably Jacob had also in view. Others think it was Michael our Prince the Eternal Word, the Angel of the Covenant, who is indeed the Lord of the Angels, who oft appeared occasionally in a Human Shape, before he assumed the Human Nature for good and all; which soever it was we are sure God's name was in him, Exod. 23. 21.

Observe, 1. How Jacob and this Angel engag'd, v. 24. 'Twas a single Combate Hand to Hand, they had neither of them any Seconds. Full of Care and Fear Jacob now was about the Interview he expected next day with his Brother, and to aggravate the Trial, God himself seemed to come forth against him as an Enemy, to oppose his entrance into the Land of Promise, and to dispute the Pass with him, not suffering him to follow his Wives and Children whom he had sent before. Note, Strong Believers must expect divers Temptations, and strong ones. We are told by the Prophet, Hos. 12. 4. how Jacob wrestled, he wept and made Supplication, Prayers and Tears

were his Weapons. 'Twas not only a Corporal but a Spiritual Wrestling, by the vigorous actings of Faith and holy Desire, and thus all the Spiritual Seed of Jacob, that pray in praying still wrestle with God.

2. What was the success of the Engagement.

1. Jacob kept his Ground; tho' the Struggle continued long the Angel prevailed not against him, v. 25. i. e. This Discouragement did not shake his Faith, nor silence his Prayer. 'Twas not in his own Strength that he wrestled, nor by his own Strength that he prevails, but in and by Strength derived from Heaven. That of Job illustrates this, Job 23. 6. will he plead against me with his great Power? No, had the Angel done so, Jacob had been crushed, but he would put Strength in me: And by that Strength Jacob had power over the Angel, Hos. 12. 3. Note, We cannot prevail with God, but in his own Strength. 'Tis his Spirit that intercedes in us, and helps our Infirmities. Rom. 8. 26.

2. The Angel put out Jacob's Thigh, to shew him what he could do, and that it was God he was wrestling with, for no Man could Disjoint his Thigh with a touch: Some think that Jacob felt little or no Pain from this Hurt; 'tis probable he did not, for he did not so much as halt till the struggle was over, v. 31. and if so, that was an evidence of a Divine Touch indeed which wounded and healed at the same time. Jacob prevailed, and yet had his Thigh put out. Note, Wrestling Believers may obtain Glorious Victories, and yet come off with broken Bones, for when they are weak then are they strong, Weak in themselves, but Strong in Christ, 2 Cor. 12. 10. Our Honours and Comforts in this World have their Allays.

3. The Angel, by an admirable Condescension speaks Jacob fair to let him go, v. 26. as God said to Moses, Exod. 32. 10. Let me alone; could not a mighty Angel get clear of Jacob's Grapples? He could; but thus he would put an Honour upon Jacob's Faith and Prayer, and further try his Constancy. The King is held in the Galleries, Cant. 7. 5. I held him (saith the Spouse) and would not let him go, Cant. 3. 4. The Reason the Angel gives why he would be gone, is because the Day breaks, and therefore he would not any longer detain Jacob, who had Business to do, a Journey to go, a Family to look after, which especially in this Critical Juncture called for his Attendance. Note, Every thing is beautiful in its Season; even the Business of Religion and the Comforts of Communion with God, must sometimes give way to the necessary Affairs of this Life; God will have Mercy and not Sacrifice.

4. Jacob persists in his Holy Importunity: I will not let thee go, except thou blest me; whatever becomes of his Family and Journey, he resolves to make the best Hand he can of this Opportunity, and not to lose the Advantage of his Victory: He doth not mean to wrestle all Night for nothing, but humbly resolves he will have a Blessing, and rather shall all his Bones be put out of joint than he would go away without one. The Credit of a Conquest will do him no good without the Comfort of a Blessing. In begging this Blessing he owns his Inferiority, tho' he seemed to have the upper Hand in the struggle, for the less is blessed of the better. Note, Those that would have the Blessing of Christ, must be in good earnest, and be importunate for it as those that resolve to have no nay. 'Tis the fervent Prayer that is the effectual Prayer.

5. The Angel puts a perpetual mark of Honour upon him by changing his Name, v. 27. 28. Thou art a brave Fellow (saith the Angel) commend me to thee for a Man of Resolution, What's thy Name? Jacob, saith he, a Supplanter, so Jacob signifies: Well, saith the Angel; be thou never so called any more; from henceforth thou shalt be celebrated, not for Craft and artful Management, but true Valour; thou shalt be called Israel, a Prince with God, a Name greater than those of the great Men of the Earth. He is a Prince indeed that's a Prince with God, and those are truly Honourable that are mighty in Prayer, Israel, Israelites indeed. Jacob is here Knighted in the Field, as it were, and has a Title of Honour given him, by him that is the Fountain of Honour, which will remain to his Praise to the end of Time. Yet this was not all, having Power with God he shall have Power with Men too. Having prevailed for a Blessing from Heaven, he shall, no doubt, prevail for Esau's Favour. Note, Whatever Enemies we have, if we can but make God our Friend, we are well enough; they that by Faith have Power in Heaven have thereby as much Power on Earth as they have occasion for.

6. He dismisseth him with a Blessing, v. 29. Jacob desired to know the Angel's Name, that he might, according to his Capacity, do him Honour too, Jud. 13. 18. But that request was denied, that he might not be too proud of his Conquest, nor think he had the Angel at such an advantage as to oblige him to what he pleased; no, Wherefore dost thou ask after my Name? What good will it do thee to know that? The Discovery of that was reserved for his Death-bed, upon which he was taught to call him Shiloh. But instead of telling him his Name he gave him his Blessing, which was the thing he wrestled for; he blessed him there, repeated and ratified the Blessing formerly given him. Note, Spiritual Blessings which secure our Felicity, are better and much more desirable than fine Notions that satisfy our Curiosity. An Interest in the Angels Blessing is better than Acquaintance with his Name.

Name. The Tree of Life is better than the Tree of Knowledge. Thus Jacob carried his Point; a Blessing he wrestled for, and a Blessing he had, nor did ever any of his Praying Seed seek in vain: See how wonderfully God condescends to Countenance and Crown importunate Prayer: Those that resolve tho' God slay them, yet to trust in him, will at length be more than Conquerors.

7. Jacob gives a new Name to the Place: He calls it *Peniel*, the Face of God, v. 30. because there he had seen the Appearance of God, and obtained the Favour of God. Observe, The Name he gives to the Place preserves and perpetuates not the Honour of his Valour or Victory, but only the Honour of God's Free Grace. He doth not say, In this Place I wrestled with God, and prevailed, but in this Place I saw God Face to Face, and my Life was preserved: Not, It was my Praise that I came off a Conqueror, but it was God's Mercy that I escaped with my Life. Note, It becomes those whom God Honours to take Shame to themselves, and to admire the Condescensions of his Grace to them. Thus David did after God had sent him a Gracious Message, 2 Sam. 7. 28. *who am I, O Lord God?*

Lastly, The Memorandum Jacob carried of this in his Bones, he baled on his Thigh, v. 31. and some think he continued to do so to his dying day, and if he did, he had not reason to complain, for the Honour and Comfort he obtained by the struggle was abundantly sufficient to countervail the Damage tho' he went limping to his Grave. He had no reason to look upon it as his Reproach, thus to bear in his Body the marks of the Lord Jesus, Gal. 6. 17. yet it might serve like St. Paul's Thorn in the Flesh to keep him from being lifted up with the Abundance of Revelations. Notice is taken of the Sun's rising upon him when he passed over Peniel, for 'tis Sun-rise with that Soul that has Communion with God. And the inspired Penman mentions a Traditional Custom which the Seed of Jacob had, in remembrance of this, never to eat of that Sinew, or Muscle, in any Beast by which the Hip-bone is fixed in its Cup: By this observance they preserved the Memorial of this Story, and gave occasion to their Children to enquire concerning it; they also did Honour to the Memory of Jacob. And this use we may still make of it, to acknowledge the Mercy of God, and our Obligations to Jesus Christ, that we may now keep up our Communion with God in Faith, Hope and Love, without peril either of Life or Limb.

C A A P. XXXIII.

We read in the former Chapter how Jacob had Power with God and prevailed; here we find what Power he had with Men too, and how his Brother Esau was mollified, and, on a sudden, reconciled to him; for so it is written, Pr. 16. 7. When a Man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his Enemies to be at Peace with him. Here's, 1. A very Friendly Meeting, between Jacob and Esau, v. 1-4. 2. Their Conference at their Meeting, in which they vie Civilities. Their Discourse is, (1.) About Jacob's Family, v. 5-7. (2.) About the Present he had sent, v. 8-11. (3.) About the Progress of their Journey, v. 12-15. 3. Jacob's Settlement in Canaan, his House, Ground, and Altar, v. 16-20.

1. **A**ND Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold, Esau came, and with him four hundred men. And he divided the children unto Leah, and unto Rachel, and unto the two handmaids. 2 And he put the handmaids and their children foremost, and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph hindmost. 3 And he passed over before them, and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother. 4 And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept.

Here, 1. Jacob discovers Esau's approach, v. 1. Some think his lifting up his Eyes notes his Cheerfulness and Confidence in opposition to a dejected Countenance: Having by Prayer committed his case to God, he went on his way, and his Countenance was no more sad, 1 Sam. 1. 18. Note, Those that have cast their care upon God, may look before them with Satisfaction and Composure of Mind, cheerfully expecting the Issue whatever it may be; come what will nothing can come amiss to him whose Heart is fixed trusting in God. Jacob sets himself upon his Watch-Tower to see what answer God will give to his Prayers, Hab. 2. 1.

2. He puts his Family into the best order he could to receive him, whether he should come as a Friend, or as an Enemy, consulting their Decency, if he come as a Friend, and their Safety if he come as an Enemy, v. 1. 2. Observe what a different Figure these two Brothers made. Esau is attended with a Guard of 400 Men, and looks big; Jacob is followed by a cumbersome Train of Women and Children that are his Care, and he looks tender

and solicitous for their Safety; and yet Jacob had the Birth-right, and was to have the Dominion, and was every way the better Man. Note, It is no Disparagement to very Great and Good Men to give a Personal Attendance to their Families and to their Family Affairs. Jacob, at the Head of his Household set a better Example than Esau at the Head of his Regiment.

3. At their meeting the Expressions of Kindness were interchanged in the best manner that could be between them.

1. Jacob bowed to Esau, v. 3. Tho' he feared Esau as an Enemy, yet he did obeysance to him as an elder Brother, knowing and remembering perhaps that when Abel was preferred in God's acceptance before his elder Brother Cain, yet God undertook for him to Cain that he should not be wanting in the Duty and Respect owing by a younger Brother, *unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him*, Gen. 4. 7. Note, 1. The way to recover Peace where it has been broken, is, to do our Duty, and pay our Respects upon all occasions as if it had never been broken. 'Tis the remembering and repeating of Matters that separates Friends, and perpetuates the Separation. 2. An Humble Submissive Carriage goes a great way towards the turning away of Wrath, Many preserve themselves by humbling themselves: The Bullet flies over him that stoops.

2. Esau embraced Jacob, v. 4. He ran to meet him, not in Passion but in Love, and as one heartily reconciled to him, he received him with all the Endearments imaginable, *embraced him, fell on his Neck and kissed him*. Some think that when Esau came out to meet Jacob 'twas with no ill design, but that he brought his 400 Men only for State, that he might pay so much the greater respect to his returning Brother. 'Tis certain Jacob understood the report of his Messengers otherwise, Chap. 32. 5. 6. Jacob was a Man of Prudence and Constancy, and we cannot suppose him to admit of a groundless Fear, to such a degree as he did this, nor that the Spirit of God would stir him up to pray such a Prayer as he did for deliverance from a meer imaginary danger: And if there were not some wonderful change wrought upon the Spirit of Esau at this time, I see not how wrestling Jacob could be said to obtain such Power with Men as to denominate him a Prince. Note, 1. God hath the Hearts of all Men in his Hands, and can turn them when and how he pleases by a secret, silent, but irresistible Power. He can of a sudden convert Enemies into Friends, as he did two Sauls, one by restraining Grace, 1 Sam. 26. 21, 25. the other by renewing Grace, Act. 9. 21, 22. 2. It is not in vain to trust in God, and to call upon him in the Day of Trouble, they that do so, often find the issue much better than they expected.

3. They both wept. Jacob wept for Joy to be thus kindly received by his Brother, whom he had feared; and Esau perhaps wept for Grief and Shame to think of the ill design he had conceived against his Brother, which he found himself strangely and unaccountably prevented from the Execution of.

5 And he lift up his eyes, and saw the women and the children; and said, Who are those with thee? And he said, The children which God hath graciously given thy servant. 6 Then the handmaidens came near, they and their children, and they bowed themselves. 7 And Leah also with her children came near, and bowed themselves: and after came Joseph near and Rachel, and they bowed themselves. 8 And he said, What meanest thou by all this drove which I met? And he said, These are to find grace in the sight of my lord. 9 And Esau said, I have enough; my brother, keep that thou hast unto thy self. 10 And Jacob said, Nay, I pray thee, if now I have found grace in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand: for therefore I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me. 11 Take, I pray thee, my blessing that is brought to thee; because God hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough: and he urged him, and he took it. 12 And he said, Let us take our journey, and let us go, and I will go before thee. 13 And he said unto him, My lord knoweth that the children are tender, and the flocks and herds with young are with me; and if men should overdrive them one day, all the flock will dye. 14 Let my lord, I pray thee, pass over before his servant: and I will lead on softly, according as the cattle that goeth before me, and the children be able to endure; until I come unto

unto my lord unto Seir. 15 And Esau said, Let me now leave with thee some of the folk that are with me: And he said, What needeth it? Let me find grace in the sight of my lord.

We have here the Discourse between the two Brothers at their Meeting, which is very Free and Friendly, without the least intimation of the old Quarrel. 'Twas the best way to say nothing of it. Their Talk is,

1. About Jacob's Retinue, v. 5, 6, 7. eleven or twelve little ones followed Jacob close, the eldest of 'em not 14 years old, *who are these?* saith Esau. Jacob had sent him an account of the increase of his Estate, Chap. 32. 5. but made no mention of his Children, perhaps because he would not expose them to his Rage, if he should meet him as an Enemy, or would please him with the surprizing sight if he should meet him as a Friend: Esau therefore had reason to ask who are *those with thee*; to which common Question Jacob returns a serious Answer, such as became his Character, they are the Children which God hath graciously given thy Servant. It had been a sufficient answer to the Question, and fit enough to be given to Prophane Esau, if he had only said, They are my Children, but then Jacob had not spoken like himself, like a Man whose Eyes were ever towards the Lord. Note. It becomes us not only to do common Actions, but to speak of them after a Godly sort, 3 Joh. 6. Jacob speaks of his Children, 1. As God's Gifts; they are a Heritage of the Lord, Ps. 127. 3---113. 9---107. 41. 2. As choice Gifts; he hath graciously given them. Tho' they were many, and now much his Care, and as yet but slenderly provided for, yet he accounts them great Blessings; his Wives and Children hereupon come up in order, and pay their Devoirs to Esau, as he had done before 'em, v. 6, 7. for it becomes the Family to shew respect to those whom the Master of the Family shews respect to.

2. About the Present he had sent him. 1. Esau modestly refused it, because he had enough, and did not need it, v. 9. Note, Men of Honour will not seem to be mercenary in their Friendship: Whatever influence Jacob's Present had upon Esau, to pacify him, he would not have it thought that it had any and therefore he refused it. His reason is, *I have enough, I have much*; so the Word is; so much that he was not willing to take any thing that was his Brother's. Note, (1.) Many that come short of Spiritual Blessings, and are out of Covenant, yet have much of this World's Wealth. Esau had what was promised him, the Fatness of the Earth, and a Livelihood by his Sword. (2.) It is a good thing for those that have much to know that they have enough, though they have not so much as some others have. Even Esau can say, *I have enough*. (3.) Those that are content with what they have, must shew it by not coveting what others have. Esau bids Jacob keep what he had to himself, supposing he had more need of it; Esau, for his part, needs it not, either to supply him, for he was Rich, or to pacify him, for he was reconciled; we should take heed lest at any time our Covetousness impose upon others Courtship, and meanly take advantage of their Generosity. 2. Jacob lovingly urges him to accept it, and prevails, v. 10, 11. Jacob sent it for Fear, Chap. 32. 20. but the Fear being over he now importunes his acceptance of it for Love, to shew that he desired his Brother's Friendship, and did not only dread his Wrath; two things he urges, 1. The mighty Satisfaction he had in his Brother's Favour, which he thought himself bound to make this thankful acknowledgment of. 'Tis a very high Complement he passeth upon him, *I have seen thy Face as though I had seen the Face of God*, i. e. I have seen thee reconciled to me, and at Peace with me, as I desire to see God reconciled. Or, the meaning is, that Jacob saw God's Favour to him in Esau's: 'Twas a token for Good to him that God had accepted his Prayers. Note, (1.) Creature Comforts are then Comforts indeed to us when they are granted as Answers to Prayer, and are tokens of our Acceptance with God. (2.) It is matter of great Joy to those that are of a loving peaceable Disposition to recover the Friendship of their Relations that they have been at variance with. 2. The competency he had of this World's Goods, God has dealt graciously with me. Note, If what we have in this World increase under our Hands, we must take notice of it with Thankfulness to the Glory of God, and own that therein he has dealt graciously with us; better than we deserve: 'Tis he that gives Power to get Wealth. Deut. 8. 18. He adds, and *I have enough; I have all*, so the Word is. Esau's enough was much, but Jacob's enough was all. Note, A Godly Man, tho' he have but little in the World, yet may truly say he has all, because he has the God of all, and has all in him: *All is yours if you be Christ's*, 1 Cor. 3. 22. He has the Comfort of all; *I have all and abound*, Phil. 4. 18. He that hath much would have more, but he that thinks he has all, is sure he has enough. He has all in prospect; he will have all shortly when he comes to Heaven; upon this Principle Jacob urged Esau, and he took his Present. Note, 'Tis an excellent thing when Men's Religion makes them generous, free-hearted and open-handed, scorning to do a thing that is paltry and sneaking.

3 About the Progress of their Journey. In which,

1. Esau offers himself to be his Guide and Companion, in token of sincere Reconciliation, v. 12. We never find that Jacob and Esau were so loving and sociable with one another as they were now. Note, As for God his work is perfect. He made Esau not only not an Enemy, but a Friend. This Bone that had been broke being well set became stronger than ever. Esau is become fond of Jacob's Company, courts him to Mount Seir; let's never despair of any, nor distrust God in whose Hand all Hearts are. Yet Jacob saw cause modestly to refuse this offer, v. 13, 14. wherein he shews a tender Concern for his own Family and Flocks, like a good Shepherd, and a good Father. He must consider the Children, and the Flocks with Young, and not lead the one or drive the other too fast. This Prudence and Tenderness of Jacob ought to be imitated by those that have the Care and Charge of Young People in the Things of God. They must not be over-driven at first, by heavy tasks in Religious Services, but led as they can bear, making their Work as easy to them as possible. Christ the good Shepherd doth so, Isa. 40. 11. Now Jacob will neither desire Esau to slacken his Pace, nor force his Family to quicken theirs, nor leave them, to keep Company with his Brother, as many would have done that love any Society better than those of their own House: But he desires Esau to march before, and promises to follow him leisurely as he could get forward. Note, It is an unreasonable thing to tye others to our rate; we may come with Comfort at last to the same Journeys end tho' we don't journey together, either in the same Path, or on the same Pace. There may be those with whom we cannot fall in, and yet with whom we need not fall out by the way. Jacob intimates to him that it was his present design to come to him to Mount Seir, and we may presume he did so, after he had settled his Family and Concerns elsewhere, tho' that Visit be not recorded. Note, When we have happily recovered Peace with our Friends, we must take care to cultivate it, and not to be behind Hand with them in Civilities.

2. Esau offers some of his Men to be his Guard and Convoy, v. 15. He saw Jacob but poorly attended, no Servants but his Husbandmen and Shepherds, no Pages or Footmen, and therefore thinking he was as desirous as himself (if he could afford it) to take State upon him, and look Great, he would needs lend him some of his Retinue, to attend upon him, that he might appear like Esau's Brother: But Jacob humbly refuseth his offer, only desiring he would not take it amiss, that he did not accept it, *What needs it?* 1. Jacob is humble and needs it not for State; he desires not to make a fair Shew in the Flesh, by encumbering himself with a needless Retinue. Note, It is the Vanity of Pomp and Grandeur that it is attended with a great deal of which it may be said, *What needs it?* 2. Jacob is under the Divine Protection, and needs it not for Safety. Note, Those are sufficiently guarded that have God for their Guard, and are under a Convoy of his Hosts, as Jacob was. They need not be beholden to an Arm of Flesh, that have God for their Arm every Morning. Jacob adds, only let me find Grace in the sight of my Lord, having thy Favour I have all I need, all I desire from thee. If Jacob thus valued the Good Will of a Brother, much more reason have we to reckon that we have enough, if we have the Good Will of our God.

16 So Esau returned that day on his way unto Seir. 17 And Jacob journeyed to Succoth, and built him an house, and made booths for his cattle: therefore the name of the place is called Succoth. 18 And Jacob came to Shalem a City of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padan-aram; and pitched his tent before the city. 19 And he bought a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Hamor Shechems father, for an hundred pieces of money. 20 And he erected there an altar, and called it El-elohe-Israel.

Here, 1. Jacob comes to Succoth; having in a Friendly manner parted with Esau, who was gone to his own Country, v. 16. he comes to a place where it should seem he rested for some time, set up Booths for his Cattle, and other Conveniences for himself and Family. The Place was afterwards known by the Name of Succoth, a City in the Tribe of Gad, on the other side Jordan, it signifies Booths: [That when his Posterity afterwards dwelt in Houses of Stone they might remember that the Syrian ready to perish was their Father, who was glad of Booths, Deut. 26. 5: such was the Rock whence they were hewn.]

2. He comes to Shechem, we read it, to Shalem; a City of Shechem; the Critics generally incline to read it appellatively, he came Safe, or in Peace, to the City of Shechem: After a perilous Journey, in which he had met with many Difficulties, he came safe at last into Canaan. Note, Diseases and Dangers should teach

us how to value Health and Safety, and should help to enlarge our Hearts in Thankfulness, when our going out and coming in has been signally preserved.

Here, 1. He buys a Field, v. 19. Tho' the Land of Canaan was his by Promise, yet the time for taking Possession being not yet come, he is content to pay for his own, to prevent Disputes with the present Occupants. *Note*, Dominion is not founded in Grace. Those that have Heaven on Free-cost, must not expect to have Earth so.

2. He builds an Altar, v. 20. (1.) in thankfulness to God for the good Hand of his Providence over him. He did not content himself with verbal Acknowledgments of God's Favour to him, but made real ones. (2.) That he might keep up Religion and the Worship of God in his Family. *Note*, Where we have a Tent God must have an Altar: Where we have a House he must have a Church in it. He dedicated this Altar to the Honour of El-elohe-Israel, God the God of Israel. To the Honour of God in general, the only living and true God, the Best of Beings and first of Causes, and to the Honour of the God of Israel, as a God in Covenant with him. *Note*, In our worship of God we must be guided and governed by the joint Discoveries both of Natural and Revealed Religion. God had lately called him by the Name of Israel, and now he calls God the God of Israel; tho' he be still a Prince with God, God shall still be a Prince with him, his Lord and his God. *Note*, Our Honours then become Honours indeed to us, when they are Consecrated to God's Honour; Israel's God is Israel's Glory.

C H A P. XXXIV.

At this Chapter begins the Story of Jacob's Afflictions in his Children, which were very great, and are recorded to shew. 1. The Vanity of this World: That which is dearest to us may prove our greatest Vexation, and we may meet with the greatest Crosses in those things of which we said these same shall Comfort us. 2. The common Grievs of Good People. Jacob's Children were Circumcised, were well taught and prayed for, and had very good Examples set them, yet some of them proved very untoward, for the Race is not to the Swift, nor the Battle to the Strong. Grace doth not run in a Blood, and yet the interrupting of the Entail of that doth not cut off the Entail of Profession, and visible Church Privileges: Nay, Jacob's Sons tho' they were his Grief in some things, yet were all taken into Covenant with God. In this Chapter we have, 1. Dinah debauched, v. 1, 2--5. 2. A Treaty of Marriage between her and Shechem who had defiled her, v. 6--19. 3. The Circumcision of the Shechemites, pursuant to that Treaty, v. 20--24. 4. The Perfidious and Bloody Revenge which Simeon and Levi took upon them, v. 25--31.

1 AND Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land. 2 And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her, and lay with her, and defiled her. 3 And his soul clave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the damsel, and spake kindly unto the damsel. 4 And Shechem spake unto his father Hamor, saying, Get me this damsel to wife. 5 And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter, (now his sons were with his cattel in the field:) and Jacob held his peace until they were come.

Dinah was, for ought appears, Jacob's only Daughter, and we may suppose her therefore the Mother's Fondling, and the Darling of the Family, and yet she proves neither a Joy nor a Credit to them; for those children seldom prove either the Best, or the Happiest, that are most indulged. She is reckoned now but about fifteen or sixteen Years of Age when she here occasioned so much Mischief. Observe,

1. Her vain Curiosity, which exposed her: She went out perhaps unknown to her Father, but by the Connivance of her Mother, to see the Daughters of the Land, v. 1. probably 'twas at a Ball, or some Publick Day. Being an only Daughter she thought herself Solitary at Home; having none of her own Age and Sex to converse with, and therefore she must needs go Abroad to divert her self, and to keep her from being Melancholy, and to accomplish her self by Conversation, better than she could in her Father's Tents. *Note*, It's a very good thing for Children to love Home; 'tis Parents Wisdom to make it easy to them, and Children's Duty then to be easy in it. Her pretence was to see the Daughters of the Land, to see how they dressed and how they danced, and what was fashionable among them: She went to see, yet that

was not all, she went to be seen too: She went to see the Daughters of the Land, but it may be with some thoughts of the Sons of the Land too. I doubt she went to get Acquaintance with those Canaanites and to learn their way. *Note*, The Pride and Vanity of young People betrays them to many Snare.

2. The Loss of her Honour by this means, v. 2. Shechem the Prince of the Country, but a slave to his own Lusts, took her and lay with her, it should seem not so much by force as by Surprise. *Note*, Great Men think they may do any thing; and what more mischievous than untaught and ungoverned Youth? See what came of Dinah's gadding; young Women must learn to be chaste, keepers at Home, they are put together, Tit. ii. 5. for those that are not keepers at Home expose their Chastity. Dinah went Abroad to look about her, but if she had looked about her, as she ought, she had not fallen into this Snare. *Note*, The beginning of Sin is as the letting forth of Water. How great a matter doth a little fire kindle? We should therefore carefully avoid all occasions of Sin, and approaches to it.

3. The Court Shechem made to her after he had defiled her. This was fair and commendable, and made the best of bad, he loved her, not as Amnon, 2 Sam. 13. 15. and he engaged his Father to make a match for him with her, v. 3. 4.

4. The Tidings of this brought to poor Jacob, v. 5. As soon as his Children grew up, they began to be a Grief to him; Let not Godly Parents that are lamenting the Miscarriages of their Children think their case Singular or Unprecedented. The Good Man held his Peace, as one astonished that knows not what to say: Or, he said nothing for fear of saying amiss, as David, Psal. 39. 1, 2. he smothered his Resentments, lest if he had suffered them to break out they should have transported him into any Indecencies. Or, it should seem he had left the Management of his Affairs very much (too much I doubt) to his Sons, and he would do nothing without them; or, at least he knew they would be uneasy to him if he did, they having shewed themselves of late upon all occasions bold, forward, and assuming. *Note*, Things never go well, when the Authority of a Parent runs low in a Family. Let every Man bear rule in his own House, and have his Children in Subjection with all Gravity.

6 And Hamor the father of Shechem went out unto Jacob to commune with him. 7 And the sons of Jacob come out of the field when they heard it, and the men were grieved, and they were very wroth: because he had wrought folly in Israel, in lying with Jacobs daughter; which thing ought not to be done. 8 And Hamor communed with them, saying, The soul of my son Shechem longeth for your daughter: I pray you give her him to wife. 9 And make ye marriages with us, and give your daughters unto us, and take our daughters unto you. 10 And ye shall dwell with us: and the land shall be before you; dwell and trade you therein, and get you possessions therein. 11 And Shechem said unto her father, and unto her brethren, Let me find grace in your eyes, and what ye shall say unto me, I will give. 12 Ask me never so much dowry and gift, and I will give according as ye shall say unto me: but give me the damsel to wife. 13 And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father deceitfully, and said, (because he had defiled Dinah their sister) 14 And they said unto them, We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one that is uncircumcised: for that were a reproach unto us. 15 But in this will we consent unto you: if ye will be as we be, that every male of you be circumcised; 16 Then will we give our daughters unto you, and we will take your daughters to us, and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people. 17 But if ye will not hearken unto us, to be circumcised; then will we take our daughter, and we will be gone.

Jacob's Sons, when they heard of the Injury done to Dinah, shewed a very great Resentment of it, perhaps rather out of a Jealousie for the Honour of their Family than a sense of Vertue. Many are concerned at the shamefulnes of Sin that never lay to Heart the sinfulness of it.

'Tis here called Folly in Israel, v. 7. according to the Language of after-times, for Israel was not yet a People, but a Family

mily only. *Note*, 1. Uncleanness is Folly, for it sacrificeth the Favour of God, the Peace of Conscience, and all the Soul can pretend to that's Sacred and Honourable, to a Base and Brutish Lust. 2. This Folly is most shameful in *Israel*, in a Family of *Israel*, where God is known and worshipt as he was in *Jacob's* Tents by the Name of the God of *Israel*. Folly in *Israel* is scandalous indeed. 3. 'Tis a good thing to have Sin put into an ill Name: Uncleanness is here proverbially called Folly in *Israel*, 2 Sam. xiii. 12. *Dinah* is here called *Jacob's Daughter* for Warning to all the Daughters of *Israel*, that they betray not themselves to this Folly.

Hamor came to treat with *Jacob* himself, but he turns them over to his Sons; and here we have a particular Account of the Treaty, in which 'tis a Shame to say the *Canaanites* were more Honest than the *Israelites*.

1. *Hamor* and *Shechem* fairly propose this Match in order to a Coalition in Trade: *Shechem* is deeply in Love with *Dinah*, he will have her upon any Terms, v. 11, 12. His Father not only consents, but solicits for him, and gravely insists upon the Advantages that would follow from the Union of the Families, v. 9, 10. He shews no Jealousy of *Jacob*, tho' he were a Stranger, but rather an earnest Desire to settle a Correspondence with him and his Family, making him that generous Offer, *The Land shall be before you, Trade you, therein*.

2. *Jacob's* Sons basely pretend to insist upon a Coalition in Religion, when really they designed nothing less. If *Jacob* had taken the Management of this Affair into his own Hands, 'tis probable he and *Hamor* would soon have concluded it; but *Jacob's* Sons meditate only Revenge, and a very strange Project they have to compass it: The *Shechemites* must be Circumcised; not to make them Holy, they never intended that, but to make them fore, that they might become an easier Prey to their Sword.

1. The Pretence was specious: 'Tis the Honour of *Jacob's* Family, that they carry about with them the Token of God's Covenant with them, and it will be a Reproach to them that were thus Dignified and Distinguished to enter into such a strict Alliance with them that were Uncircumcised, v. 14. and therefore if you'll be Circumcised, then we will become one People with you, v. 15, 16. Had they been sincere herein, their Proposal of these Terms had been very commendable. For, (1.) *Israelites* should not Intermarry with *Canaanites*, Professors with Profane, 'tis a great Sin, or at least the Cause and Inlet of a great deal, and has oft been of pernicious Consequence. (2.) The Interest we have in any Persons, and the Hold we have of them, should be wisely improved by us, to bring them to the Love and Practice of Religion: He that wins Souls is Wise; but then we must not, like *Jacob's* Sons, think it enough to persuade them to submit to the external Rites of Religion, but must endeavour to convince 'em of its Reasonableness, and to bring 'em acquainted with the Power of it.

The Intention was malicious; as appears by the Sequel of the Story: All they aimed at was to prepare them for the Day of Slaughter. *Note*, Bloody Designs have oft been covered and carried on with a Pretence of Religion; thus they have been accomplished most plausibly, and most securely: But this dissembled Piety is doubtless double Iniquity. Religion is never more Injur'd, nor God's Sacraments more Profan'd, than when they are thus used for a Cloke of Maliciousness. Nay, if *Jacob's* Sons had not had this bloody Design, I do not see how they could justify their offering the sacred Sign of Circumcision, the Seal of God's Covenant, to these devoted *Canaanites*, who had no Part nor Lot in the matter. They had no Right to the Seal that had no Right to the Promise; *It is not meet to take the Children's Bread, and cast it to Dogs*: But *Jacob's* Sons valued not this, while they could make it serve their Turn.

18 And their words pleased *Hamor*, and *Shechem* *Hamor's* son. 19 And the young man deferred not to do the thing, because he had delight in *Jacob's* daughter: and he was more honourable than all the house of his father. 20 And *Hamor* and *Shechem* his son came unto the gate of their city, and communed with the men of their city, saying, 21 These men are peaceable with us, therefore let them dwell in the land, and trade therein; for the land, behold, it is large enough for them: let us take their daughters to us for wives, and let us give them our daughters. 22 Only herein will the men consent unto us, for to dwell with us, to be one people, if every male among us be circumcised, as they are circumcised: 23 Shall not their cattle, and their substance, and every beast of theirs be ours? only let us consent unto them, and they will dwell with us. 24 And unto *Ha-*

mor and unto *Shechem* his sons hearkened all that went out of the gate of his city: and every male was circumcised, all that went out of the gate of his city.

Here, 1. *Hamor* and *Shechem* gave consent themselves to be Circumcised, v. 18, 19. To this, perhaps, they were mov'd not only by the strong Desire they had to bring about this Match, but by what they might have heard of the sacred and honourable Intentions of this Sign, in the Family of *Abraham*, which, 'tis probable, they had some confused Notions of, and of the Promises confirmed by it; which made them the more desirous to incorporate with the Family of *Jacob*, Zech. 8. 1. *Note*, (1.) Many who know little of Religion, yet know so much of it as makes 'em willing to join themselves with those that are Religious. (2.) If a Man would take upon him a Form of Religion to gain a good Wife, much more should we embrace the Power of it, to gain the Favour of a good God; even Circumcise our Hearts to love him, and as *Shechem* here, not defer to do the thing. 2. They gain'd the Consent of the Men of their City, *Jacob's* Sons requiring that they also should be Circumcised. (1.) They themselves had a great Influence upon them, by their Command and Example. *Note*, Religion would greatly prevail, if those in Authority, who, like *Shechem*, are more Honourable than their Neighbours, would appear forward and zealous for it. (2.) They urg'd an Argument which was very cogent, v. 23. Shall not their Cattle, and their Substance be ours? They observed that *Jacob's* Sons were industrious, thriving People, and promised themselves and their Neighbours Advantage by an Alliance with them: 'Twould improve Ground and Trade, and bring Money into their Country. Now, 1. It was bad enough to Marry upon this Principle, yet we see Covetousness the greatest Match-maker in the World, and nothing designed so much with many as the laying of House to House, and Field to Field, without regard had to any other Consideration. 2. It was worse to be Circumcised upon this Principle. The *Shechemites* will embrace the Religion of *Jacob's* Family, only in hopes of interesting themselves thereby in the Riches of that Family. Thus there are many with whom Gain is Godliness, and who are more govern'd and influenced by their secular Interest, than by any Principle of their Religion.

25 And it came to pass on the third day when they were fore, that two of the sons of *Jacob*, *Simeon* and *Levi*, *Dinah's* brethren, took each man his sword, and came upon the city boldly, and slew all the males. 26 And they slew *Hamor* and *Shechem* his son with the edge of the sword, and took *Dinah* out of *Shechem's* house, and went out. 27 The sons of *Jacob* came upon the slain, and spoiled the city, because they had defiled their sister. 28 They took their sheep, and their oxen, and their asses, and that which was in the city, and that which was in the field. 29 And all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives took they captive, and spoiled even all that was in the house. 30 And *Jacob* said to *Simeon* and *Levi*, Ye have troubled me, to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, amongst the *Canaanites*, and the *Perizzites*: and I being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me, and I shall be destroyed, I and my house. 31 And they said, Should he deal with our sister as with an harlot?

Here we have *Simeon* and *Levi*, two of *Jacob's* Sons, young Men, not much above twenty Years old, cutting the Throats of the *Shechemites*, and thereby breaking the Heart of their good Father.

1. Here's the barbarous Murder of the *Shechemites*; *Jacob* himself was us'd to the Sheep-Hook, but his Sons had got Swords by their Sides, as if they had been the Seed of *Esau*, who was to live by his Sword; we have 'em here.

(1.) Slaying the Inhabitants of *Shechem*; all the Males, *Hamor* and *Shechem* particularly with whom they had been treating in a friendly manner, but 't'other Day, yet with a Design upon their Lives. Some think all *Jacob's* Sons, when they wheedled the *Shechemites* to be Circumcised, designed to take Advantage of their Soreness, and to rescue *Dinah* from among them; but *Simeon* and *Levi*, not content with that, would revenge the Injury, and they did it with a Witnes. Now, (1.) It cannot be denied but that God was righteous in it. Had the *Shechemites* been Circumcised in obedience to any Command of God, their Circumcision would have been their Protection; but when they submitted to that sacred Right only to serve a Turn, to please their Prince, and to enrich themselves, it was just with

God to bring this upon them. *Note*, As nothing secures us better than true Religion, so nothing exposes us more than Religion only pretended to. (2.) But *Simeon* and *Levi* were most Unrighteous.

1. It was true that *Shechem* had wrought Folly against *Israel*, in defiling *Dinah*, but it ought to have been consider'd how far *Dinah* her self had been accessary to it. Had *Shechem* abused her in her own Mother's Tent, it had been another Matter, but she went upon his Ground, and perhaps, by her indecent Carriage, had struck the Spark which begun the Fire: When we are severe upon the Sinner, we ought to consider who was the Tempter.

2. 'Twas true that *Shechem* had done ill, but he was endeavouring to atone for it by his After-Respects, and was as Honest and Honourable, *ex post facto*, as the Case would admit. 'Twas not the Case of the *Levite's* Concubine that was abus'd to death, nor doth he justify what he hath done, but courts a Reconciliation upon any Terms.

3. 'Twas true that *Shechem* had done ill, but what was that to all the *Shechemites*? Doth one Man Sin, and will they be wroth with all the Town? Must the Innocent fall with the Guilty? This was barbarous indeed.

4. But that which above all aggravated the Cruelty, was the most perfidious Treachery that was in it. The *Shechemites* had submitted to their Conditions, and had done that upon which they had promised to become one People with them, v. 16. yet they act as sworn Enemies to those to whom they were lately become sworn Friends, making as light of their Covenant, as they did of the Laws of Humanity: And are these the Sons of *Israel*? *Cursed be their Anger, for it was fierce.*

5. This also added to the Crime, that they made a holy Ordinance of God subservient to their wicked Design, so making that odious; as if it were not enough for 'em to shame themselves and their Family, they bring a Reproach upon that honourable Badge of their Religion; justly would it be called a bloody Ordinance.

(2.) Seizing the Prey of *Shechem*, and plundering the Town: They rescued *Dinah*, v. 26. and if that was all they came for, they might have done that without Blood, as appears by their own shewing, v. 17. but they aim'd at the Spoil; and tho' *Simeon* and *Levi* only were the Murderers, yet it is intimated that others of the Sons of *Jacob* came upon the *Slain*, and spoiled the City, v. 27. and so became accessary to the Murder; in them 'twas manifest Injustice, yet here we may observe the Righteousness of God: The *Shechemites* were willing to gratify the Sons of *Jacob* by submitting to the Penance of Circumcision upon this Principle, *Shall not their Cattle and their Substance be ours?* v. 23. And see what was the Issue, instead of making themselves Masters of the Wealth of *Jacob's* Family, *Jacob's* Family becomes Masters of their Wealth. *Note*, Those who unjustly grasp at that which is another's, justly lose that which is their own.

2. Here's *Jacob's* Resentment of this bloody Fact of *Simeon* and *Levi*, v. 30. Two things he sensibly complains of.

1. The Reproach they had brought upon him thereby, *Ye have troubled me*, put me into a Disorder, for ye have made me to sink among the Inhabitants of the Land, i. e. You have render'd me and my Family odious among them. What will they say of us and our Religion? We shall be looked upon as the most perfidious, barbarous People in the World. *Note*, The gross Miscarriages of wicked Children, are the Grief and Shame of their godly Parents. Children should be the Joy of their Parents, but wicked Children are their Trouble, sadden their Hearts, break their Spirits, and make them go Mourning from Day to Day; Children should be an Ornament to their Parents, but wicked Children are their Reproach, and are as dead *Elies* in their Por of Quintment: But let such Children know, that if they repent not, the Grief they have caused to their Parents, and the Damage Religion has sustained in its Reputation through them, will come into the Account, and be reckoned for.

2. The Ruin they had expos'd him to: What could be expected but that the *Canaanites*, who were Numerous and Formidable, would Confederate against him, and he and his little Family would become an easy Prey to them, *I shall be destroyed, I and my House*: If all the *Shechemites* must be destroyed for the Offence of one, why not all the *Israelites* for the Offence of two? *Jacob* knew indeed that God had promised to preserve and perpetuate his House, but he might justly fear that these vile Practises of his Children would amount to a Forfeiture, and cut off the Entail. *Note*, When Sin is in the House, there is reason to fear Ruin at the Door. The tender Parents foresee those ill Consequences of Sin which the wicked Children have no dread of.

One would think this should have made them to relent, and they should have humbled themselves to their good Father, and begg'd his Pardon, but instead of that, they justify themselves, and give him this insolent Reply, *Should he deal with our Sister as with an Harlot?* No, he should not, but if he do, must they be their own Avengers? Will nothing less than so many Lives, and the Ruin of a whole City serve to atone for an abuse done to one foolish Girl? By their Question they tacitly reflect upon their Father, as if he would have been content to let 'em deal with his Daughter as with an Harlot. *Note*, It is common for

those who run into one Extrem to Reproach and Censure those who keep the Mean, as if they run into the other. Those who condemn the Rigor of Revenge, shall be misrepresented as if they countenanced and justified the Offence.

CHAP. XXXV.

In this Chapter we have three Communion, and three Funerals:

1. Three Communion between God and *Jacob*. 1. God ordered *Jacob* to Bethel, and in obedience to that Order he purged his House of Idols, and prepared for that Journey, v. 1---5. 2. *Jacob* built an Altar at Bethel to the Honour of God that had appeared to him, and in performance of his Vow, v. 6, 7. 3. God appeared to him again, and confirmed the Change of his Name, and the Covenant with him, v. 9---13. of which Appearance *Jacob* made a grateful Acknowledgment, v. 14, 15. 2. Three Funerals, 1. *Deborah's*, v. 8. 2. *Rachel's*, v. 16---20. 3. *Isaac's*, v. 27---29. Here is also *Reuben's* Incest, v. 22. and an Account of *Jacob's* Sons, v. 23, 26.

1 AND God said unto *Jacob*, Arise, go up to Beth-el, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of *Esau* thy brother. 2 Then *Jacob* said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: 3 And let us arise, and go up to Beth-el; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went. 4 And they gave unto *Jacob* all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their ear-rings which were in their ears; and *Jacob* hid them under the oak which was by *Shechem*. 5 And they journeyed: and the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of *Jacob*.

Here, 1. God minds *Jacob* of his Vow at Bethel, and sends him thither to perform it, v. 1. *Jacob* had said in the Day of his Distress, *If I come again in Peace, this Stone shall be God's House*, Chap. xxviii. 22. God had performed his Part of the Bargain, had given *Jacob* more than Bread to eat, and Raiment to put on, he had got an Estate, and was become Two Bands, but it should seem he had forgotten his Vow, or at least had too long deferred the Performance of it. Seven or eight Years it was now since he came to *Canaan*; he had purchased Ground there, and had built an Altar in remembrance of God's last Appearance to him when he called him *Israel*, Chap. xxxiii. 19, 20. but still Bethel is forgotten. *Note*, Time is apt to wear out the Sense of Mercies, and the Impressions made upon us by them; it should not be so, but so it is. God had exercised *Jacob* with a very sore Affliction in his Family, Ch. xxiv. to see if that would bring his Vow to his remembrance, and put him upon the Performance of it, but it had not that Effect; therefore God comes himself, and puts him in mind of it, *Arise, Go to Bethel*, *Note*, 1. As many as God loves he will remind of neglected Duties one way or other, by Conscience or Providences. 2. When we have vowed a Vow to God, 'tis best not to defer the Payment of it (*Ecd. v. 4.*) yet better late than never. God bid him go to Bethel and dwell there, i. e. not only go himself, but take his Family with him, that they might join with him in his Devotions. *Note*, In Bethel, the House of God, we should desire to dwell, Pf. xxvii. 4. That should be our Home, not our Inn. God minds him not expressly of his Vow, but of the Occasion of it, when thou fleddest from the Face of *Esau*. *Note*, The remembrance of former Afflictions should bring to mind the workings of our Souls under them, Pf. lvi. 13, 14.

2. *Jacob* commands his Household to prepare for this Solemnity; not only for the Journey and Remove, but for the religious Services that were to be performed, v. 2, 3. *Note*, 1. Before solemn Ordinances there must be solemn Preparation, *Wash ye, make ye clean, and then come and let us reason together*, Isa. i. 16, 17, 18. 2. Masters of Families should use their Authority for the promoting of Religion in their Families: Not only we, but our Houses also should serve the Lord, Jos. xxiv. 15. Observe the Commands he gives his Household, like *Abraham*, Gen. xviii. 19. (1.) They must put away the strange Gods. Strange Gods in *Jacob's* Family! strange things indeed! Could such a Family that was taught the good Knowledge of the Lord, admit them? Could such a Master, to whom God had appeared twice, and oftener, connive at them? Doubtless this was his Infirmary. *Note*, Those that are good themselves, cannot have those about

bout them so good as they should be. In those Families where there is a Face of Religion, and an Altar to God, yet many times there is much amiss, and more *strange Gods* than one would suspect. In *Jacob's Family*, *Rachel* had her *Teraphim*, which, 'tis to be feared, she secretly made some superstitious use of. The Captives of *Shechem* brought their Gods along with them, and perhaps *Jacob's Sons* took some with the Plunder. However they came by them, now they must put 'em away. (1.) They must be clean, and change their Garments; they must observe a Decorum, and make the best Appearance they could; *Simson* and *Levi* had their Hands full of Blood; it concerned them to wash, and to put off the Garments that were so stained. These were but Ceremonies, signifying the Purification of the Heart, and the change of that: What's clean Cloaths, and new Cloaths, without a clean Heart, and a new Heart? Dr. Lightfoot, by their being clean, or, washing them, understands *Jacob's* admission of the Profelytes of *Shechem* and *Syria* into his Religion by Baptism, because Circumcision was become odious. (3.) They must go with him to *Bethel*, v. 3. Note, Masters of Families, when they go up to the House of God, should bring their Families with them.

3. His Family surrenders all they had that was idolatrous, or superstitious, v. 4. Perhaps, if *Jacob* had called for 'em sooner, they had sooner parted with them, being convicted by their own Consciences of the Vanity of them. Note, Sometimes Attempts for Reformation succeed better than one could have expected, and People are not so obstinate against them as we feared. *Jacob's* Servants, and even the Retainers to his Family, gave him all the *strange Gods*, and the *Ear-Rings* they wore either as Charms, or to the Honour of their Gods, they parted with all. Note, Reformation is not sincere, if it be not universal. We may hope they parted with them cheerfully and without reluctance, as *Ephraim* did when he said, *What have I to do any more with Idols?* Hos. xiv. 8. or that People that said to their Idols, *Get ye hence*, Isa. xxx. 22. *Jacob* took care to bury their Images, we may suppose, in some Place unknown to them, that they might not afterwards find 'em, and return to them. Note, We must be wholly separated from our Sins, as we are from those that are dead, and buried out of our sight: Cast 'em to the Moles and the Bats, Isa. ii. 20.

4. He removes without Molestation, from *Shechem* to *Bethel*, v. 5. The Terror of God was upon the Cities: Tho' the *Canaanites* were much exasperated against the Sons of *Jacob*, for their barbarous Usage of the *Shechemites*, yet they were so restrained by a Divine Power, that they could not take this fair Opportunity which now offer'd it self, when they were upon their March, to avenge their Neighbour's Quarrel. Note, The Way of Duty is the Way of Safety. While there was Sin in *Jacob's* House, he was afraid of his Neighbours, but now the *strange Gods* were put away, and they were all going together to *Bethel*, his Neighbours were afraid of him. When we are about God's Work, we are under special Protection: God is with us while we are with him, and if he be for us, who can be against us? See Exod. xxxiv. 24. No Man shall desire thy Land, when thou goest up to appear before the Lord. God governs the World more by secret Terrors on Men's Minds than we are aware of.

6 So *Jacob* came to *Luz*, which is in the land of *Canaan* (that is *Beth-el*) he and all the people that were with him. 7 And he built there an altar, and called the place *El-beth-el*: because there God appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother. 8 But *Deborah* *Rebekah's* nurse died, and she was buried beneath *Beth-el*, under an oak: and the name of it was called *Allon-bachuth*. 9 And God appeared unto *Jacob* again, when he came out of *Padan-aram*; and blessed him. 10 And God said unto him, Thy name is *Jacob*: thy name shall not be called any more *Jacob*, but *Israel* shall be thy name; and he called his name *Israel*. 11 And God said unto him, I am God Almighty; be fruitful and multiply, a nation and a company of Nations shall be of thee: and kings shall come out of thy loyns. 12 And the land which I gave *Abraham* and *Isaac*, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land. 13 And God went up from him in the place where he talked with him. 14 And *Jacob* set up a pillar in the place where he talked with him, even a pillar of stone: and he poured a drink-offering thereon, and he poured oyl thereon. 15 And

Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him, *Beth-el*.

Jacob and his Retinue being come safe to *Bethel*, we are here told what passed there.

1. There he built an Altar, v. 7. and no doubt offered Sacrifice upon it, perhaps the Tenth of his Cattle, according to his Vow, I will give the Tenth unto thee. With these Sacrifices he joynd Praises for former Mercies, particularly that which the Sight of the Place brought fresh to his Remembrance, and Prayers for the continuance of God's Favour to him and his Family. And he called the Place, i. e. the Altar, *El-Beth-el*, the God of *Bethel*. As when he made a thankful Acknowledgment of the Honour God had lately done him in calling him *Israel*, he worshipped God by the Name of *El-Elohe, Israel*, so now he was making a grateful Recognition of God's former Favour to him at *Bethel*, he worshipped God by the Name of *El-Beth-el*, the God of *Bethel*, because there God appeared to him. Note, The Comfort which the Saints have in Holy Ordinances is not so much from *Bethel* the House of God, as from *El-Bethel*, the God of the House. The Ordinances are but empty Things if we do not meet with God in them.

2. There he buried *Deborah*, *Rebekah's* Nurse, v. 8. we have reason to think that *Jacob* after he came to *Canaan*, while his Family dwelt near *Shechem*, went himself ('tis likely often) to visit his Father *Isaac*, at *Hebron*. *Rebekah* probably was dead, but her old Nurse (of whom mention is made, Chap. xxiv. 59.) survived her, and *Jacob* took her to his Family, to be a Companion to his Wives, her Country-Women, and an Instructor to his Children: While they were at *Bethel*, she died, and died lamented, so much lamented, that the Oak under which she was buried was called *Allon-Bachuth*, the Oak of Weeping. Note, (1.) Old Servants in a Family that have in their time been faithful and useful, ought to be respected. Honour was done to this Nurse at her Death by *Jacob's* Family, tho' she was not related to them, and tho' she was aged. Former Services, in such a Case, must be remembered. (2.) We do not know where Death may meet us, perhaps at *Bethel*, the House of God. Therefore let us be always ready. (3.) Family Afflictions may come even then, when Family Reformation and Religion is on foot: Therefore Rejoice with trembling.

3. There God appeared to him, v. 9. to own his Altar, and to answer to the Name by which he had called him, The God of *Bethel*, v. 7. and to comfort him under his Affliction, v. 8. Note, God will appear to them in a way of Grace, that attend on him in a way of Duty.

Here, (1.) He confirmed the change of his Name, v. 10. It was done before by the Angel that wrestled with him, Chap. xxxii. 28. and here 'twas ratified by the Divine Majesty, or *Shechinah* that appeared to him. There 'twas to encourage him against the Fear of *Esaus*, here against the Fear of the *Canaanites*. Who can be too hard for *Israel*, a Prince with God? 'Tis below those who are thus dignified, to droop and despond.

(2.) He renewed and ratified the Covenant with him, by the Name of *El-Shaddai*. I am God Almighty: God All-sufficient, (v. 11.) able to make good the Promise in due time, and to support thee and provide for thee in the mean time. Two things are promised him which we have met with oft before: (1.) That he should be the Father of a great Nation; great in Number, a Company of Nations shall be of thee: Every Tribe of *Israel* was a Nation, and all the Twelve a Company of Nations; great in Honour and Power, Kings shall come out of thy Loyns.

2. That he should be the Master of a good Land, v. 12. described by the Grantees, *Abraham* and *Isaac* to whom it was promised, not by the Occupants, the *Canaanites* in whose Possession it now was. The Land that was given to *Abraham* and *Isaac* is here entailed on *Jacob* and his Seed: He shall not have Children without an Estate, which is oft the Care of the Poor, nor an Estate without Children, which is oft the Grief of the Rich, but both. These two Promises had a spiritual Signification, which we may suppose *Jacob* himself had some Notion of, though not so clear and distinct as we now have; for without doubt *Christ* is the Promised Seed, and *Heaven* is the Promised Land: The former is the Foundation, and the latter the Top-Stone of all God's Favours.

(3.) He then went up from him, (or from over him,) in some visible Display of Glory, which had hovered over him, while he talked with him; v. 13. Note, The sweetest Communion the Saints have with God in this World, are short and transient, and soon have an end. Our Vision of God in Heaven will be everlasting: there we shall be ever with the Lord; 'tis not so here.

4. There he erected a Memorial of this, Ver. 14. (1.) He set up a Pillar. When he was going to *Padan-aram*, he set up that Stone, which he had laid his Head on for a Pillar; that was agreeable enough to his low Condition, and his hasty Flight, but now he took time to erect one more stately, more distinguishable, and durable, probably inserting that Stone into it. And in Token of his intending it for a sacred Memorial of his Communion with God, he poured Oil, and other the Ingredients of a Drink-Offering upon it: His Vow was, This

Stone shall not be God's House, i. e. shall be set up for his Honour, as Houses to the Praise of their Builders; and here he performs it, transferring it to God by anointing it. (2.) He confirmed the Name he had formerly given to the Place, (v. 15.) *Bethel the House of God*. Yet this very Place afterwards lost the Honour of its Name, and became *Bethaven*, A House of Iniquity; for here it was that *Jeroboam* set up one of his Calves. 'Tis impossible for the best Men to entail so much as the Profession and Form of Religion upon a Place.

16 And they journeyed from Beth-el: and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath: and Rachel travailed; and she had hard labour. 17 And it came to pass when she was in hard labour, that the midwife said unto her, Fear not, thou shalt have this son also. 18 And it came to pass as her soul was in departing (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin. 19 And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Beth-lehem. 20 And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave: that is the pillar of Rachels grave unto this day.

We have here the Story of the Death of *Rachel*, the beloved Wife of *Jacob*. (1.) She fell in Travail by the Way, not able to reach to *Bethlehem* the next Town, tho' they were near it; so suddenly doth Pain sometimes come upon a Woman in Travail, which she cannot escape, or put off. We must suppose *Jacob* had soon a Tent up, convenient enough for her Reception. (2.) Her Pains were violent. She had hard Labour, harder than usual: This was the Effect of Sin, *Gen. iii. 16.* Note, Human Life begins with Sorrow, and the Roses of its Joy are surrounded with Thorns. (3.) The Midwife encouraged her, *ver. 17.* No doubt she had her Midwife with her, ready at hand, yet that would not secure her. *Rachel* had said, when she bore *Joseph*, God shall add another Son, which now the Midwife remembers, and tells her her Words were made good. Yet this did not avail to keep up her Spirits: Unless God command away Fear, no one else can. He only saith, as one having Authority, *Fear not.* We are apt in extreme Perils, to comfort our selves and our Friends with the hopes of a temporal Deliverance, in which we may be disappointed, we had better found our Comforts on that which cannot fail us, the Hope of Eternal Life. (4.) Her Travail was to the Life of the Child, but to her own Death. Note, Tho' the Pains and Perils of Child-bearing were introduced by Sin, yet they have sometimes been fatal to very Holy Women, who tho' not saved in Child-bearing, are saved through it with an everlasting Salvation. *Rachel* had passionately said, *Give me Children or else I die*; and now she had Children (for this was her second) she dyed. Her dying is here called the departing of her Soul. Note, The Death of the Body is but the Departure of the Soul to the World of Spirits. (5.) Her dying Lips called her new-born Son *Benoni*, the Son of my Sorrow: And many a Son, not born in such hard Labour, yet proves the Son of his Parent's Sorrow, and the Heaviness of her that bare him. Children are enough the Sorrow of their poor Mothers, in the Breeding, Bearing, and Nursing of them, they should therefore, when they grow up, study to be their Joy, and so, if possible, to make them some Amends. But *Jacob*, because he would not renew the sorrowful Remembrance of the Mother's Death, every time he called his Son by his Name, changed his Name, and called him *Benjamin*, The Son of my Right-hand, i. e. very dear to me; set on my Right-Hand for a Right-Hand Blessing: The Support of my Age, like the Staff in my Right-Hand. (6.) *Jacob* buried her near the Place where she died: Dying in Child-bed, 'twas convenient to bury her quickly, and therefore he did not bring her to the Burying-Place of his Family. If the Soul be at rest after Death, the Matter is not great where the Body lies. In the Place where the Tree falls, there let it be. No mention is made of the Mourning that was at her Death, because that might easily be taken for granted. *Jacob*, no doubt, was a true Mourner. Note, Great Afflictions sometime befall us immediately after great Comforts. Left *Jacob* should be lifted up with the Visions of the Almighty he was honour'd with, this was sent as a Thorn in the Flesh to humble him. Those that enjoy the Favours peculiar to the Children of God, must yet expect the Troubles, that are common to the Children of Men. *Deborah* (who, had she lived, would have been a Comfort to *Rachel* in her Extremity) dyed but a little before. Note, When Death comes into a Family, it often strikes double. God by it speaks once, yea, twice. The Jewish Writers say, The Death of *Deborah* and *Rachel* was to expiate the Murder of the *Shechemites*, occasioned by *Dinah* a Daughter of the Family. Lastly, Observe, That *Jacob* set up a Pillar upon her Grave, so that it was known long after, to be *Rachel's* Sepulchre, 1 Sam. x. 2. and Providence so order'd it that this Place afterwards fell in the Lot of *Benjamin*. *Jacob* set up a Pillar in remembrance

of his Joys, v. 14. and here he sets up one in remembrance of his Sorrows; for as it may be of use to our selves to keep both in mind, so it may be of use to others to transmit the Memorials of both: The Church long after owned that what God said to *Jacob* at *Bethel*, both by his Word and by his Rod, he intended for their Instruction, *Hos. xii. 4.* There be Spake with us.

21 And *Israel* journeyed and spread his tent beyond the tower of *Edar*. 22 And it came to pass when *Israel* dwelt in that land, that *Reuben* went and lay with *Bilhah* his fathers concubine: and *Israel* heard it. Now the sons of *Jacob* were twelve. 23 The sons of *Leah*; *Reuben* *Jacobs* first-born, and *Simeon*, and *Levi*, and *Judah*, and *Issachar*, and *Zebulun*. 24 The sons of *Rachel*, *Joseph*, and *Benjamin*. 25 And the sons of *Bilhah*, *Rachels* handmaid; *Dan*, and *Naphtali*. 26 And the sons of *Zilpah*, *Leahs* hand-maid; *Gad*, and *Asher*. These are the sons of *Jacob*, which were born to him in *Padan-aram*. 27 And *Jacob* came unto *Isaac* his father unto *Mamre*, unto the city of *Arbah* (which is *Hebron*) where *Abraham* and *Isaac* sojourned. 28 And the days of *Isaac* were an hundred and fourscore years. 29 And *Isaac* gave up the ghost and died, and was gathered unto his people, being old and full of days: and his sons *Esau* and *Jacob* buried him.

Here's, 1. *Jacob's* Remove, v. 21. He also, as his Father, sojourn'd in the Land of Promise as in a strange Country, and was not long in a Place. Immediately after the Story of *Rachel's* Death, he is here called *Israel*, v. 21, 22, and not often so after: The Jews say the Historian doth him this Honour here, because he bore that Affliction with such admirable Patience and Submission to Providence. Note, Those are *Israel's* indeed, Princes with God, that support the Government of their own Passions. He that has this rule, over his own Spirit, is better than the Mighty *Israel*, a Prince with God, yet dwells in *Tents*; the City is reserved for him in t'other World.

2. The Sin of *Reuben*; a piece of abominable Wickedness it was that he was guilty of; that very Sin which the Apostle saith, 1 Cor. v. 1. is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his Father's Wife, v. 22. 'Tis said to be when *Israel* dwelt in that Land, as if he were then absent from his Family, which might be the unhappy Occasion of these Disorders. Tho' perhaps *Bilhah* was the greater Criminal, and 'tis probable was abandon'd by *Jacob* for it, yet *Reuben's* Crime was so provoking, that for it he lost his Birth-right and Blessing, Ch. xlix. 4. The First-born is not always the best, nor the most promising. This was *Reuben's* Sin, but it was *Jacob's* Affliction, and what a sore Affliction it was it was intimated in a little Compass, and *Israel* heard it. No more is said, that's enough, he heard it with the utmost Grief and Shame, Horror and Displeasure. *Reuben* thought so conceal it, that his Father should never hear it; but those that promise themselves Secrecy in Sin, are generally disappointed, a Bird of the Air carries the Voice.

3. A complete List of the Sons of *Jacob*, now *Benjamin* the Youngest was born. This is the first Time that we have the Names of these Heads of the twelve Tribes together, afterwards we find them very often spoken of and enumerated, even to the end of the Bible, *Rev. vii. 4-21. 12.*

4. The Visit which *Jacob* made to his Father *Isaac* at *Hebron*. We may suppose he had visited him before since his return, for he sore longed after his Father's House; but never till now brought his Family to settle with him, or near him, v. 27. Probably he did this now upon the Death of *Rebekah*, by which *Isaac* was left solitary, and not disposed to Marry again.

5. The Age and Death of *Isaac*, are here recorded, tho' it appears by Computation, that he died not till many Years after *Joseph* was sold into *Egypt*, and much about the Time that he was preferred there. *Isaac*, a mild quiet Man, lived the longest of all the Patriarchs, for he was One Hundred and Eighty Years Old, *Abraham* was but One Hundred Seventy-Five, *Isaac* lived about Forty Years after he had made his Will, Ch. xxvii. 2. We shall not dye an Hour the sooner, but abundance the better for our timely setting of our Heart and House in Order. Particular Notice is taken of the amicable Agreement of *Esau* and *Jacob*, in solemnizing their Father's Funeral, v. 29. to shew how God had wonderfully changed *Esau's* Mind, since he vowed his Brother's Murder immediately upon his Father's Death, Chap. xxvii. 21. Note, God has many Ways of preventing ill Men from doing the Mischief they intended, he can either tie their Hands, or turn their Hearts.

C H A P. XXXVI.

In this Chapter we have an Account of the Posterity of Esau, who from him were called Edomites; that Esau who sold his Birth-right, and lost his Blessing, and was not loved of God as Jacob was. Here's a brief Register kept of his Family for some Generations. (1.) Because he was the Son of Isaac, for whose sake this Honour is put upon him. (2.) Because the Edomites were Neighbours to Israel, and their Genealogy would be of use to give Light to the following Stories of what passed between them. (3.) To shew the Performances of the Promise to Abraham that he should be the Father of many Nations; and of that Answer which Rebekah had from the Oracle she consulted, Two Nations are in thy Womb, and of the Blessing of Isaac, Thy dwelling shall be the Fatness of the Earth. Here's, 1. Esau's Wives, v. 1-5. 2. His Remove to Mount Seir, v. 6-8. 3. The Names of his Sons, v. 9-14. 4. The Dukes which descended of his Sons, v. 15-19. 5. The Dukes of the Horites, v. 20-30. 6. The Kings and Dukes of Edom, v. 31, ad fin. Little more is recorded but their Names only, because the History of those that were out of the Church, though, perhaps, it might have been serviceable in Politics, yet would have been of little Use in Divinity. 'Tis in the Church that the memorable Instances are found of special Grace, and special Providence, for that's the Inclosure, the rest is Common. This Chapter is abridg'd, 1 Chron. 1. 35, &c.

NOW these are the generations of Esau, who is Edom. 2 Esau took his wives of the daughters of Canaan; Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Aholibamah the daughter of Anah the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite: 3 And Basemath, Ishmaels daughter, sister of Nebajoth. 4 And Adah bare to Esau, Eliphaz: and Basemath bare Reuel. 5 And Aholibamah bare Jeshu, and Jaalam, and Korah: These are the sons of Esau, which were born unto him in the land of Canaan. 6 And Esau took his wives, and his sons, and his daughters, and all the persons of his house, and his cattle, and all his beasts, and all his substance, which he had got in the land of Canaan; and went into the country, from the face of his brother Jacob. 7 For their riches were more than that they might dwell together: and the land wherein they was strangers, could not bear them, because of their cattle. 8 Thus dwelt Esau in mount Seir: Esau is Edom.

Observe here, (1.) Concerning Esau himself, v. 1. That he is called *Edom* (and again, v. 8.) that Name by which was perpetuated the Remembrance of the foolish Bargain he made, when he sold his Birth-right for that *Red*, that *Red* Pottage. The very Mention of that Name is enough to intimate the Reason why his Family is turned off with such a short Account. Note, If Men do an ill Thing, they must thank themselves when it is long after remembered against them to their Reproach.

(2.) Concerning his Wives, and the Children they bore him in the Land of Canaan. He had three Wives, and by them all, but five Sons: Many a one has more by One Wife. God, in his Providence often disappoints those who take indirect Courses to build up a Family; yet here the Promise prevailed, and Esau's Family was built up.

(3.) Concerning his Remove to Mount Seir, which was the Country God had given him for a Possession when he reserved Canaan for the Seed of Jacob. God owns it long after, I gave to Esau Mount Seir, Deut. ii. 5. Jos. xxiv. 4. which was the Reason why the Edomites must not be disturbed in their Possession. Those that have not a Right by Promise, such as Jacob had to Canaan, may have a very good Title by Providence to their Estates, such as Esau had to Mount Seir. Esau had begun to settle among his Wives Relations in Seir, before Jacob came from Padan-aram, Chap. xxxii. 3. Isaac, 'tis likely, had sent him thither, (as Abraham in his Life-time had sent the Sons of the Concubines from Isaac his Son into the East-Country, Chap. xxv. 6.) that Jacob might have the clearer Way made him to the Possession of the Promised Land: But probably during the Life of Isaac, Esau had still some Effects remaining in Canaan; but after his Death, he wholly withdrew to Mount Seir, took with him what came to his Share of his Father's personal Estate, and left Canaan to Jacob; not only because he had the Promise of it, but because he saw if they should both continue to thrive, as they had begun, there would not be room for both. Thus dwelt E-

sa in Mount Seir, v. 8. Note, Whatever Opposition may be made, God's Word will take place, and even those that have opposed it, will see themselves, sometime or other, under a necessity of yielding to it, and acquiescing in it. Esau had struggled for Canaan, but now he tamely retires to Mount Seir, for God's Counsels shall certainly stand, concerning the Times before appointed, and the Bounds of our Habitation.

9 And these are the generations of Esau the father of the Edomites, in mount Seir. 10 These are the names of Esau's sons; Eliphaz the son of Adah the wife of Esau, Reuel the son of Basemath the wife of Esau. 11 And the sons of Eliphaz were, Teman, Omar, Zepho, and Gatam, and Kenaz. 12 And Timna was concubine to Eliphaz Esau's son; and she bare to Eliphaz Amalek: these were the sons of Adah Esau's wife. 13 And these are the sons of Reuel; Nahath, and Zerah, Shammah and Mizzah: these were the sons of Basemath Esau's wife. 14 And these were the sons of Aholibamah, the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon Esau's wife: and she bare to Esau, Jeshu, and Jaalam, and Korah. 15 These were dukes of the sons of Esau: the sons of Eliphaz the first-born son of Esau; duke Teman, duke Omar, duke Zepho, duke Kenaz, 16 Duke Korah, duke Gatam, and duke Amalek: These are the dukes that came of Eliphaz, in the land of Edom: these were the sons of Adah. 17 And these are the sons of Reuel Esau's son; duke Nahath, duke Zerah, duke Shammah, duke Mizzah. These are the dukes that came of Reuel, in the land of Edom: these are the sons of Basemath Esau's wife. 18 And these are the sons of Aholibamah Esau's wife; duke Jeshu, duke Jaalam, duke Korah: these were the dukes that came of Aholibamah the daughter of Anah, Esau's wife. 19 These are the sons of Esau (who is Edom) and these are their dukes.

Observe here, 1. That only the Names of Esau's Sons and Grand-Sons are recorded. Only their Names, not their History, for 'tis the Church that Moses preserves the Records of, not of those that were without. The Elders only that lived by Faith, obtained a good Report. 'Tis *Seir* that produceth the Men of Renown, not *Seir*, Pl. lxxxvii. 5. Nor doth the Genealogy go any further than the third and fourth Generation, the very Names of all after are buried in Oblivion: 'Tis only the Pedigree of the Israelites, who were to be the Heirs of Canaan, and of whom were to come the Promised Seed, and the Holy Seed that is drawn out to any length, as far as there was occasion for it; even of all the Tribes till Canaan was divided among them, and of the Royal Line till Christ came. 2. That these Sons and Grandsons of Esau are called *Dukes*, v. 15-18. Probably they were Military Commanders, Dukes or Captains that had Soldiers under them; for Esau and his Family lived by the Sword, Ch. xxvii. 40. Note, Titles of Honour have been more ancient out of the Church than in it. Esau's Sons were Dukes, when Jacob's Sons were but plain Shepherds, Chap. xlvii. 3. This is not a reason why such Titles should not be used among Christians; but is a Reason why Men should not over-value themselves, or others, for the sake of them. There is an Honour that comes from God, and a Name in his House that is infinitely more valuable. Edomites may be Dukes with Men, but Israelites indeed are made to our God Kings and Priests. 3. We may suppose those Dukes had numerous Families of Children and Servants, that were their Dukedom. God promised to multiply Jacob, and to enrich him, yet Esau increases, and is enriched first. Note, It is no new thing for the Men of this World to be full of Children, and to have their Bellies too filled with the hid Treasure, Plal. xvii. 14. God's Promise to Jacob began to work late, but the Effect of it remained longer, and it had its compleat Accomplishment in the Spiritual Israel.

20 These are the Sons of Seir the Horite, who inhabited the land; Lotan, and Shobal, and Zibeon, and Anah. 21 And Dishon, and Ezer, and Dishan: these are the dukes of the Horites, the children of Seir in the land of Edom. 22 And the children of Lotan, were Hori, and Heman: and

and Lotans sister was Timna. 23 And the children of Shobal were these; Alvan, and Manahath, and Ebal, Shepho, and Onam. 24 And these are the children of Zibeon: both Ajah, and Anah: this was that Anah, that found the mules in the wilderness, as he fed the asses of Zibeon his father. 25 And the children of Anah were these; Dishon, and Aholibamah the daughter of Anah. 26 And these are the children of Dishon; Hemdan, and Eshban, and Ithran, and Gheran. 27 The children of Ezer are these; Bilhan, and Zavan, and Achan. 28 The children of Dishan are these; Uz, and Aran. 29 These are the dukes that came of the Horites; duke Lotan, duke Shobal, duke Zibeon, duke Anah. 30 Duke Dishon, duke Ezer, duke Dishan: these are the dukes that came of Hori, among their dukes in the land of Seir.

In the midst of the Genealogy of the Edomites, here is inserted the Genealogy of the Horites, those Canaanites, or Hittites, (compare Gen. xxvi. 34.) that were the Natives of Mount Seir. Mention is made of them, Gen. xiv. 6. and of their Interest in Mount Seir before the Edomites took possession of it, Deut. ii. 12, 22. This comes in here not only to give light to the Story, but to be a standing Reflection upon the Edomites for Intermarrying with them, by which, 'tis likely, they learned their Way, and corrupted themselves. Esau having sold his Birth-right, and lost his Blessing, and enter'd into Alliance with the Horites, his Posterity and the Sons of Seir are here reckon'd together. Note, Those that treacherously desert God's Church, are justly number'd with those that were never in it: Apostate Edomites stand on the same Ground with accursed Horites. Particular notice is taken of one Anah who fed the Asses of Zibeon his father, v. 20. and yet is called Duke Anah, v. 29. Note, Those that expect to rise high should begin low. An Honourable Descent should not keep Men from an Honest Employment, nor a mean Employment balk any Man's Preferment. This Anah was not only Industrious in his Business, but Ingenious too, and successful, for he found Mules, (or as some read it) Waters, hot Baths in the Wilderness: Those that are diligent in their Business, sometimes find more Advantages than they expected.

31 And these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel. 32 And Bela the son of Beor reigned in Edom: and the name of his city was Dinhabah. 33 And Bela died, and Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned in his stead. 34 And Jobab died, and Husham of the land of Temani reigned in his stead. 35 And Husham died, and Hadad the son of Bedad (who smote Midian in the field of Moab) reigned in his stead: and the name of his city was Avith. 36 And Hadad died, and Samlah of Mafrekah reigned in his stead. 37 And Samlah died, and Saul of Rehoboth by the river reigned in his stead. 38 And Saul died, and Baal-hanan the son of Achbor reigned in his stead. 39 And Baal-hanan the son of Achbor died, and Hader reigned in his stead: and the name of his city was Pau; and his wives name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezahab. 40 And these are the names of the dukes that came of Esau, according to their families, after their places, by their names; duke Timnah, duke Alvah, duke Jetheth, 41 Duke Aholibamah, duke Elah, duke Pinon, 42 Duke Kenaz, duke Teman, duke Mibzar. 43 Duke Magdiel, duke Iram: these be the dukes of Edom, according to their habitations, in the land of their possession; he is Esau the father of the Edomites.

By Degrees, it seems, the Edomites worm'd out the Horites,

and got full Possession of the Country, and had a Government of their own. 1. They were ruled by Kings that govern'd the whole Country, and seem to have come to the Throne by Election, and not by lineal Descent; so Bishop Patrick observes. These Kings reign'd in Edom before there reigned any King over the Children of Israel, i. e. before Moses's time, for he was King in Jerusalem, v. 31. God had lately promised Jacob, that Kings should come out of his Loins, Ch. xxxv. 11. yet Esau's Blood becomes Royal long before any of Jacob's did. Note, In external Prosperity and Honour the Children of the Covenant are oft cast behind, and those that are out of Covenant go the start. The Triumphing of the Wicked may be quick, but it is short, soon ripe, and as soon rotten, but the Products of the Promise, tho' they are slow, they are sure and lasting, at the end he shall speak, and not lie. We may suppose it a great Trial to the Faith of God's Israel, to hear of the Pomp and Power of the Kings of Edom, while they were Bond-Slaves in Egypt, but those that look for great things from God, must be content to wait for them; God's Time is the best Time. 2. They were afterwards governed by Dukes, again here named, who, I suppose, ruled all at the same time in several Places in the Country. They set up this Form of Government, either in Conformity to the Horites, who had used it, v. 29. or God's Providence reduced them to it, as some conjecture, to correct them for their Unkindness to Israel, in refusing them Passage through their Country. Num. xx. 18. Note, When Power is abus'd, 'tis just with God to weaken it, by turning it into divers Channels: For the Transgression of a Land many are the Princes thereof. Sin brought Edom from Kings to Dukes, from Crowns to Coronets. We read of the Dukes of Edom, Exod. xv. 15. yet long after of their Kings again.

Lastly, Observe, Mount Seir is called the Land of their Possession, Ver. 43. While the Israelites dwelt in the House of Bondage, and their Canaan was only the Land of Promise, the Edomites dwelt in their own Habitations, and Seir was in their Possession. Note, The Children of this World have their all in Hand, and nothing in Hope, (Luke xvi. 25.) while the Children of God have their all in Hope, and next to nothing in Hand: But all things consider'd, it's better have Canaan in Promise, than Mount Seir in Possession.

CHAP. XXXVII

At this Chapter begins the Story of Joseph, who from hence in a very Chapter (but one) to the End of this Book, makes the greatest Figure. He was Jacob's Eldest Son by his beloved Wife Rachel, born, as many eminent Men were, of a Mother that had been long Barren. His Story is so remarkably divided between his Humiliation and his Exaltation, that we cannot avoid seeing something of Christ in it, who was first humbled and then exalted, and in many Instances, so as to answer the Type of Joseph: It also shows the Lot of Christians, who must through many Tribulations enter into the Kingdom. In this Chapter we have,

1. The Malice his Brethren bore against him: They hated him, (1.) Because he informed his Father of their Wickedness, v. 1, 2. (2.) Because his Father loved him, v. 3, 4. (3.) Because he dreamed of his Dominion over them, v. 5--11.
2. The Mischief his Brethren designed, and did to him. (1.) His kind Visions he made them gave an Opportunity, v. 12--17. (2.) They designed to Slay him, but determined to Starve him, v. 18--24. (3.) They changed their Purpose, and sold him for a Slave, v. 25--8. (4.) They made their Father believe that he was torn in pieces, v. 29--35. (5.) He was sold in Egypt to Potiphar, v. 36. And all this was working together for good.

1 AND Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan. 2 These are the generations of Jacob; Joseph being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren, and the lad was with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his fathers wives: and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report. 3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours. 4 And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.

Moses has no more to say of the Edomites, unless as they happen to fall in Israel's Way, but now applies himself closely to the Story of Jacob's Family, These are the Generations of Jacob. His is not a bare barren Genealogy as those of Esau, Ch.

36. 1. but a memorable useful History. Here's, 1. *Jacob*, a Sojourner with his Father *Isaac*, who was yet living, v. 1. We shall never be at Home till we come to Heaven. 2. *Joseph* a Shepherd feeding the Flock with his Brethren, v. 2. Tho' he was his Father's Darling, yet he was not bred up in Idleness or Delicacy. Those do not truly love their Children that do not inure them to Business and Labour and Mortification. Fondling of Children is with good reason commonly called *spoiling* 'em, and *marring* 'em. Those that are trained up to do nothing, are likely to be good for nothing. 3. *Joseph* beloved by his Father, Verse 3. partly for his dear Mother's sake that was dead, and partly for his own sake; because he was the greatest Comfort of his old Age, probably he waited on him, and was more observant of him than the rest of his Sons; he was the Son of the Ancient, so some, i. e. when he was a Child, he was as Grave and Discreet as if he had been an old Man: A Child, but not Childish. *Jacob* proclaimed his Affection to him by dressing him finer than the rest of his Children, he made him a Coat of divers Colours, which probably was significant of further Honours intended him. Note, Tho' those Children are happy that have that in them which justly recommends them to their Parents particular Love, yet it is the Prudence of Parents not to make a Difference between one Child and another, unless there be a great and manifest Cause given for it by the Children's Dutifulness or Undutifulness: Paternal Government must be Impartial, and managed with a steady Hand. 4. *Joseph* hated by his Brethren, (1.) Because his Father loved him: When Parents make a Difference, Children soon take notice of it, and it oft occasions Feuds and Quarrels in Families. (2.) Because he brought to his Father their evil Reports. *Jacob's* Sons did that when they were from under his Eye, which they durst not have done if they had been at Home with him, but *Joseph* gave his Father an Account of their ill Carriage, that he might reprove and restrain them; not as a malicious Tale-bearer to sow Discord, but as a faithful Brother, who when he durst not admonish them himself, represented their Faults to one that had Authority to admonish them. Note, (1.) 'Tis common for friendly Monitors to be look'd upon as Enemies. They that hate to be reformed, hate those that would reform them, Pr. ix. 8. (2.) 'Tis common for those that are beloved of God to be hated by the World; whom Heaven blesteth Hell curseth: Those whom God speaks comfortably to, wicked Men will not speak peaceably to. 'Tis said here of *Joseph*, the Lad was with the Sons of *Bilhah*; some read it, and he was Servant to them; they made him their Drudge.

5 And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more. 6 And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed. 7 For behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf. 8 And his brethren said unto him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? and they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words. 9 And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more, and behold, the sun and the moon, and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. 10 And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother, and thy brethren indeed come to bow down our selves to thee, to the earth? 11 And his brethren envied him: but his father observed the saying.

Here, 1. *Joseph* relates the Prophetical Dreams he had, v. 6, 7, 9, 10. Tho' he was now very Young, about seventeen Years Old, yet he was Pious and Devout, and well inclin'd, and this fitted him for God's gracious Discoveries of himself to him. *Joseph* had a great deal of Trouble before him, and therefore God gave him sometimes this Prospect of his Advancement, to support and comfort him under the long and grievous Troubles with which he was to be exercised: Thus Christ had a Joy set before him, and so have Christians. Note, God has Ways of preparing his People before-hand for the Trials which they cannot foresee, but which he has an Eye to in the Comforts he furnisheth them with. His Dreams were, (1.) That his Brethren's Sheaves all bow'd to his, intimating upon what Occasion they should be brought to do Obedience to him, viz. in seeking to him for

Corn, their empty Sheaves should bow to his full one. (2.) That the Sun and Moon, and the eleven Stars did Obedience to him, v. 9. *Joseph* was more of a Prophet than a Politician, else he would have kept this to himself, when he could not but know that his Brethren did already hate him, and that this would but the more exasperate them. But if he told it in his Simplicity, yet God directed it for the Mortification of his Brethren. Observe, *Joseph* dreamt of his Preferment, but he did not dream of his Imprisonment. Thus many young People, when they are setting out in the World, think of nothing but Prosperity and Pleasure, and never dream of Trouble.

2. His Brethren take it very heinously, and are more and more enraged against him, v. 8. Shalt thou indeed reign over us? See here, 1. How truly they interpreted his Dream, that he should reign over them. They become the Expositors of his Dream who were Enemies to the Accomplishment of it, as in *Gideon's* Story, Jud. vii. 13, 14. they perceived that he spake of them, Matt. xxi. 45. The Event exactly answer'd this Interpretation, Ch. xlii. 6, &c. 2. How scornfully they resented it, shalt thou, that art but one, reign over us that are many? Thou that art the youngest, over us that are elder? Note, The Reign and Dominion of Jesus Christ, our *Joseph*, hath been, and is despised, and striven against by a carnal unbelieving World, who cannot endure to think that this Man should reign over them: The Dominion also of the Upright in the Morning of the Resurrection is thought of with the utmost Disdain.

3. His Father gives him a gentle Rebuke for it, yet observes the saying, v. 10, 11. Probably he checked him for it, to lessen the Offence which his Brethren would be apt to take at it, yet he took notice of it more than he seem'd to do: He insinuated that it was but an idle Dream, because his Mother was brought in who had been dead some time since; whereas the Sun, Moon, and eleven Stars, signify no more but the whole Family that should have a Dependence upon him, and be glad to be beholden to him. Note, The Faith of God's People in God's Promises, is often sorely shaken by their Misunderstanding of the Promises, and then suggesting the Improbabilities that attend the Performance: But God is doing his own Work, and will do it, whether we understand him aright or no. *Jacob*, like *Mary*, (Luke ii. 51.) kept these Sayings in his Heart, and no doubt remember'd them long after when the Event answer'd the Prediction.

12 And his brethren went to feed their fathers flock in Shechem. 13 And Israel said unto Joseph, Do not thy brethren feed the flock in Shechem? Come, and I will send thee unto them, And he said unto him, Here am I. 14 And he said to him, Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again. So he sent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem. 15 And a certain man found him, and behold, he was wandering in the field: and the man asked him, saying, What seekest thou? 16 And he said, I seek my brethren: tell me, I pray thee, where they feed their flocks. 17 And the man said, They are departed hence: for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan. 18 And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him, to slay him. 19 And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh. 20 Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit; and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams. 21 And Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him. 22 And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him; that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again.

Here's, 1. The kind Visit which *Joseph*, in obedience to his Father's Command, made to his Brethren, who were feeding the Flock at Shechem, many Miles off. Some suggest that they went thither on purpose, expecting that *Joseph* would be sent to see them, and then they should have an Opportunity to do him a Mischief. However, *Joseph* and his Father had both of them

them more of the Innocency of the Dove, than the Wisdom of the Serpent, else he had never come thus into the Hands of those that hated him: But God designed it all for good. See in Joseph an Instance, (1.) of Dutifulness to his Father; tho' he was his Father's Darling, yet he was made, and was willing, to be his Father's Servant. How readily doth he wait his Father's Orders? *Here am I, v. 13.* Note, Those Children that are best beloved by their Parents, should be most obedient to their Parents, and then their Love is well bestowed, and well returned. (2.) Of Kindness to his Brethren; tho' he knew they hated him, and envied him, yet he made no Objections against his Father's Commands, either from the Distance of the Place, or Danger of the Journey, but cheerfully embraced the Opportunity of shewing his Respect to his Brethren. Note, It is a very good Lesson, tho' 'tis hardly learnt, and rarely practised, to love those that hate us. If our Relations do not their Duty to us, yet we must not be wanting in our Duty to them. This is Thank-worthy; Joseph was sent by his Father to Shechem, to see whether his Brethren were well there, and whether the Country had not risen upon them, and destroyed them, in revenge of their barbarous Murder of the Shechemites, some Years before. But Joseph not finding them there, went to Dothan, which shewed that he undertook this Journey, not only in obedience to his Father, for then he might have returned when he missed of 'em at Shechem, having done what his Father bid him, but, out of love to his Brethren, he seeks diligently till he finds them. Thus let Brotherly Love continue, and let us give Proofs of it.

2. The bloody and malicious Plot of his Brethren against him, who render'd Good for Evil, and for his Love, they were his Adversaries. Observe, 1. How deliberate they were in the Contrivance of this Mischief, when they saw him afar off they conspired against him, v. 18. 'Twas not in a Heat, or upon a sudden Provocation that they thought to slay him, but from Malice prepen'd, and in cold Blood. Note, He that hateth his Brother is a Murderer, for he will be one if he have an Opportunity, 1 Joh. iii. 15. Malice is a most mischievous Thing, and is in danger of making bloody Work where it is harbour'd and indulg'd. The more there is of a Project and Contrivance in a Sin, the worse it is: 'Tis bad to do Evil, but worse to devise it. 2. How cruel they were in the Design, nothing less than his Blood would satisfy them, Come, and let us slay him, v. 20. Note, The old Enmity hunts for the precious Life. They are the Blood-thirsty that hate the Upright, Pr. xxix. 10. and 'tis the Blood of the Saints that the Whore is drunk with. 3. How scornfully they reproach'd him for his Dreams, v. 19. This Dreamer comes, and v. 26. we shall see what will become of his Dreams. This shews what it was that stuck upon their Stomach, they could not endure to think of doing Obedience to him, that was it which they were plotting to prevent by the Murder of him. Note, Men that fret and rage at God's Counsels, are foolishly aiming to defeat them, but they imagine a vain thing, Ps. ii. 1, 2, 3. God's Counsels will stand. 4. How they agreed to keep one another's Counsel, and to cover the Murder with a Lie, We will say, some evil Beast hath devoured him; whereas they were worse than the most evil Beasts that were now consulting to devour him; for evil Beasts prey not on those of their own Kind, but these were tearing a Piece of themselves.

3. Reuben's Project to deliver him, v. 21, 22. Note, God can raise up Friends for his People, even among their Enemies, for he has all Hearts in his Hands: Reuben, of all the Brothers, had most Reason to be jealous of Joseph, for he was the first-born, and so intitled to those distinguishing Favours which Jacob was conferring on Joseph, yet he proves his best Friend. Reuben's Temper seems to have been soft and effeminate, which had betray'd him to the Sin of Uncleanness, while the Temper of the two next Brothers, Simeon and Levi, was fierce, which betray'd them to the Sin of Murder, a Sin which Reuben startled at the thought of. Note, Our Natural Constitution should be guarded against those Sins it is most inclinable to, and improved (as Reuben's here) against those Sins it is most averse to. Reuben made a Proposal which they thought would effectually answer their Intention of destroying Joseph, and yet which he designed should answer his Intention of rescuing Joseph out of their Hands, and restoring him to his Father, probably hoping thereby to recover his Father's Favour, which he had lately lost; but God overru'd all to serve his own Purpose of making Joseph an Instrument to save much People alive.

Joseph was here a Type of Christ: Tho' he was the beloved Son of his Father, and hated by a wicked World, yet the Father sent him out of his Bosom to visit us in great Humility and Love; he came from Heaven to Earth to seek and save us; yet then malicious Plots were laid against him; he came to his own, and his own not only received him not, but conspired, This is the Heir, come, let us kill him; Crucify him, crucify him: This he submitted to, in pursuance of his Design to redeem and save us.

23 And it came to pass when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stript Joseph out of his coat, his coat of many colours that was on him.

24 And they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it. 25 And they sat down to eat bread: and they lift up their eyes and looked, and behold a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead, with their camels bearing spicery, and balm, and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt. 26 And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? 27 Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother, and our flesh: and his brethren were content. 28 Then there passed by Midianites merchant-men; and they drew and lift up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt. 29 And Reuben returned unto the pit, and behold, Joseph was not in the pit: and he rent his clothes. 30 And he returned unto his brethren, and said, The child is not; and I, whither shall I go?

We have here the Execution of their Plot against Joseph.

1. They strip him, each striving to seize the envy'd Coat of many Colours, v. 23. Thus, in Imagination, they degraded him from the Birth-right, which perhaps this was the Badge of, grieving him, affronting their Father, and making themselves Sport while they insulted over him; Now, Joseph, where is the fine Coat? Thus our Lord Jesus was strip'd of his Seamless Coat, and thus his suffering Saints have first been industriously divested of their Privileges and Honours, and then made the off-scouring of all things.

2. They went about to starve him, throwing him into a dry Pit, to perish there with Hunger and Cold, so cruel were their tender Mercies, v. 24. Note, Where Envy reigns, Pity is banish'd, and Humanity it self is forgotten. Prov. xxvii. 4. so full of deadly Poison is Malice, that the more barbarous any thing is, the more grateful it is. Now Joseph begg'd for his Life in the Anguish of his Soul, Gen. xlii. 21. intreated by all imaginable In-dearments, and that they would be content with his Coat and spare his Life: He pleads Innocency, Relation, Affection, Submission, weeps, and makes Supplication, but all in vain: Reuben only relents and intercedes for him, Chap. xlii. 22. But he cannot prevail to save Joseph from the horrible Pit, in which they resolve he shall dye by Degrees, and be buried alive. Is this he to whom his Brethren must do Obedience? Note, God's Providences often seem to contradict his Purposes even then when they are serving them, and working at a distance towards the accomplishment of them.

3. They slighted him when he was in Distress, and were not grieved for the Affliction of Joseph, for when he was pining away in the Pit, bemoaning his own Misery, and with a languishing Cry calling to them for Pity, they sat down to eat Bread, v. 25. (1.) They felt no remorse of Conscience for the Sin, which if they had; 'twould have spoiled their Stomach to their Meat, and the Relish of it. Note, A great Force put upon Conscience, commonly stupifies it, and, for the Time, deprives it both of Sense and Speech. Daring Sinners are secure ones: But the Consciences of Joseph's Brethren, though asleep now, were rous'd long after, Ch. xlii. 21. (2.) They were now pleas'd to think how they were freed from the Fear of their Brother's Dominion over them, and that on the contrary they had turned the Wheel upon him. They made Merry over him as the Persecutors over the two Witnesses that had tormented them, Rev. xi. 10. Note, Those that oppose God's Counsels, may possibly prevail so far as to think they have gained their Point, and yet be deceived.

4. They sold him: A Caravan of Merchants very opportunely pass'd by, Providence so ordering it, and Judah made the Motion that they should sell Joseph to them, to be carried far enough off into Egypt, where, in all probability, he would be lost, and never heard of more. (1.) Judah moved it in Compassion to Joseph, v. 26. What Profit is it if we slay our Brother? 'Twill be less Guilt, and more Gain to sell him. Note, When we are tempted to Sin, we should consider the Unprofitableness of it. 'Tis what there is nothing to be got by. (2.) They acquiesced in it, because they thought if he were sold for a Slave, he would never be a Lord; if sold into Egypt, would never be their Lord, yet all this was working towards it. Note, The Wrath of Man shall praise God, and the remainder of Wrath he will restrain, Ps. lxxvi. 10. Joseph's Brethren were wonderfully restrained from Murthering him, and their selling him as wonderfully turned to God's Praise: As Joseph was sold by the Contrivance of Judah, for twenty Pieces of Silver, so was our Lord Jesus for thirty, and by one of the same Name too, Judas.

Reuben (it seems) was gone away from his Brethren when they

they sold *Joseph*, intending to come round some other Way to the Pit, and to help *Joseph* out of it, and return him safe to his Father; this was a kind Project, but if it had taken Effect, what had become of God's Purpose concerning his Preferment in *Egypt*. *Note*, There are many Devices in Man's Heart, many Devices of the Enemies of God's People to destroy them, and of their Friends to help them, which perhaps are both disappointed, as these here, but the Counsel of the Lord that shall stand. *Reuben* thought himself undone because the Child was sold, *I, whither shall I go?* v. 30. he being the eldest, his Father would expect from him an Account of him, but it proved they had all been undone if he had not been sold.

31 And they took *Joseph's* coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood. 32 And they sent the coat of many colours, and they brought it to their father; and said, This have we found: know now whether it be thy sons coat or no. 33 And he knew it, and said, It is my sons coat; an evil beast hath devoured him: *Joseph* is without doubt rent in pieces. 34 And *Jacob* rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loyns, and mourned for his son many days. 35 And all his sons, and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son, mourning: Thus his father wept for him. 36 And the *Midianites* sold him into *Egypt* unto *Potiphar*, an officer of *Pharaohs*, and captain of the guard.

Joseph would soon be missed, great Enquiry would be made for him, and therefore his Brethren have a further Design, to make the World believe that *Joseph* was torn in pieces by a wild Beast: And this they did,

1. To clear themselves, that they might not be suspected to have done him any Mischief. *Note*, We have all learned of *Adam* to cover our Transgression, *Job* xxxi. 33. When the Devil has taught Men to commit one Sin, he then teaches them to conceal it with another: Theft and Murder, with Lying and Perjury; but he that covers his Sin, shall not prosper long. *Joseph's* Brethren kept their own and one another's Counsel for some time, but their Villany came to Light at last, and 'tis here published to the World, and the Remembrance of it transmitted to every Age.

2. To grieve their good Father: It seems designed by them on purpose to be revenged upon him for his distinguishing Love of *Joseph*; 'twas contrived on purpose to create the utmost Vexation to him: They sent him *Joseph's* Coat of many Colours, with one Colour more than it had had, a bloody Colour, v. 32. They pretend they had found it in the Fields, and *Jacob* himself must be scornfully ask'd, Is this thy Son's Coat? Now the Badge of his Honour is the Discovery of his Fate; and it is rashly infer'd from the Bloody Coat, that *Joseph* without doubt is rent in pieces. Love is always apt to fear the worst concerning the Person loved; there is a Love that casteth out Fear, but that's a perfect Love. Now let those that know the Heart of a Parent suppose the Agonies of poor *Jacob*, and put their Souls into his Soul's stead: How strongly doth he represent to himself the direful Idea of *Joseph's* Misery? Sleeping or Waking, he imagines he sees the Wild Beast setting upon *Joseph*, thinks he hears his piteous Shrieks, when the Lion roared against him, makes himself tremble and grow chill many a time when he fancies how the Beast sucked his Blood, tore him Limb from Limb, and left no Remains of him but the Coat of many Colours to carry the Tidings. And no doubt it added no little to the Grief, that he had exposed him by sending him, and sending him all alone on this dangerous Journey, that proved so fatal to him. This cuts him to the Heart, and he is ready to look upon himself as an accessory to the Death of his Son.

Now, 1. Endeavours were used to comfort him; His Sons basely pretended to do it, v. 35. but miserable hypocritical Comforters were they all. Had they really desired to comfort him they might easily have done it by telling him the Truth, *Joseph* is alive, he is indeed sold into *Egypt*; but 'twill be an easy thing to send thither and ransom him; this would have loosed his Sackcloth, and girded him with gladness presently. I wonder their Countenances did not betray their Guile, and with what Face they could pretend to condole the Death of *Joseph* when they knew he was alive. *Note*, The Heart is strangely hardened by the Deceitfulness of Sin.

But, 2. 'Twas all in vain, *Jacob* refused to be comforted, v. 35. He was an obstinate Mourner, resolved to go down to the Grave Mourning: 'Twas not a sudden Transport of Passion, like that of *David*, would God I had died for thee, my Son, my Son!

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But, like *Job*, he hardened himself in Sorrow. *Note*, 1. Great Affliction to any Creature doth but prepare for so much the greater Affliction when it is either removed from us, or embittered to us; Inordinate Love commonly ends in immoderate Grief; as much as the Sway of the Pendulum throws one way, so much it will throw the other way. 2. Those consult neither the Comfort of their Souls, nor the Credit of their Religion that are resolved in their Sorrow, upon any Occasion whatsoever; we must never say we will go to our Grave Mourning, because we know not what joyful Days Providence may yet reserve for us, and it is our Wisdom and Duty to accommodate our selves to Providence. 3. We oft perplex our selves with imaginary Troubles; we fancy Things worse than they are, and then afflict our selves more than we need; sometimes there needs no more to comfort us, but to undeceive us: It's good to hope the best.

Lastly, The *Ismaelites* and *Midianites* having bought *Joseph* only to make their Markets of him; here we have him sold again; with Gain enough to the Merchants, no doubt to *Potiphar*, v. 36. *Jacob* was lamenting the Loss of his Life; had he known all he would have lamented tho' not so passionately, the Loss of his Liberty: Shall *Jacob's* free-born Son exchange the best Robe of his Family for the Livery of an *Egyptian* Lord, and all the Marks of Servitude? How soon was the Land of *Egypt* made a House of Bondage to the Seed of *Jacob*! *Note*, It is the Wisdom of Parents not to bring up their Children too delicately, because they know not what Hardships and Mortifications Providence may reduce them to before they die. *Jacob* little thought that ever his beloved *Joseph* should be thus bought and sold for a Servant.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

This Chapter gives us an account of *Judah* and his Family, and such an account it is that one would wonder that of all *Jacob's* Sons our Lord should spring out of *Judah*, *Heb.* vii. 14. If we were to form a Character of him by this Story here, we would not say, *Judah*, thou art he whom thy Brethren shall Praise, *Gen.* xlix. 8. But God will shew that his Choice is of Grace and not of Merit, and that *Christ* came into the World to save Sinners, even the Chief, and is not ashamed upon their Repentance to be ally'd to them. Also, that the Worth and Worthiness of *Jesus Christ* is Personal, of himself, and not derived from his Ancestors, humbling himself to be made in the likeness of Sinful Flesh he was pleas'd to descend from some that were infamous. How little reason had the *Jews*, who were so called from this *Judah*, to boast as they did, that they were not born of Fornication, *Job.* viii. 41. We have in this Chapter, 1. *Judah's* Marriage and Issue, and the untimely Death of his two eldest Sons, v. 1---11. 2. *Judah's* Incest with his Daughter-in-Law *Tamar*, incognito, v. 12---23. 3. His Confusion when it was discovered, v. 24---26. 4. The Birth of his twin Sons in whom his Family was built up, v. 27. ad fin.

1 AND it came to pass at that time, that *Judah* went down from his brethren, and turned in to a certain *Adullamite*, whose name was *Hirah*. 2 And *Judah* saw there a daughter of a certain *Canaanite*, whose name was *Shuah*; and he took her, and went in unto her. 3 And she conceived and bare a son; and he called his name *Er*. 4 And she conceived again, and bare a son, and she called his name *Onan*. 5 And she yet again conceived, and bare a son; and called his name *Shelah*: and he was at *Chezib* when she bare him. 6 And *Judah* took a wife for *Er* his first-born, whose name was *Tamar*. 7 And *Er* *Judah's* first-born was wicked in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD slew him. 8 And *Judah* said unto *Onan*, Go in unto thy brothers wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother. 9 And *Onan* knew that the seed should not be his: and it came to pass, when he went in unto his brothers wife, that he spilled it on the ground, lest that he should give seed to his brother. 10 And the thing which he did, displeased the LORD: wherefore he slew him also. 11 Then said *Judah* to *Tamar* his daughter in law, Remain a widow at thy fathers house, till *Shelah* my son be grown; (for he said, Lest peradventure he dye also, as his brethren did:) and *Tamar* went and dwelt in her father house.

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Here's 1. *Judah's foolish Friendship with a Canaanite Man*, he went down from his Brethren, and withdrew for a time from their Society, and his Father's Family, and got to be intimately acquainted with one *Hirah* an *Adullamite*, v. 1. 'Tis computed that he was now not much above fifteen or sixteen years of Age, an easy prey to the Tempter. Note, When young People that have been well educated begin to change their Company, they will soon change their Manners, and lose their good Education. They that go down from their Brethren, that despise and forsake the Society of the Seed of *Israel*, and pick up *Canaanites* for their Companions, are going down the Hill apace, 'Tis of great Consequence to young People whom they chuse for their Associates, for those they will imitate, study to recommend themselves to, and by their Opinion of them value themselves: An Error in this choice is oft fatal.

2. His foolish Marriage with a *Canaanite Woman*, a Match made not by his Father, who it should seem was not consulted, but by his new Friend, *Hirah*, v. 2. Many have been drawn in to Marriages scandalous and pernicious to themselves and their Families by keeping bad Company, and growing familiar with ill People: One wicked League entangles Men in another. Let young People be admonished by this to take their good Parents for their best Friends, and be advis'd by them, and not by Flatterers that wheedle them to make a Prey of them.

3. His Children by this *Canaanite*, and his Disposal of them. Three Sons he had by her, *Er*, *Onan*, and *Shelah*. 'Tis probable she embraced the Worship of the God of *Israel*, at least in Profession, but for ought appears, there was little of the Fear of God in the Family: *Judah* married too young, and very rashly; He also married his Sons too young when they had neither Wit nor Grace to govern themselves, and the Consequences were very ill.

1. His first-born *Er* was notoriously wicked, he was so in the sight of the Lord, i. e. in Defiance of God and his Law; or, if perhaps he was not wicked in the sight of the World, he was so in God's Sight, to whom all Men's Wickedness is open; and what came of it? Why God cut him off presently, v. 7. The Lord slew him. Note, Sometimes God makes quick Work with Sinners, and takes them away in his Wrath, when they are but just setting out in a wicked Course of Life.

2. The next Brother *Onan* was, according to the ancient Usage, married to the Widow to preserve the Name of his deceased Brother that died Childless. Tho' God had taken away his Life for his Wickedness, yet they were solicitous to preserve his Memory; and their Disappointment therein, tho' *Onan's* Sin was a further Punishment of his Wickedness. This Custom of marrying the Brother's Widow was afterward made one of the Laws of *Moses*, *Deut. xxv. 5*. *Onan* tho' he consented to marry the Widow, yet to the great Abuse of his own Body, of the Wife he had married, and the Memory of his Brother that was gone, he refused to raise up Seed unto his Brother, as he was in Duty bound. This was so much the worse, because the Messiah was to descend from *Judah*, and had he not been guilty of this Wickedness, he might have had the Honour of being one of his Ancestors. Note, Those Sins that dishonour the Body, and defile it, are very displeasing to God, and the Evidences of vile Affections.

3. *Shelah* the third Son was reserved for the Widow (v. 11.) yet with design that he should not marry so young as his Brothers had done, lest he dye also; some think that *Judah* never intended to marry *Shelah* to *Tamar*, but unjustly suspected her to have been the Death of her two former Husbands (whereas 'twas their own Wickedness that slew them) and then sent her to her Father's House with a Charge to remain a Widow. If so, 'twas an inexcusable piece of Prevarication he was guilty of; However, *Tamar* acquiesced for the present, and waited the Issue.

12 And in process of time, the daughter of *Shuah* *Judah's* wife died: and *Judah* was comforted, and went up unto his sheep-shearers to *Timnath*, he and his friend *Hirah* the *Adullamite*. 13 And it was told *Tamar*, saying, Behold, thy father in law goeth up to *Timnath*, to shear his sheep. 14 And she put her widows garments off from her, and covered her with a vail, and wrapped her self, and sat in an open place, which is by the way to *Timnath*: for she saw that *Shelah* was grown, and she was not given unto him to wife. 15 When *Judah* saw her, he thought her to be an harlot; because she had covered her face. 16 And he turned unto her by the way, and said, Go to, I pray thee, let me come in unto thee (for he knew not that she was his daughter in law :) and she said, What wilt

thou give me, that thou may'st come in unto me? 17 And he said, I will send thee a kid from the flock: and she said, Wilt thou give me a pledge, till thou send it? 18 And he said, What pledge shall I give thee? And she said, Thy signet, and thy bracelets, and thy staff that is in thine hand: and he gave it her, and came in unto her, and she conceived by him. 19 And she arose and went away, and laid by her vail from her, and put on the garments of her widowhood. 20 And *Judah* sent the kid by the hand of his friend the *Adullamite*, to receive his pledge from the woman's hand: but he found her not. 21 Then he asked the men of that place, saying, Where is the harlot that was openly by the way-side? And they said, There was no harlot in this place. 22 And he returned to *Judah*, and said, I cannot find her; and also the men of the place said, that there was no harlot in this place. 23 And *Judah* said, Let her take it to her, lest we be shamed: behold, I sent this kid, and thou hast not found her.

'Tis a very ill-favour'd Story that is here told concerning *Judah*; one would not have expected such jolly in *Israel*: *Judah* had buried his Wife, and Widowers have need to stand upon their Guard with the utmost Caution and Resolution, against all Fleishly Lusts. He was unjust to his Daughter-in-Law, either through Negligence or Design, in not giving her his surviving Son, and this exposed her to Temptation.

1. *Tamar* wickedly prostituted her self as a Harlot to *Judah*, that if the Son might not the Father might raise up Seed to the deceased. Some excuse this by suggesting, that tho' she was a *Canaanite* yet she had embraced the true Religion, and believed the Promise made to *Abraham* and his Seed, particularly that of the Messiah who was to descend from the Loins of *Jacob*, and that she was therefore thus earnestly desirous to have a Child by one of that Family, that she might have the Honour, or at least stand fair for the Honour of being the Mother of the Messiah. And if this was indeed her Desire it had its Success, she is one of the four Women particularly named in the Genealogy of Christ, *Mat. i. 3*. Her sinful Practice was pardoned, and her good Intention was accepted, which magnifies the Grace of God, but will by no means be admitted to justify or encourage the like. Bishop *Patrick* thinks it probable that she hoped *Shelah*, who was by right her Husband, might have come along with his Father, and that he might have been allured to her embraces.

There was a great deal of Plot and Contrivance in *Tamar's* Sin. (1.) She took an Opportunity for it when *Judah* had a Time of Mirth and Feasting with his Sheep-shearers. Note, Times of jollity oft prove Times of Temptation, particularly to the Sin of Uncleaness; when Men are fed to the full, the Reins are apt to be let loose. (2.) She exposed her self as a Harlot in an open place, v. 14. Those that are and would be Chaste, must be Keepers at Home, *Tit. ii. 5*. It should seem it was the custom of Harlots in those Times to cover their Faces, that tho' they were not ashamed, yet they might seem to be so: The Sin of Uncleaness did not then go so bare-faced as now it doth.

2. *Judah* was taken in the Snare, and tho' 'twas ignorantly that he was guilty of Incest with his Daughter-in-Law, not knowing her to be so, yet he was wilfully guilty of Fornication; whoever she was, he knew she was not his Wife, and therefore not to be touched. Nor was his Sin capable in the least of such a charitable Excuse as some make for *Tamar*, that tho' the Action was ill, the Intention possibly might be good. Observe, 1. *Judah's* Sin began in the Eye, v. 15. he saw her. Note, Those have Eyes and Hearts too full of Adultery (as it is 2 *Pet. ii. 14*.) that catch at every Bait that presents it self to them, and are as Tinder to every Spark: We have need to make a Covenant with our Eyes, and to turn them from beholding Vanity, lest the Eye infect the Heart. 2. It added to the Scandal, that the hire of a Harlot (than which nothing more infamous) was demanded, offered, and accepted: A Kid from the Flock, a goodly Price at which her Chastity and Honour was valued! Nay, had the Consideration been thousands of Rams, and ten thousand Rivers of Oyl, it had not been a valuable Consideration. The Favour of God, the Purity of the Soul, the Peace of the Conscience, and the Hope of Heaven, are too precious to be exposed to sale at any such Rates; the Topaz of *Ethiopia* cannot equal them; what are those profited that lose their Souls to gain the World? 3. It turned to the Reproach of *Judah* that he left his Jewels in pawn for a Kid. Note, Fleishly Lusts are not only Brutish, but Sottish, and ruining to Men's secular Interests. 'Tis plain that Whoredom as well as Wine and new Wine take away the Heart first, else it would never take away the Signet and the Bracelets.

3. He lost his Jewels by the Bargain: He sent the Kid according to his Promise, to redeem his Pawn, but the supposed Harlot could not be found. He sent it by his Friend, (who was indeed his bad Friend, because he was aiding and abetting in his evil Deeds) the Adullamite; who came back without the Pledge. 'Tis a good Account, if it be but true, of any Place, that which they here gave, That there is no Harlot in this Place, for such Sinners are the Scandals and Plagues of any Place. Judah sits down content to lose his Signet and his Bracelets, and forbids his Friend to make any further Enquiry after them, giving this Reason, *lest we be ashamed*, v. 27. Either, 1. Left his Sin should come to be known publicly, and be talk'd of: Fornication and all Uncleanness have ever been look'd upon as scandalous Things, and the Reproach and Shame of those that are convicted of them. Nothing will make those Blush, that are not ashamed of these. 2. Left he should be laughed at as a Fool for trusting a Whore with his Signet and his Bracelets. He expresses no Concern about the Sin to get that pardoned, only about the Shame, to prevent that. Note, There are many who are more solicitous to preserve their Reputation with Men, than to secure the Favour of God, and a good Conscience; *lest we be ashamed* goes further with them than *lest we be damned*.

24 And it came to pass about three months after, that it was told Judah, saying, Tamar thy daughter in law hath played the harlot; and also behold, she is with child by whoredom: and Judah said, Bring her forth, and let her be burnt. 25 When she was brought forth, she sent to her father in law, saying, By the man, whose these are, am I with child: and she said, Discern, I pray thee, Whose are these, the signet, and bracelets, and staff. 26 And Judah acknowledged them, and said, She hath been more righteous than I; because that I gave her not to Shelah my son: and he knew her again no more. 27 And it came to pass in the time of her travail, that behold twins were in her womb. 28 And it came to pass when she travailed, that the one put out his hand; and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying, This came out first. 29 And it came to pass as he drew back his hand, that behold, his brother came out; and she said, How hast thou broken forth? *this breach be upon thee*: therefore his name was called Pharez. 30 And afterward came out his brother that had the scarlet thread upon his hand; and his name was called Zarah.

Here's, 1. Judah's Rigor against Tamar, when he heard she was an Adulteress: She was in the Eye of the Law Shelah's Wife, and therefore her being with Child by another was looked upon as an Injury and Reproach to Judah's Family; bring her forth therefore, saith Judah, the Master of the Family, and let her be burnt, not burnt to Death, but burnt in the Cheek or Forehead, stigmatized for a Whore. This seems probable, v. 24. Note, It is a common thing for Men to be severe against those very Sins in others, which yet they allow themselves in: And so in judging others they condemn themselves, Rom. ii. 1. See Rom. xiv. 22. If he designed the should be burnt to Death, perhaps under Pretence of Zeal against the Sin, he was contriving how to get rid of his Daughter-in-Law, being loth to marry Shelah to her. Note, It is a common thing but a very ill thing to cover Malice against Mens Persons with a shew of Zeal against their Vices.

2. Judah's Shame when it was made to appear that he was the Adulterer: She produced the Ring and the Bracelets in Court which justified the fathering of the Child upon Judah, v. 25, 26. Note, The Wickedness that has been most secretly committed, and most industriously concealed, yet sometimes is strangely brought to light, to the Shame and Confusion of those who have said, No Eye sees. A Bird of the Air may carry the Voice, however, there is a discovering Day coming, when all will be laid open. Some of the Jewish Writers observe, that as Judah had said to his Father, See, is this thy Son's Coat? Chap. xxxvii. 31. so it was now said to him, See, are these thy Signet and Bracelets? Judah being convicted by his own Conscience, (1.) Confesses his Sin, *She has been more righteous than I*. He owns that a perpetual Mark of Infamy should be fastened rather upon him, who had been so much accessory to it. Note, Those Offenders ought to be treated with the greatest Tenderness to whom we have any way given Occasion of offending. If Servants purloin, and their Masters, by withholding from them what is due, tempt them to it, they ought to forgive them. (2.) He never returned to it.

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again, *knew her again no more*. Note, Those do not truly repent of their Sins that do not forsake them.

3. The Building up of Judah's Family hereby notwithstanding in the Birth of Pharez and Zarah, from whom descended the most considerable Families of the illustrious Tribe of Judah: It should seem the Birth was hard to the Mother, by which she was corrected for her Sin. The Children also, like Jacob and Esau, struggled for the Birthright, and Pharez got it, is ever named first, and from him Christ descended. He had his Name from his breaking forth before his Brother; this Breach be upon thee, which is applicable to those that sow Discord, and create Distance between Brethren. The Jews as Zarah bid fair for the Birthright, and were marked with a Scarlet Thread, as those that come out first, but the Gentile like Pharez, as a Son of Violence, got the start of them, by that violence which the Kingdom of Heaven suffers, and attained to the Righteousness which the Jews came short of: Yet when the fulness of time is come all Israel shall be saved. Both these Sons are named in the Genealogy of our Saviour, Matt. i. 3. to perpetuate the Story, as an Instance of the Humiliation of our Lord Jesus. Some observe that the four eldest Sons of Jacob fell under very foul Guilt, Reuben and Judah of Incest, Simeon and Levi of Murder, yet they were Patriarchs; of Levi came the Priests, of Judah Kings and the Messiah, thus they became Examples of Repentance, and Monuments of pardoning Mercy.

CHAP. XXXIX.

At this Chapter we return to the Story of Joseph: We have him here, 1. A Servant, a Slave in Potiphar's House, v. 1. and yet there greatly honoured and favoured, (1.) By the Providence of God, which made him in Effect a Master, v. 2—6. (2.) By the Grace of God, which made him more than a Conqueror over a strong Temptation to Uncleanness, v. 7—12. 2. We have him here a Sufferer, falsely accus'd, v. 13—18. Imprisoned, v. 19—20. And yet his Imprisonment made both honourable and comfortable by the Tokens of God's special Presence with him, v. 21—23. And here in Joseph was a Type of Christ, who took upon him the Form of a Servant, and yet then did that which made it evident that God was with him; who was tempted by Satan, but overcame the Temptation: who was falsely accus'd and bound, and yet had all things committed to his Hand.

1 AND Joseph was brought down to Egypt: and Potiphar an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmeelites, which had brought him down thither. 2 And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man: and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. 3 And his master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand. 4 And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand. 5 And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptians house for Josephs sake: and the blessing of the LORD was upon all that he had, in the house, and in the field. 6 And he left all that he had in Josephs hand; and he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat: and Joseph was a goodly person, and well-favoured.

Here's, 1. Joseph bought, v. 1. and he that bought him, whatever he gave for him, had a good Bargain of him, 'twas better than the Merchandise of Silver. The Jews have a Proverb, If the World did but know the worth of good Men, they would hedge 'em about with Pearls. He was sold to an Officer of Pharaoh, with whom he might get acquainted with publick Persons, and publick Business, and so be fitted for the Preferment he was afterwards designed for. Note, 1. What God intends Men for, he will be sure some way or other to qualify them for. 2. Providence is to be acknowledged in the Disposal even of poor Servants, and in their Settlements, and therein may perhaps be working towards something great and considerable.

2. Joseph blessed, wonderfully blessed even in the House of his Servitude, 1. God prospered him, v. 2, 3. Perhaps the Affairs

of Potiphar's Family had remarkably gone backward before, but upon Joseph's coming into it, a discernable turn was given to them, and the Face and Posture of them altered on a sudden. Tho' at first we may suppose his Hand was put to the meanest Services, even in those appeared his Ingenuity and Industry, and a particular Blessing of Heaven attending him: And as he rose in his Employment it became more and more discernable. *Note*, 1. Those that have Wisdom and Grace have that which cannot be taken away from them, whatever else they are rob'd of. Joseph's Brethren had stript him of his Coat of many Colours, but they could not strip him of his Virtue and Prudence. 2. Those that can separate us from all our Friends, yet cannot deprive us of the gracious Presence of our God. When Joseph had none of all his Relations with him, he had his God with him, even in the House of the Egyptian, Joseph was separated from his Brethren, but not from his God; banished from his Father's House, but the Lord was with him, and that comforted him. 3. It is God's Presence with us that makes all we do prosperous. Those that would prosper must therefore make God their Friend; and those that do prosper must therefore give God the Praise. 2. His Master prefer'd him; by Degrees made him Steward of his Household, v. 4. *Note*, (1.) Industry and Honesty are the surest and safest way both of rising and thriving; *seest thou a Man Prudent, and Faithful, and Diligent in his Business, he shall stand before Kings at length, and not always before mean Men*. (2.) It is the Wisdom of those that are in any sort of Authority to countenance and employ those with whom it appears that the Presence of God is, *Psal. ci. 6. Potiphar knew what he did when he put all into the Hand of Joseph, for he knew 'twould prosper better there than in his own Hand*. (3.) He that is Faithful in a few Things, stands fair for being made ruler over many Things, *Matt. xxv. 21. Christ goes by this Rule with his Servants*. (4.) It's a great Ease to a Master to have those employed under him that are trusty; Potiphar was so well satisfied with Joseph's Conduct, that he knew not ought he had save the Bread which he did eat, v. 6. The Servant had all the Care and Trouble of the Estate, the Master had only the Enjoyment of it; an Example not to be imitated by any Master unless he could be sure that he had one in all Respects like Joseph for a Servant. 3. God favoured his Master for his sake, v. 5. He blessed the Egyptians' House, tho' he were an Egyptian, a Stranger to the true God, for Joseph's sake, and he himself like Laban soon learned it by experience, *Gen. xxx. 27. Note*, 1. Good Men are the Blessings of the Places where they live; even good Servants may be so, though mean and lightly esteemed. 2. The Prosperity of the Wicked is one way or other for the sake of the Godly: Here was a wicked Family blessed for the sake of one good Servant in it.

7 And it came to pass after these things, that his masters wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me. 8 But he refused, and said unto his masters wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand. 9 There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me, but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? 10 And it came to pass as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkned not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her. 11 And it came to pass about this time, that Joseph went into the house to do his business; and there was none of the men of the house there within. 12 And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out.

Here's, 1. A most infamous Instance of Impudence and Immodesty in Joseph's Mistress, the Shame and Scandal of her Sex, perfectly lost to all Virtue and Honour, and not to be mentioned or thought of without the utmost Indignation. 'Twas well she was an Egyptian, for we must have shared in the Confusion if such Folly had been found in Israel. Observe, 1. Her Sin began in the Eye: She cast her Eyes upon Joseph, v. 7. who was a Goodly Person, and well favoured, v. 6. *Note*, (1.) Remarkable Beauty either of Men or Women oft proves a dangerous Snare both to themselves and others; which forbids Pride in it, and commands constant Watchfulness against Temptation that attends it, *Favour is deceitful, deceiving*. (2.) We have great need to make a Covenant with our Eyes, *Job xxxi. 1. lest the Eye infect the Heart*: Joseph's Mistress had a Husband that ought to have been to her for a covering of the Eyes from

all other, *Chap. xx. 16. 2. She was daring and shameless in the Sin, with an impudent Face, and a Whores Forehead, she said, Lie with me, having already by her wanton Looks and unchaste Designs committed Adultery with him in her Heart. Note*, Where the unclean Spirit gets Possession and Dominion in a Soul, 'tis as with the possessed of the Devils, *Luke viii. 27, 29. the Clothes of Modesty are thrown off, and the Bands and Fetters of Shame are broke in pieces*. When Lust has got head, 'twill stick at nothing, blush at nothing: Decency and Reputation, and Conscience and all are sacrificed to that *Baal-Poor*. 3. She was urgent and violent in the Temptation; oft she had been denied with the strongest Reasons, and yet as oft renewed her vile Solicitations. She spake to him day by day, v. 10. Now this was, (1.) Great Wickedness in her, and shewed her Heart fully set to do Evil. (2.) A Great Temptation to Joseph. The Hand of Satan no doubt was in it, who when he found he could not overcome him with Troubles and the Frowns of the World, but in them he still held fast his Integrity, he assaulted him with soft and charming Pleasures, which have ruined more than the former, and have slain their Ten-thousands.

2. Here's a most famous Instance of Virtue and resolved Chastity in Joseph, who by the Grace of God was enabled to resist and overcome this Temptation; and all things considered his Escape was for ought I know as great an Instance of the Divine Power, as the Deliverance of the three Children out of the Fiery Furnace.

1. The Temptation he was assaulted with was very strong; never was a more violent Onset made upon the Fort of Chastity than this here. (1.) The Sin he was tempted to was Uncleanliness, which considering his Youth, his Beauty, his single State, and his plentiful Living at the Table of a Ruler, was a Sin which one would think might most easily beset him, and betray him. (2.) The Tempter was his Mistress, a Person of Quality, whom it was his place to obey, and his Interest to oblige, whose Favour would contribute more than any thing to his Preferment, and by whose Means he might arrive to the highest Honours of the Court. And on the other hand 'twas at his utmost peril if he slighted her, and made her his Enemy. (3.) Opportunity makes a Thief, makes an Adulterer, and that favoured the Temptation. The Tempter was in the House with him, his Business led him to be without any Suspicion, where she was, and v. 11. none of the Family were within. There appeared no Danger of its being ever discovered, or if it should be suspected, his Mistress would protect him. (4.) To all this was added Importunity, frequent, constant Importunity, to such a Degree that at last she laid violent Hands on him.

2. His Resistance of the Temptation was very brave, and the Victory truly honourable. The Almighty Grace of God enabled him to overcome this Assault of the Enemy.

1. By Strength of Reason, and where-ever right Reason may be heard, Religion no doubt will carry the day. He argues from the Respect he owed both to God and his Master, v. 8, 9.

(1.) He would not wrong his Master, nor do such an irreparable Injury to his Honour. He considers and urges it, how kind his Master had been to him, what a confidence he had reposed in him, in how many Instances he had befriended him, for which he abhorred the Thought of making such an ungrateful Return. *Note*, We are bound in Honour, as well as Justice and Gratitude not in any thing to injure those that have a good Opinion of us, and place a Trust in us, how secretly soever it may be done. See how he argues, v. 9. *There is none greater in this House than I, therefore I will not do it. Note*, Those that are great, instead of being proud of their Greatness, should use it as an Argument against Sin. Is none greater than I? then I'll scorn to do an ill Thing: It's below me to serve a base Lust; I'll never disgrace my self so much.

(2.) He would not offend his God. This is his chief Argument with which he strengthens his Aversion to the Sin, *How can I do this? not only, How shall I? or, How dare I? but, How can I? id possumus quod jure possumus*. 'Tis good to shut out Sin with the strongest Bar, even that of an Impossibility. He that is born of God cannot Sin, 1 *Joh. iii. 9*.

Three Arguments Joseph urges upon himself. (1.) He considers who he was that was tempted. I, Others may perhaps take their Liberty, but I cannot. I that am an Israelite, in Covenant with God, that profess Religion, and Relation to him, 'Tis next to impossible for me to do so. (2.) What the Sin was to which he was tempted, this great Wickedness. Others might look upon it as a small Matter, a Pecadillo, a Trick of Youth, but Joseph had another Idea of it. In general, when at any time we are tempted to Sin, we must consider the great Wickedness there is in it, let Sin appear Sin, *Rom. vii. 13. call it by its own Name*, and never go about to lessen it. Particularly, Let the Sin of Uncleanliness always be looked upon as great Wickedness, as an exceeding sinful Sin, that wars against the Soul as much as any other. (3.) Against whom he was tempted to Sin, against God; not only how shall I do it and sin against my Master, my Mistress, my Self, my own Body and Soul, but against God. *Note*, Gracious Souls look upon this as the worst thing in Sin, that it is

is against God, against his Nature and his Dominion, against his Love and his Design. They that love God for this Reason hate Sin.

2. By steadfastness of Resolution. The Grace of God enabled him to overcome the Temptation, by avoiding the Tempter. (1.) He *hearkened not to her* so much as to be with her, v. 10. Note, Those that would be kept from Harm, must keep themselves out of Harm's Way. *Avoid it, pass not by it.* Nay, (2.) When she laid hold on him, he *left his Garment in her Hand*, v. 12. He would not stay so much as to parley with the Temptation, but flew out from it with the utmost Abhorrence; he *left his Garment* as one escaping for his Life. Note, It's better lose a good Coat than lose a good Conscience.

13 And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and was fled forth, 14 That she called unto the men of her house, and spake unto them, saying, See, he hath brought in an Hebrew unto us to mock us: he came in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice. 15 And it came to pass, when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled, and got him out. 16 And she laid up his garment by her, until his lord came home. 17 And she spake unto him according to these words, saying, The Hebrew servant which thou hast brought unto us, came in unto me to mock me. 18 And it came to pass, as I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled out.

Joseph's Mistress having tried in vain to make him a Criminal, now endeavours to represent him as one; so to be revenged on him for his Virtue. Now was her Love turned into the utmost Rage and Malice, and she pretends she cannot endure the sight of him whom a-while ago she could not endure out of her sight. Chaste and Holy Love will continue, though slighted, but sinful Love like Ammon's to Tamar is easily changed into sinful Hatred.

1. She accused him to his Fellow-Servants (v. 13, 14, 15.) and put him into an ill Name with them. Probably they envied him his Interest in their Master's Favour, and his Authority in the House, and perhaps found themselves aggrieved, sometimes at his Fidelity which prevented their purloining, and therefore were glad to hear any thing that might tend to his Disgrace, and if there were room for it, incensed their Mistress yet more against him. Observe, When she speaks of her Husband, she doth not call him her Husband or her Lord, but only *He*; for she had forgotten the Covenant of her God that was between them. Thus the Adulteress, Pr. vii. 19. calls her Husband *the good Man*. Note, Innocency it self cannot secure a Man's Reputation. Every one that keeps a good Conscience cannot keep a good Name.

2. She accused him to his Master, who had Power in his hand to punish him, which his Fellow-Servants had not, v. 17, 18. Observe, (1.) What an improbable Story she tells, producing his Garment as an Evidence that he had offered violence to her, which was a plain Indication that she had offered violence to him. Note, Those that have broken the Bonds of Modesty will never be held by the Bonds of Truth. She that had Impudence enough to say, *Lie with me*, no marvel she had Front enough to say, *He would have lain with me*. Had the Lie been told to conceal her own Crime, it had been bad enough, yet in some Degree excusable, but it was told to be revenged upon his Virtue; a most malicious Lie. And yet, (2.) She manages it so as to incense her Husband against him, reflecting upon him for bringing this Hebrew Servant among them, perhaps at first against her Mind, because he was a Hebrew. Note, It is no new Thing for the best of Men to be falsely accused of the worst of Crimes by those who themselves are the worst of Criminals. As this Matter here was represented, one would have thought chaste Joseph a very Ill Man, and his wanton Mistress a virtuous Woman; 'Tis well there is a Day of Discovery coming in which all shall appear in their true Characters. This was not the first time that Joseph's Coat was made use of as a false Witness concerning him; His Father had been deceived by it before, now his Master.

19 And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spake unto him, saying, After this manner did thy servant to me; that his wrath was kindled. 20 And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound; and he was there in the prison. 21 But the LORD was

with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. 22 And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison: and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it. 23 The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand; because the LORD was with him: and that which he did, the LORD made it to prosper.

Here's, 1. Joseph wronged by his Master. He believed the Accusation, and either Joseph durst not make his Defence by telling the Truth, 'twould reflect too much upon his Mistress, or, his Master would not hear it, or, would not believe it; and there's no Remedy, he is condemned to perpetual Imprisonment, v. 19, 20. God restrained his Wrath, else he had put him to death, and that Wrath which imprisoned him, God made to turn to his Praise, in Order to which Providence so dispos'd that he should be clapt up among the King's Prisoners, the State Prisoners. Potiphar 'tis likely chose that Prison, because it was the worst, for there the Irons entered into the Soul, Pl. cv. 18: but God designed it to pave the Way to his Enlargement. He was committed to the King's Prison, that from thence he might be preferred to the King's Person. Note, Many an Action of False Imprisonment will in the great day be found to lie against the Enemies and Persecutors of God's People. Our Lord Jesus like Joseph here was bound, and numbered with the Transgressors.

2. Joseph owned and righted by his God, who is and will be the just and powerful Patron of oppressed Innocency. Joseph was at a Distance from all his Friends, and Relations, had not them with him to comfort him, or to minister to him, or mediate for him, but the Lord was with Joseph, and shewed him Mercy, v. 21. Note, 1. God despiseth not his Prisoners, Pl. xcvi. 33. No Gates nor Bars can shut out his gracious Presence from his People, for he has promised he will never leave them. 2. Those that have a good Conscience in a Prison, have a good God there. Integrity and Uprightness qualifies us for the Divine Favour where-ever we are. Joseph has not been long a Prisoner, but he becomes a little Ruler even in the Prison, which is to be attributed under God, 1. To the Keeper's Favour. God gave him Favour in the Sight of the Keeper of the Prison. Note, God can raise up Friends for his People, even there where they little expect to find them, and can make them to be pitied even of those that carry them Captive, Pl. cvi. 46. 2. To Joseph's Fitness for Business. The Keeper saw that God was with him, and that every thing prospered under his Hand, and therefore intrusted him with the Management of the Affairs of the Prison, v. 22, 23. Note, Wisdom and Virtue will shine in the narrowest Spheres. A Good Man will do Good where-ever he is, and will be a Blessing, even in Bonds and Banishments, for the Spirit of the Lord is not Bound or Banished, witness St. Paul, Phil. i. 12, 13.

C H A P. XL.

In this Chapter things are working, tho' slowly, towards Joseph's Advancement. 1. Two of Pharaoh's Servants are committed to Prison, and there, to Joseph's Care, and so become Witnesses of his extraordinary Conduct, v. 1--4. 2. They dreamed each of them a Dream, which Joseph interpreted, v. 5--19: and the Event verified the Interpretation, v. 20--22. and so they became Witnesses of his extraordinary Skill. 3. Joseph recommends his Case to one of them whose Preferment he foresaw, v. 14, 15. but in vain, v. 23.

1 AND it came to pass after these things, that the butler of the king of Egypt and his baker had offended their lord the king of Egypt. 2 And Pharaoh was wrath against two of his officers, against the chief of his butlers, and against the chief of the bakers. 3 And he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, into the prison, the place where Joseph was bound. 4 And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them; and they continued a season in ward.

We should not have had this Story of Pharaoh's Butler and Baker recorded in Scripture if it had not been serviceable to Joseph's Preferment. The World stands for the sake of the Church, and is governed for its Good. Observe, 1. Two of the Great Officers of Pharaoh's Court having offended the King, are committed to Prison. Note, High Places are slippery Places; Nothing more uncertain than the Favour of Princes. Those that make God's Favour their Happiness, and his Service their Business, will find him a better Master than Pharaoh was; and not

not so extream to mark what they do amiss. Many Conjectures there are concerning the Offence of these Servants of *Pharaoh*; some make it no less than an Attempt to take away his Life, others no more but the casual lighting of a Fly into his Cup, and a little Sand into his Bread: Whatever it was, Providence by this Means brought them into the Prison where *Joseph* was. 2. The *Captain of the Guard* himself, which was *Potiphar*, charged *Joseph* with them, (v. 4.) which intimates that he began now to be reconciled to him, and perhaps to be convinced of his Innocency, tho' he durst not release him for fear of disobliging his Wife. *John Baptist* must lose his Head to please *Herodias*.

5 And they dreamed a dream both of them, each man his dream in one night, each man according to the interpretation of his dream; the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, which were bound in the prison. 6 And *Joseph* came in unto them in the morning, and looked upon them, and behold they were sad. 7 And he asked *Pharaohs* officers that were with him in the ward of his lords house, saying, Wherefore look ye so sadly to day? 8 And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter of it. And *Joseph* said unto them, Do not interpretations belong to God? tell me them I pray you. 9 And the chief butler told his dream to *Joseph*, and said unto him, In my dream, behold, a vine was before me. 10 And in the vine were three branches: and it was as though it budded, and her blossoms shot forth; and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes. 11 And *Pharaohs* cup was in my hand: and I took the grapes and pressed them into *Pharaohs* cup, and I gave the cup into *Pharaohs* hand. 12 And *Joseph* said unto him, This is the interpretation of it: The three branches are three days. 13 Yet within three days shall *Pharaoh* lift up thine head, and restore thee unto thy place: and thou shalt deliver *Pharaohs* cup into his hand, after the former manner when thou wast his butler. 14 But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and shew kindness, I pray thee, unto me; and make mention of me unto *Pharaoh*, and bring me out of this house. 15 For indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews: and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon. 16 When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good; he said unto *Joseph*, I also was in my dream, and behold, I had three white baskets on my head. 17 And in the uppermost basket there was of all manner of bake-meats for *Pharaoh*; and the birds did eat them out of the basket upon my head. 18 And *Joseph* answered, and said, This is the interpretation thereof: the three baskets are three days. 19 Yet within three days shall *Pharaoh* lift up thy head from off thee, and shall hang thee on a tree; and the birds shall eat thy flesh from off thee.

Observe, 1. The special Providence of God which filled the Heads of these two Prisoners with unusual Dreams, such as made extraordinary Impressions upon them, and carried with them Evidences of a Divine Original, both in one Night. Note, God has an immediate access to the Spirits of Men, which he can make serviceable to his own Purposes whenever he pleases, quite beyond the Intention of those concerned. To him all hearts are open, and anciently he spoke not only to his own People but to others in dreams, Job xxxiii. 15. Things to come were thus foretold, but very obscurely.

Observe, 2. the Impression which was made upon these Prisoners by their Dreams, v. 6. they were sad. 'Twas not the Prison that made them sad, they were pretty well used to that; and perhaps lived jovially there, but the Dream. Note, God has more ways than one to sadden the Spirits of those that are to be made sad. Those Sinners that are hardy enough under outward Troubles, and will not yield to them, yet God can find out a

way to trouble them, and take off their Wheels, by wounding their Spirits, and laying a load upon them.

Observe, 3. *Joseph's* great Tenderness and Compassion towards them. He enquired with Concern, *Wherefore look ye so sadly to day?* v. 7. *Joseph* was their Keeper, and in that Office he was mild. Note, It becomes us to take Cognizance of the Sorrows even of those that are under our Check. *Joseph* was their Companion in Tribulation, he was now a Prisoner with them, and had been a Dreamer too. Note, Communion in Sufferings, helps to work Compassion towards those that do suffer. Let us learn hence, 1. To concern our selves in the Sorrows and Troubles of others, and enquire into the Reason of the Sadness of our Brethren's Countenances; we should be oft considering the tears of the oppressed, Eccl. iv. 1. 'Tis some Relief to those that are in trouble to be taken notice of. 2. To enquire into the Causes of our own Sorrow, *Wherefore do I look so sadly?* Is there a Reason? Is it a good Reason? Is there not a Reason for Comfort sufficient to balance it, whatever it is? *Why art thou cast down, O my Soul?*

Observe, 4. The Dreams themselves, and the Interpretation of them. That which troubled these Prisoners was, that being confined they could not have recourse to the Diviners of Egypt, who pretended to interpret Dreams, there is no Interpreter here in the Prison, v. 8. Note, There are Interpreters which those that are in Prison and Sorrow should wish to have with them, to instruct them in the Meaning and Design of Providence, an Interpreter, one among a Thousand to shew unto Man his Uprightness, Job xxxiii. 23. 24. Interpreters to guide their Consciences, not to satisfy their Curiosity. *Joseph* hereupon directed them which way to look, *Do not Interpretations belong to God?* he means the God whom he worshipped, to the Knowledge of whom he endeavours hereby to lead them. Note, 1. It is God's Prerogative to foretell things to come, Isa. xli. 10. 2. He must therefore have the Praise of all the Gifts of Foresight which Men have, ordinary or extraordinary. *Joseph* premiseth a Caveat against his own Praise, and is careful to transmit the Glory to God, as *Daniel*, Chap. ii. 30. *Joseph* suggests, if Interpretations belong to God, he is a free Agent, and may communicate the Power to whom he pleases, and therefore tell me your Dreams.

Now, (1.) The chief Butler's Dream was a Happy Preface of his Enlargement, and Re-advancement, within three Days, and so *Joseph* explained it to him, v. 12, 13. Probably it had been usual with him to press the full ripe Grapes immediately into *Pharaoh's* Cup, the Simplicity of that Age not being acquainted with the modern Arts of making the Wine fine. Observe, *Joseph* foretold the chief Butler's Deliverance, but he did not foretell his own. He had long before dreamt of his own Honour, and the Obsequance which his Brethren should do to him, with the Remembrance of which he ought now to support himself, without any new or fresh Discoveries. The Visions that are for the Comfort of God's Saints are for a great while to come, and relate to things that are very far off, whilst others Foresights, like this here, look but three days before them.

(2.) The chief Baker's Dream portended his Ignominious Death, v. 18, 19. The Happy Interpretation of the other Dream encouraged him to relate his. Thus Hypocrites when they hear good things promised to good Christians, would put in for a share tho' they have no part or lot in the Matter. 'Twas not *Joseph's* Fault that he brought him no better Tidings, Ministers are but Interpreters, they cannot make the thing otherwise than it is; If therefore they deal faithfully, and their Message prove displeasing, 'tis not their Fault. Bad Dreams cannot expect a good Interpretation.

Observe, 5. The Improvement *Joseph* made of this Opportunity to get a Friend at Court, v. 14, 15. He modestly bespoke the Favour of the chief Butler, whose Preferment he foretold. But think on me, when it shall be well with thee. Tho' the Respect paid to *Joseph* made the Prison as easy to him as a Prison could be, yet none can blame him to be desirous of Liberty. See here, 1. What a modest Representation he makes of his own Case, v. 15. He doth not Reflect upon his Brethren that sold him, only faith, I was stolen out of the Land of the Hebrews, i. e. unjustly sent thence, no matter where the Fault was. Nor doth he reflect on the wrong done him in this Imprisonment by his Mistresses that was his Prosecutor, and his Master that was his Judge, but mildly avers his own Innocency, here have I done nothing that they should put me into the Dungeon. Note, When we are called to vindicate our selves we should carefully avoid as much as may be speaking ill of others. Let us be content to prove our selves innocent, and not fond of upbraiding others with their Guilt. 2. What a modest Request he makes to the chief Butler; only, think on me. Pray do me a Kindness if it lie in your way. And his particular Petition is, bring me out of this House: He doth not say, bring me into *Pharaoh's* House, get me a Place at Court; No, he begs for Enlargement, not Preferment. Note, Providence sometimes designs the greatest Honours for those that least covet or expect them.

20 And it came to pass the third day, which was *Pharaohs* birth-day, that he made a feast unto all his servants: and he lifted up the head of the chief

chief butler, and of the chief baker among his servants. 21 And he restored the chief butler unto his butlership again; and he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand: 22 But he hanged the chief baker: as Joseph had interpreted to them. 23 Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him.

Here's, 1. The verifying of Joseph's Interpretation of the Dreams, on the very day prefixed. The chief Butler and Baker were both advanced, one to his Office, t'other to the Gallows, and both at the three Days end. Note, very great Changes both for the better, and for the worse, oft happen in a very little time: so sudden are the Revolutions of the Wheel of Nature. The Occasion of giving Judgment severally upon their Case was the solemnizing of Pharaoh's Birth-day, on which all his Servants being obliged by Custom to attend him, these two came to be enquired after, and the Cause of their Commitment looked into. The solemnizing of the Birth-days of Princes has been an ancient Piece of Respect done them, and if it be not abused as Jeroboam's was, *Hos. vii. 5.* and Herod's, *Mar. vi. 21.* is a Usage innocent enough: And we may all profitably take notice of our Birth-days, with Thankfulness for the Mercies of our Birth, Sorrow for the Sinfulness of it, and an Expectation of the Day of our Death as better than the Day of our Birth. On Pharaoh's Birth-day he lifted up the Head of these two Prisoners, i. e. arraigned and tried them, (when Naboth was tried he was set on high among the People, *1 King. xxi. 9.*) and he restored the chief Butler, and hanged the chief Baker. If the Butler were innocent, and the Baker guilty, we must own the Equity of Providence in clearing up the Innocency of the Innocent, and making the Sin of the Guilty to find 'em out. If either both were equally innocent, or equally guilty, 'tis an Instance of the Arbitrariness of such great Princes, who pride themselves in that Power which Nebuchadnezzar set up for, *Dan. v. 19.* whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive, forgetting that there is a higher than they, to whom they are accountable.

2. The disappointing of Joseph's Expectation from the chief Butler, he remembered not Joseph, but forgot him, v. 23. 1. See here an Instance of base Ingratitude; Joseph had deserved well at his Hands, had ministered to him, sympathized with him, helped him to a favourable Interpretation of his Dreams, had recommended himself to him as an extraordinary Person upon all Accounts, and yet he forgot him. We must not think it strange if we have Hatred shewed us for our Love, and Sights for our Respects in this World. 2. See how apt those that are themselves at Ease are to forget others in Distress. Perhaps 'tis an Allusion to this Story that the Prophet speaks of those that drunk Wine in Bowls, and were not grieved for the Affliction of Joseph, *Amos vi. 6.*

3. Let us learn from hence to cease from Man. Joseph perhaps depended too much upon his Interest in the chief Butler, and promised himself too much from him, and learned by his Disappointment to trust in God only. We cannot expect too little from Man, nor too much from God. Lastly, Some observe the Resemblance between Joseph and Christ in this Story. Joseph's Fellow-sufferers were like the two Thieves that were crucified with Christ; the one saved, the other condemned. ('Tis Dr. Lightfoot's Remark, from Mr. Broughton.) One of these when Joseph said to him, Remember me when it shall be well with thee, forgot him; But one of those when he said to Christ, Remember me when thou comest into thy Kingdom, was not forgotten. We justly blame the chief Butler's Ingratitude to Joseph, yet we carry our selves much more disingenuously to the Lord Jesus. Joseph had but foretold the chief Butler's Enlargement, but Christ wrought out ours, mediated with the King of Kings for us; yet we forget him, tho' often minded of him, tho' we have promised never to forget him; Thus ill do we requite him like foolish People and unwise.

CHAP. XLI.

Two things Providence is here bringing about, 1. The Advancement of Joseph. 2. The Maintenance of Jacob and his Family in a time of Famine; for the Eyes of the Lord run to and fro thro' the Earth, and direct the Affairs of the Children of Men for the Benefit of those few whose Hearts are upright with him. In Order to these, here's, 1. Pharaoh's Dreams, v. 1-8. 2. The Recommendation of Joseph to him for an Interpreter, v. 9-13. 3. The Interpretation of the Dreams, and the Prediction of seven Years Plenty, and seven Years Famine in Egypt, with the prudent Advice given to Pharaoh thereupon, v. 14-36. 4. The Preference of Joseph to a Place of the highest Power and Trust in Egypt, v. 37-45. 5. The Accomplishment of Joseph's Prediction, and his Fidelity to his Trust, v. 46. ad fin.

1 AND it came to pass at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh dreamed, and behold, he stood by the river. 2 And behold, there came up out of the river seven well-favoured kine; and fat-fleshed; and they fed in a meadow. 3 And behold, seven other kine came up after them out of the river ill-favoured, and lean-fleshed; and stood by the other kine, upon the brink of the river. 4 And the ill-favoured, and lean-fleshed kine, did eat up the seven well-favoured and fat kine. So Pharaoh awoke. 5 And he slept, and dreamed the second time: and behold, seven ears of corn came up upon one stalk, rank and good. 6 And behold, seven thin ears, and blasted with the east-wind sprung up after them. 7 And the seven thin ears devoured the seven rank and full ears: and Pharaoh awoke, and behold, it was a dream. 8 And it came to pass in the morning, that his spirit was troubled; and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wise-men thereof: and Pharaoh told them his dream; but there was none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh.

Observe, 1. The Delay of Joseph's Enlargement, 'twas not till the End of two full Years, (v. 1.) So long he waited after he had intrusted the chief Butler with his Case, and began to have some Prospect of Relief. Note, We have need of Patience, not only bearing but waiting Patience. Joseph lay in Prison until the time that his Word came, *Pf. cv. 19.* There is a time set for the Deliverance of God's People, that time will come, tho' it seem to tarry, and when it comes, it will appear to have been the best time, and therefore we ought to wait for it, (*Hab. ii. 3.*) and not to think two full Years too long to continue waiting.

2. The Means of Joseph's Enlargement, which was Pharaoh's Dreams, which are here related. If we were to look upon them as ordinary Dreams, we might observe from them the Follies and Absurdities of a roving working Fancy; how it represents to it self tame Cows, as Beasts of Prey, nay more ravenous than any; eating up those of their own kind, and Ears of Corn devouring one another. Surely in multitude of Dreams, nay, even in one Dream, there are divers Vanities, *Eccl. v. 7.* Now God no longer speaks to us in that way, I think it is no Matter how little we either heed 'em, or tell them. Foolish Dreams related can make no better than foolish Talk. But these Dreams which Pharaoh dreamed carried their own Evidence with them that they were sent of God. And therefore when he awoke, his Spirit was troubled, v. 8. It cannot but put us into a Concern to receive any extraordinary Message from Heaven, because we are conscious to our selves that we have no Reason to expect any good tidings from thence. His Magicians were puzzled, the Rules of their Art failed them, these Dreams of Pharaoh's it seems did not fall within the Compass of them, so that they could not offer at the Interpretation of them. This was to make Joseph's Performance by the Spirit of God the more admirable. Human Reason, Prudence and Foresight must be Non-plu'd, that Divine Revelation may appear the more glorious in the Contrivance of our Redemption, *1 Cor. ii. 13, 14.* Compare with this Story, *Dan. ii. 27-4. 7-5. 8.* Joseph's own Dreams were the Occasion of his Troubles, and now Pharaoh's Dreams were the Occasion of his Enlargement.

9 Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day. 10 Pharaoh was wroth with his servants, and put me in ward in the captain of the guards house, both me and the chief baker. 11 And we dreamed a dream in one night, I and he: we dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream. 12 And there was there with us a young man, an Hebrew, servant to the captain of the guard; and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams: to each man according to his dream he did interpret. 13 And it came to pass, as he interpreted to us, so it was: me he restored unto mine office, and him he hanged. 14 Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon: And he shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh. 15 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that

that can interpret it : and I have heard say of thee, *that* thou canst understand a dream, to interpret it. 16 And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, *It is not in me*, God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.

Here's, 1. The Recommending of Joseph to Pharaoh for an Interpreter. The Chief Butler did it more in Complement to Pharaoh, to oblige him, than in Gratitude to Joseph, or Compassion of his Case. He makes a fair Confession, v. 9. *I remember my Faults this day*, in forgetting Joseph. Note, It is best to remember our Duty, and to do it in its time, but if we have neglected that, 'tis next best to remember our Faults, and repent of them, and do our Duty at last; better late than never. Some think he means his Faults against Pharaoh, for which he was imprisoned, and then he would insinuate, that tho' Pharaoh had forgiven him, he had not forgiven himself. The Story he had to tell was in short, That there was an obscure young Man in the King's Prison who had very happily interpreted his Dream, and the chief Bakers, and the Event agreed thereto, and he would recommend him to the King his Master for an Interpreter. Note, God's Time for the Enlargement of his People, will appear at last to be the fittest time. If the chief Butler had at first used his Interest for Joseph's Enlargement, and had obtained it, 'tis probable upon his Release he would have gone back to the Land of the Hebrews again, which he spoke of so feelingly, Chap. xl. 15. and then he had neither been so blessed himself, nor such a Blessing to his Family, as afterwards he proved. But staying two Years longer, and coming out now upon this Occasion at last to interpret the King's Dreams, way was made for his very great Preferment. Those that patiently wait for God shall be paid for their waiting, not only Principal but Interest, Lam. iii. 26.

2. The introducing of Joseph to Pharaoh. The King's Business required haste, Joseph is sent for out of the Dungeon with all speed, Pharaoh's Order discharged him both from his Imprisonment, and from his Servitude, and makes him a Candidate for some of the highest Trusts at Court. The King can scarce allow him time, but that Decency required it, to shave himself, and to change his Raiment, v. 14. 'Tis done with all possible Expedition, and Joseph is brought in perhaps almost as much surprized as Peter was, Acts xii. 9. so suddenly is his Captivity brought back that he is as one that dreams, Pl. cxvii. 1. Pharaoh immediately, without enquiring who or whence he was, tells him his Business, that he expected he should interpret his Dream, v. 15. To which Joseph makes him a very modest decent Reply, v. 16. in which, 1. He gives Honour to God. *It is not in me*, God must give it. Note, Great Gifts then appear most graceful and illustrious, when those that have them use them humbly, and take not the Praise of them to themselves, but give it to God. To such God gives more Grace. 2. He shews Respect to Pharaoh, and hearty good Will to him and his Government in supposing that the Interpretation would be an answer of Peace. Note, Those that consult God's Oracles may expect an answer of Peace. If Joseph be made the Interpreter, *hope the best*.

17 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, In my dream, behold, I stood upon the bank of the river. 18 And behold, there came up out of the river seven kine, fat-fleshed, and well-favoured; and they fed in a meadow. 19 And behold, seven other kine came up after them, poor and very ill-favoured, and lean-fleshed, such as I never saw in all the land of Egypt for badness. 20 And the lean and the ill-favoured kine did eat up the first seven fat kine. 21 And when they had eaten them up, it could not be known that they had eaten them; but they were still ill-favoured, as at the beginning. So I awoke. 22 And I saw in my dream, and behold, seven ears came up in one stalk, full and good. 23 And behold, seven ears, withered, thin, and blasted with the east-wind, sprung up after them. 24 And the thin ears devoured the seven good ears: and I told this unto the magicians; but there was none that could declare it unto me. 25 And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh is one: God hath shewed Pharaoh what he is about to do. 26 The seven good kine are seven years; and the seven good ears are seven years: the dream is one. 27 And the seven thin and ill-favoured kine that came up after them, are seven years; and the seven

empty ears blasted with the east-wind, shall be seven years of famine. 28 This is the thing which I have spoken unto Pharaoh: What God is about to do, he sheweth unto Pharaoh. 29 Behold, there come seven years of great plenty, throughout all the land of Egypt. 30 And there shall arise after them seven years of famine, and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt: and the famine shall consume the land. 31 And the plenty shall not be known in the land, by reason of that famine following; for it shall be very grievous. 32 And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass,

Here, 1. Pharaoh relates his Dream. He dreamt that he stood upon the Bank of the River Nilus, and saw the Kine both the fat ones, and the lean ones, come out of the River. For the Kingdom of Egypt had no Rain, as appears, Zech. xiv. 18. but the Plenty of the Year depended upon the overflowing of the River, and it was about one certain Time of the Year that it overflowed. If it rose to fifteen or sixteen Cubits there was plenty, if to twelve or thirteen only, or under, there was Scarcity. See how many Ways Providence hath of dispensing its Gifts, yet whatever the second Causes are, our Dependence is still the same upon the first Cause, who makes every Creature that to us that it is, be it Rain or River.

2. Joseph interprets his Dream, and tells him that it signifies seven Years of Plenty now immediately to ensue, which should be succeeded by as many Years of Famine. 1. The two Dreams signified the same thing, but the Repetition was to note both the Certainty, the Nearness, and the Importance of the Event, v. 32. Thus hath God often shewed the Immutability of his Counsel by two immutable Things, Heb. vi. 17, 18. The Covenant is sealed with two Sacraments; and in the one of them there is both Bread and Wine, wherein the Dream is one, and yet it is doubled, for the thing is certain. 2. Yet the two Dreams have a distinct Reference to the two Things wherein we most experience Plenty and Scarcity, viz. Grass and Corn. The Plenty and Scarcity of Grass for the Cattle was signified by the fat Kine and the lean ones; The Plenty and Scarcity of Herb for the Service of Man, by the full Ears, and the thin ones.

3. See what Changes the Comforts of this Life are subject to. After great Plenty may come great Scarcity, how strong soever we may think our Mountain stands, if God speak the Word it will soon be moved. We cannot be sure that *to-morrow shall be as this day*, next Year as this, and much more abundance, Isa. lvi. 12. We must learn how to want, as well as how to abound.

4. See the Goodness of God in sending the seven Years of Plenty before those of Famine, that Provision might be made accordingly. Thus he sets the one over against the other, Eccl. vii. 14. How wonderful wisely has Providence, that great House-keeper, ordered the Affairs of this numerous Family from the Beginning hitherto! Great Variety of Seasons there have been, and the Produce of the Earth, sometimes more, and sometimes less, yet take one Time with another, what was miraculous concerning the Manna, is ordinarily verified in the common Course of Providence, He that gathers much has nothing over, and he that gathers little has no lack, Exod. xvi. 18.

5. See the perishing Nature of our worldly Enjoyments. The great Increase of the Years of Plenty was *quite lost and swallowed up* in the Years of Famine, and the overplus of it, which seemed very much, yet did but just serve to keep Men alive, v. 21, 30, 31. Meats for the Belly, and the Belly for Meats, but God shall destroy both it and them, 1 Cor. vi. 13. There is Bread which endures to everlasting Life which shall not be forgotten, and which it is worth while to labour for, Job. vi. 27. They that make the things of this World their good Things, will find but little Pleasure in remembering that they have received them, Luk. xvi. 25.

6. Observe, That God revealed this before-hand to Pharaoh, who as King of Egypt, was to be the Father of his Country, and to make prudent Provision for them: Magistrates are called Shepherds, whose Care it must be not only to rule but to feed.

33 Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. 34 Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years. 35 And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. 36 And that food shall be for store

store to the land, against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through the famine. 37 And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants. 38 And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find *such a one* as this is, a man in whom the spirit of God is? 39 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, *there is none* so discreet and wise as thou art. 40 Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou. 41 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. 42 And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linnen, and put a gold chain about his neck. 43 And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, *Bow the knee*: and he made him *ruler* over all the land of Egypt. 44 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, *I am Pharaoh*, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt. 45 And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-paaneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Poti-pherah priest of On: and Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt.

Here's, 1. The Good Advice that Joseph gave to Pharaoh, which was, (1.) That in the Years of Plenty he should lay up for the Years of Famine; buy up Corn when it was cheap, that he might both enrich himself and supply the Country when it would be dear and scarce. Note, 1. Fair warning should always be followed with Good Counsel. Therefore the *Prudent Man foresees the Evil* that he may *hide himself*. God has in his Word told us of a Day of Trial and Exigence before us, when we shall need all the Grace we can get, and all little enough. Now therefore provide accordingly. 2. Times of gathering must be diligently improved, because there will come a time of spending. Let us go to the Ant and learn of her this Wisdom, Prov. vi. 6, 7, 8. (2.) Because that which is every Body's Work, commonly proves no Body's Work, he advises Pharaoh to appoint Officers who should make it their Business, and pitch upon some one Person to preside in the Affair, v. 33. Probably if Joseph had not advised this, it had not been done; Pharaoh's Councillors could no more improve the Dream than his Magicians interpret it, therefore 'tis said of him, Ps. cv. 22. that he *taught his Senators Wisdom*. That of Solomon may be inferred from hence, Eccl. iv. 13. *Better is a poor and a wise Child, than an old and foolish King*.

2. The Great Honour that Pharaoh did to Joseph. (1.) He gave him an honourable Testimony. He is a *Man in whom the Spirit of God is*, and that puts a great Excellency upon any Man, such Men ought to be valued, v. 38. He is a Nonfuch for Prudence, *there is none so Discreet and Wise as thou art*, v. 39. Now he is abundantly recompensed for the Disgrace that had been done him, and his Righteousness is as the Morning Light, Psa. xxxvii. 6. (2.) He put him into an Honourable Office; not only employed him to buy up Corn, but made him prime Minister of State; Controller of the Household, *Thou shalt be over my House*, chief Justice of the Kingdom, according to thy Word *shall all my People be ruled*, Or, *shall be armed*, as some read it, and then it speaks him General of the Forces. His Commission was very ample, *I have set thee over all the Land of Egypt*, v. 41. *without thee shall no Man lift up his Hand or Foot*, v. 44. all the Affairs of the Kingdom must pass through his Hand, Nay, v. 40. *Only in the Throne will I be greater than thou*. Note, It is the Wisdom of Princes to prefer those, and the Happiness of People to have those preferred to Places of Power and Trust, in whom the Spirit of God is. 'Tis probable there were those about Court that opposed Joseph's Preferment, which occasioned Pharaoh so oft to repeat the Grant, and with that solemn Sanction, v. 44. *I am Pharaoh*. When the proposal was made that there should be a Corn-Master General nominated, 'tis said, v. 37. *Pharaoh's Servants were all pleased* with the Motion, each hoping for the Place, but when Pharaoh said to them, *Joseph shall be the Man*, we do not read that they made him any Answer, being uneasy at it, and acquiescing only because they could not help it; Joseph had Enemies no doubt, Archers that shot at him, and hated him, Chap. xlix. 23. as Da-

niel, Chap. vi. 4. (3.) He put upon him all the Marks of Honour imaginable, to recommend him to the Esteem and Respect of the People as the King's Favourite, and one whom he *delighted to Honour*. (1.) He gave him his own Ring, as a Ratification of his Commission, and in token of peculiar Favour; Or it was like delivering him the Great Seal. (2.) He put fine Cloths upon him, instead of his Prison Garments. For they that are in *Kings Palaces* must wear *soft Cloathing*; He that in the Morning was dragging his Fetters of Iron, before Night was adorned with a Chain of Gold. (3.) He made him *ride in the second Chariot* next his own, and order'd all to do Obedience to him. *Bow the Knee*, as to Pharaoh himself. (4.) He gave him a new name to shew his Authority over him, and yet such a Name as spoke the Value he had for him, *Zaphnath-paaneah*, a *Revealer of Secrets*. (5.) He married him honourably to a Prince's Daughter. Where God had been liberal in giving Wisdom and other Merits, Pharaoh was not sparing in conferring Honours. Now this Preferment of Joseph was, (1.) An Abundant Recompence for his innocent and patient Suffering, a lasting Instance of the Equity and Goodness of Providence; and an Encouragement to all Good People to trust in a Good God. (2.) 'Twas Typical of the Exaltation of Christ, that great Revealer of Secrets, (Job. i. 18.) or as some translate Joseph's new Name, the *Saviour of the World*. The brightest Glories of the upper World are put upon Him, the highest Trusts lodged in his Hand, and all Power given him both in Heaven and Earth. He is Gatherer, Keeper, and Disposer of all the Stores of Divine Grace, and Chief Ruler of the Kingdom of God among Men. The Work of Ministers is to cry before him, *Bow the Knee*; Kiss the Son.

46 And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt: and Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt. 47 And in the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth by handfuls. 48 And he gathered up all the food of the seven years, which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities: the food of the field which was round about every city, laid he up in the same. 49 And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering: for it was without number. 50 And unto Joseph were born two sons, before the years of famine came: which Asenath the daughter of Poti-pherah priest of On, bare unto him. 51 And Joseph called the name of the first-born Manasseh: for God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my fathers house. 52 And the name of the second called he Ephraim: for God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction. 53 And the seven years of plenteousness that was in the land of Egypt, were ended. 54 And the seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said: and the dearth was in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. 55 And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread: And Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do. 56 And the famine was over all the face of the earth: And Joseph opened all the store-houses, and sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt. 57 And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn; because that the famine was so sore in all lands.

Observe here, 1. The Building of Joseph's Family, in the Birth of two Sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, v. 50, 51, 52. In the Names he gave 'em, he owned the Divine Providence giving this happy turn to his Affairs, (1.) He was made to *forget his Misery*, Job xi. 16. We should bear our Afflictions when they are present, as those that know not but Providence may so out-weight them by After-Comforts, as that we may even forget 'em when they are past. But could he be so unnatural as to *forget all his Father's House*? He means the Unkindnesses he received from his Brethren, or perhaps the Wealth and Honour he expected from his Father, with the Birth-right. The Robes he now wore made him forget the Coat of divers Colours he wore in his Father's House. (2.) He

was made fruitful in the Land of his Affliction. It had been the Land of his Affliction, and in some Sense it was still so, for it was not Canaan, the Land of Promise. His Distance from his Father was still his Affliction. Note, Light is sometimes sown for the Righteous in barren and unlikely Soil, and yet if God Sow it and Water it, it will come up again. The Afflictions of the Saints promote their Fruitfulness. Ephraim signifies Fruitfulness, and Manasseh Forgetfulness, for these two oft go together, when Jeshurun waxed Fat he forgot God his Maker.

2. The Accomplishment of Joseph's Predictions, Pharaoh had a great Confidence in the Truth of them, perhaps finding in his own Mind beyond what another Person could, an exact agreeableness between them and his Dreams, as between the Key and the Lock; And the Event shewed that he was not deceived. The seven plenteous years came, v. 47. and at length they were ended, v. 53. Note, We ought to foresee the approaching Period of the days, both of our Prosperity and of our Opportunity, and therefore must not be secure in the Enjoyment of our Prosperity, nor slothful in the Improvement of our Opportunity; Years of Plenty will end, therefore what thy Hand finds to do, do it; and gather in gathering time, *The Morning cometh, and also the Night*, Isa. xxi. 12. The Plenty and also the Famine. V. 54. *the seven years of Dearth began to come*: See what changes of Condition we are liable to in this World, and what need we have to be joyful in a day of Prosperity, and in a day of Adversity to consider, *Ecc. vii. 14.* This Famine, it seems, was not only in Egypt, but in other Lands, in all Lands, i. e. All the Neighbouring Countries; Fruitful Lands are soon turned into Barrenness, by the Iniquity of them that dwell therein, *Ps. cvii. 34.* 'Tis here said, that in the Land of Egypt there was Bread, meaning probably, not that only which Joseph had bought up for the King, but that which private Persons by his Example, and upon the publick notice of this Prediction, as well as by the Rules of common Prudence, had laid up.

3. The Performance of Joseph's Trust; he was found Faithful to it, as a Steward ought to be.

1. He was diligent in laying up while the Plenty lasted, v. 48. 49. He that thus gathers is a Wise Son.

2. He was Prudent and Careful in giving out when the Famine came, and kept the Markets low by furnishing them at reasonable rates out of his Stores. The People in Distress cried to Pharaoh, as that Woman to the King of Israel, *2 Kings vi. 26.* *Help, my Lord, O King*: He sent them to his Treasurer, *Go to Joseph*. Thus God in the Gospel directs those that apply themselves to him for Mercy and Grace to go to the Lord Jesus, in whom all Fulness dwells, and, *what he saith to you, do.* Joseph, no doubt, with Wisdom and Justice fixed the Price of the Corn he sold, so that Pharaoh, whose Money had bought it up, might have reasonable Profit, and yet the Country might not be oppressed, nor Advantage taken of their prevailing Necessity; while he that with-holdeth Corn, when it is dear, in hopes it will yet grow dearer, and People perish for want of it, has many a Curse for so doing, and it is not a Curse causeless, *Blessings shall be upon the Head of him that thus selleth it*, *Pr. xi. 26.* And let the Price be determin'd by that Golden Rule of Justice, to do as we would be done by.

CHAP. XLII.

We had in the foregoing Chapter the fulfilling of the Dreams which Joseph had interpreted: In this and the following Chapters we have the fulfilling of the Dreams which Joseph himself had dreamed, that his Father's Family should do obeisance to him. The Story is very largely and particularly related of what passed between Joseph and his Brethren, not only because it is an entertaining Story, and probably was much talk'd of, both among the Israelites, and among the Egyptians, but because it is very instructive, and it gave occasion for the Removal of Jacob's Family into Egypt, on which so many great Events afterwards depended. We have in this Chapter, 1. The humble Application of Jacob's Sons to Joseph, to buy Corn, v. 1—6. 2. The fright Joseph put them into, for their Trial, v. 7—20. 3. The Conviction they were now under of their Sin concerning Joseph long before, v. 21—24. 4. Their return to Canaan with Corn, and the great Distress their good Father was in, upon the account they gave him of their Expedition, v. 25. ad fin.

1 **N**OW when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons, Why do ye look one upon another? 2 And he said, Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt: get ye down thither, and buy for us from thence, that we may live, and not die. 3 And Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt. 4 But Benjamin, Joseph's brother, Jacob sent not

with his brethren: for he said, Left peradventure mischief befall him. 5 And the sons of Israel came to buy corn among those that came: for the famine was in the land of Canaan. 6 And Joseph was the governor over the land, and he it was that sold to all the people of the land, and Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him, with their faces to the earth.

Tho' Jacob's Sons were all Married, and had Families of their own, yet it should seem they were still Incorporated in one Society under the Conduct and Presidency of their Father Jacob: And here we have, 1. The Orders he gave them to go and buy Corn in Egypt, v. 1, 2. Observe, 1. The Famine was grievous in the Land of Canaan. 'Tis observable that all the three Patriarchs, to whom Canaan was the Land of Promise, met with Famine in that Land; which was not only to try their Faith, whether they could trust God, tho' he slay them, tho' he starve them, but to reach them to seek the better Country, that is, the Heavenly, *Heb. xi. 14, 15.* We have need of something to wean us from this World, and make us long for a better. 2. Still when there was Famine in Canaan, there was Corn in Egypt. Thus Providence orders it, that one Place should be a succour and supply to another, for all we are Brethren. The Egyptians, the Seed of accursed Ham, have Plenty when God's blessed Israel want. Thus God in dispensing common Favours oft crosseth Hands: yet observe, The Plenty Egypt now had was owing under God to Joseph's Prudence and Care. If his Brethren had not sold him into Egypt, but respected him according to his Merits, who knows but he might have done the same thing for Jacob's Family which now he had done for Pharaoh, and the Egyptians might then have come to them to buy Corn; but those who drive away from among them Wise and Good Men, know not what they do. 3. Jacob saw that there was Corn in Egypt; he saw the Corn that his Neighbours had bought there and brought Home: 'Tis a Spur to endeavour to see where Supplies are to be had, and to see others supplied: Shall others get Food for their Souls, and shall we starve while it is to be had? 4. He reproved his Sons for delaying to provide Corn for their Families, *why do ye look one upon another?* Note, When we are in Trouble and Want, 'tis Folly for us to stand looking one upon another, that is, to stand desponding and despairing, as if there were no hope, no help; to stand disputing either which shall have the Honour of going first, or which shall have the Safety of coming last: To stand deliberating and debating what we shall do, and doing nothing: To stand dreaming under a Spirit of Slumber, as if we had nothing to do; and to stand delaying as if we had time at command. Let it never be said we left that to be done to-morrow which we could as well have done to-day. 5. He quickened them to go to Egypt, *get ye down thither*. Masters of Families must not only pray for daily Bread for their Families, and Food convenient, but must lay out themselves with Care and Industry to provide it. 2. Their Obedience to these Orders, v. 3. they went down to buy Corn: They did not send their Servants, but very prudently went themselves, to lay out their own Money. Let none think themselves too Great or too Good to take Pains. Masters of Families should see with their own Eyes, and take heed of leaving too much to Servants. Only Benjamin went not with them, for he was his Father's Darling. To Egypt they came, among others, and, having a considerable Cargo of Corn to buy, they were brought before Joseph himself, who probably expected they would come: And, according to the Laws of Honour, they bowed down themselves before him, v. 6. Now their empty Sheaves did obeisance to his full one. Compare this with *Isa. lx. 14.* and *Rev. iii. 9.*

7 And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them; and he said unto them, Whence come ye? And they said, From the land of Canaan to buy food. 8 And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him. 9 And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and said unto them, Ye are spies; to see the nakedness of the land you are come. 10 And they said unto him, Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come. 11 We are all one man's sons: We are true men, thy servants are no spies. 12 And he said unto them, Nay, but to see the nakedness of the land you are come. 13 And they said, Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of

of

of one man in the land of Canaan : and behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not. 14 And Joseph said unto them, That is it that I spake unto you, saying, Ye are spies. 15 Hereby ye shall be proved: by the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither. 16 Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall be kept in prison, that your words may be proved, whether there be any truth in you: or else by the life of Pharaoh surely ye are spies. 17 And he put them altogether into ward, three days. 18 And Joseph said unto them the third day, This do, and live: for I fear God, 19 If ye be true men, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison: go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses. 20 But bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die. And they did so.

We may well wonder that Joseph, during the twenty years he had now been in Egypt, especially during the last seven years that he had been in Power there, never sent to his Father to acquaint him with his Circumstances; nay, 'tis strange that he who so oft went throughout all the Land of Egypt, ch. xli. 45, 46. never made a step to Canaan, to visit his aged Father, when he was in the borders of Egypt that lay next to Canaan; perhaps it would not have been above three or four Days Journey for him in his Chariot. 'Tis a probable Conjecture, that his whole Management of himself in this Affair was by special Direction from Heaven, that the Purpose of God, concerning Jacob and his Family, might be accomplished. When Joseph's Brethren came he knew them by many a good Token, but they knew not him, little thinking to find him there, v. 8. He remembered the Dreams, v. 9. but they had forgot them. The laying up of God's Oracles in our Hearts will be of excellent Use to us in all our Conduct. Joseph had an Eye to his Dreams, which he knew to be Divine, in his Carriage towards his Brethren, and aimed at the Accomplishment of them, and the bringing of his Brethren to Repentance for their former Sins; and both those Points were gained. 1. He shewed himself very rigorous and harsh with them: The very manner of his speaking considering the Post he was in, was enough to frighten them, for he spake roughly to them, v. 7. He charged them with ill Designs against the Government, v. 9. treated them as dangerous Persons, ye are Spies, protesting by the Life of Pharaoh that they were so, v. 16. Some make that an Oath, others make no more but a vehement Asseveration, like that as thy Soul liveth; however, it was more than *yes, yes,* and *no, no,* and therefore came of Evil. Note, Bad Words are soon learned by converse with those that use 'em, but not so soon unlearned: Joseph by being much at Court, got the Courtier's Oath, by the Life of Pharaoh, perhaps designing hereby to confirm his Brethren in their Belief that he was an Egyptian, and not an Israelite; They knew this was not the Language of a Son of Abraham; when Peter would prove himself no Disciple of Christ, he Curst and Swore. Now why was Joseph thus hard upon his Brethren? We may be sure it was not from a Spirit of Revenge that he might trample upon them now who had formerly trampled upon him, he was not a Man of that Temper. But, (1.) 'Twas to enrich his own Dreams, and complete the Accomplishment of them. (2.) 'Twas to bring them to Repentance. (3.) 'Twas to get out of them an Account of the State of their Family, which he long'd to know: They would have discovered him if he had asked as a Friend, therefore he asks as a Judge. Not seeing his Brother Benjamin with them, perhaps he began to suspect that they had made him away too, and therefore gives them Occasion to speak of their Father and Brother. Note, God, in his Providence, sometimes seems harsh with those he loves, and speaks roughly to those whom yet he has great Mercy in Store for. 2. They hereupon were very submissive; they spoke to him with all the respect imaginable, *say, my Lord*, v. 10. a great Change since they said, Behold, this Dreamer comes. They very modestly deny the Charge, *we are no Spies*, they tell him their Business, they came to buy Food, a justifiable Errand, and the same that many Strangers came to Egypt upon at this time; They undertake to give a particular Account of themselves and their Family, v. 13. And that was it he wanted. 3. He clapt them all up in Prison for three Days, v. 17. Thus God deals with the Souls he designs for special Comfort and Honour, he first humbles them, and terrifies them, and brings them under a Spirit of Bondage, and then binds up their Wounds by the Spirit of Adoption. 4. He concluded with them at last that one of them should be left as a

Hostage, and the rest should go Home and fetch Benjamin. 'Twas a very encouraging Word he said to them, v. 18. *I fear God, q. d. you may assure your selves I'll do you no wrong, I dare not, for I know that as high as I am there is one higher than I.* Note, With those that fear God we have Reason to expect fair Dealing: The Fear of God will be a Check upon those that are in Power, to restrain them from abusing their Power to Oppression and Tyranny: Those that have no one else to stand in awe of, ought to stand in awe of their own Conscience. See Neb. v. 15. *So did not I, because of the Fear of God.*

21 And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us; and we would not hear: therefore is this distress come upon us. 22 And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore behold also, his blood is required. 23 And they knew not that Joseph understood them; for he spake unto them by an interpreter. 24 And he turned himself about from them, and wept; and he returned to them again, and communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes. 25 Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every mans money into his sack, and to give them provision for the way: and thus did he unto them. 26 And they laden their asses with the corn, and departed thence. 27 And as one of them opened his sack to give his ass provender in the inn, he espied his money: for behold it was in his sacks mouth. 28 And he said unto his brethren, My money is restored; and lo, it is even in my sack: and their heart failed them, and they were afraid, saying one to another, What is this that God hath done unto us?

Here's, 1. The Penitent Reflection Joseph's Brethren made upon the Wrong they had formerly done to him, v. 21. they talked the matter over in the Hebrew Tongue, not suspecting that Joseph, whom they took for a Native of Egypt, understood them, much less that he was the Person they spoke of. (1.) They remember'd with Regret the barbarous Cruelty wherewith they persecuted him, *we are verily Guilty concerning our Brother*; we do not read that they said this during their three days Imprisonment, but now when the matter was come to some issue, and they saw themselves still embarrassed, now they began to relent. Perhaps Joseph's mention of the fear of God, v. 18. put them upon Consideration, and extorted this Reflection. Now see here, 1. The Office of Conscience, it is a Remembrancer to bring to mind Things long since said and done, to show us wherein we have erred, tho' it were long ago, as this Reflection here was above twenty Years after the Sin was committed: As Time will not wear out the Guilt of Sin, so it will not blot out the Records of Conscience; when the Guilt of this Sin of Joseph's Brethren was fresh, they made light of it, and sat down to eat Bread, but now long after their Consciences minded 'em of it. 2. The Benefit of Afflictions; those often prove a happy and effectual Means of awakening Conscience, and bringing Sin to our Remembrance, Job xlii. 26. 3. The Evil of Guilt concerning our Brethren; of all their Sins that was it that Conscience now reproached them for; whenever we think we have wrong done us, we ought to remember the wrong we have done to others, Eccl. vii. 21, 22. (2.) Reuben only remember'd with Comfort that he had been an Advocate for his Brothers, and had done what he could to prevent the Mischief they did him, v. 22. *Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the Child?* Note, 1. It is an aggravation of Sin that it was committed against Admonitions. 2. When we come to share with others in their Calamities it will be a Comfort to us, if we have the Testimony of our Consciences for us, that we did not share with them in their Iniquities, but in our Places witnessed against them. This shall be our rejoicing in the Day of Evil, and take out the Sting.

2. Joseph's Tenderness towards them upon this Occasion. He retired from them to weep, v. 24. Tho' his Reason directed that he should still carry himself as a Stranger to them, because they were not as yet humbled enough, yet Natural Affection could not but work, for he was a Man of a tender Spirit. This represents the tender Mercies of our God towards repenting Sinners. See Jer. xxxi. 20. *Since I spake against*

gainst him, I do earnestly remember him still. See *Jud. x. 16.*

3. The Imprisonment of *Simeon*, v. 24. He chose him for the Hostage, probably, because he remembered him to have been his most bitter Enemy, or because he observed him now to be least humbled and concerned; he bound him *before their Eyes*, to affect them all; or, perhaps 'tis intimated that tho' he bound him with some Severity *before them*, yet afterwards, when they were gone, he took off his Bonds.

4. The Dismissal of the rest of them. They came for Corn, and Corn they had, and not only so, but every Man had his Money restored in his Sacks Mouth. Thus Christ our Joseph gives out Supplies *without Money and without Price*: Therefore the Poor are invited to buy, *Rev. iii. 17, 18.* This put them into a mighty Consternation, v. 28. *their Heart failed them, and they were afraid, saying one to another, what is this that God has done to us?* 1. It was really a merciful Event; I hope they had no wrong done them when they had their money given them back, but a Kindness, yet they were thus terrified by it. Note, 1. Guilty Consciences are apt to take good Providences in a bad Sense, and to put wrong Constructions even upon those things that make for them. *They flee when none pursues.* 2. Wealth sometimes brings as much Care along with it as Want doth, and more too. If they had been robb'd of their Money they could not have been worse frightened than they were, now when they found their Money in their Sacks: Thus he whose Ground brought forth plentifully said, *What shall I do?* *Luk. xii. 17.* 2. Yet in their Circumstances it was very amazing: They knew that the Egyptians abhor'd a Hebrew, *Chap. xliii. 32.* and therefore since they could not expect to receive any Kindness from them, they concluded that this was done with a design to pick a Quarrel with them, the rather because the Man, the Lord of the Land, had charged them as Spies. Their own Consciences also were awake, and their Sins set in order before them, and this puts them into Confusion. Note, (1.) When Men's Spirits are sinking, every thing helps to sink them. (2.) When the Events of Providence concerning us are surprizing, 'tis good to enquire what it is that God has done, and is doing with us, and to consider the Operation of his Hands.

29 And they came unto Jacob their father, unto the land of Canaan, and told him all that befel unto them, saying, 30 The man who is the lord of the land, spake roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country. 31 And we said unto him, We are true men; we are no spies. 32 We be twelve brethren, sons of our father: one is not, and the youngest is this day with our father in the land of Canaan. 33 And the man, the lord of the country, said unto us, Hereby shall I know that ye are true men; leave one of your brethren here with me, and take food for the famine of your households, and be gone. 34 And bring your youngest brother unto me: then shall I know that ye are no spies, but that ye are true men: so will I deliver you your brother, and ye shall traffick in the land. 35 And it came to pass as they emptied their sacks, that behold, every mans bundle of money was in his sack: and when both they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid. 36 And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me. 37 And Reuben spake unto his father, saying, Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee: deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again. 38 And he said, My son shall not go down with you: for his brother is dead, and he is left alone; if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

Here's, 1. The Report which Jacob's Sons made to their Father of the great Distress they had been in in Egypt, how they had been suspected, and threatened, and obliged to leave Simeon a Prisoner there till they should bring Benjamin with them thither. Who would have thought of this when they left Home? When we go Abroad we should consider how many sad Accidents, that

we little think of, may befall us before we return Home; we know not what a Day may bring forth, we ought therefore to be always ready for the worst.

2. The deep Impression this made upon the Good Man: The very Bundles of Money which Joseph returned in kindness to his Father, frightened him, v. 35. for he concluded it was done with some Mischievous Design, or perhaps suspected his own Sons to have done some ill thing, and so to have run themselves into a Premunire, which is intimated in what he saith, v. 36. *Me have ye bereaved.* He seems to lay the fault upon them; knowing their Characters, he feared they had provoked the Egyptians, and, perhaps, forcibly or fraudulently brought home their Money. Jacob is here much out of Temper. 1. He has very melancholy Apprehensions concerning the present State of his Family, Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, whereas Joseph was in Honour, and Simeon in the way to it. Note, we oft perplex our selves with our own Mistakes, even in matter of Fact. True Grievs may arise from false Intelligence and Suppositions, 2 Sam. xiii. 31. Jacob gives up Joseph for gone, and Simeon and Benjamin in Danger, and concludes, *all these things are against me.* It proved otherwise, that all these things were for him, were working together for his good, and the good of his Family, yet here he thinks them all against him. Note, Through our Ignorance and Mistake, and the weakness of our Faith, we often apprehend that to be against us which is really for us. We are afflicted in Body, Estate, Name, Relations, and we think all these things are against us, whereas these are really working for us the weight of Glory. 2. He is at present resolved that Benjamin shall not go down. Reuben will undertake to bring him back in Safety, v. 30. not so much as putting in, if the Lord will, not excepting the common Disasters of Travellers: But he foolishly bids Jacob slay his two Sons (which it's like he was very proud of) if he brought him not back; as if the Death of two Grand-sons could satisfy Jacob for the Death of a Son. No, Jacob's present Thoughts are, My Son shall not go down with you. He plainly intimates a Distrust of them, remembering that he never saw Joseph since he had been with them; therefore Benjamin shall not go with you, by the way in which ye go, for ye shall bring down my Gray Hairs. Note, It is bad with a Family when Children carry themselves so ill that their Parents know not how to trust them.

CHAP. XLIII.

Here the Story of Joseph's Brethren is carried on, and very particularly related. 1. Their melancholy parting with their Father Jacob in Canaan, v. 1---14. 2. Their pleasant meeting with Joseph in Egypt, v. 15. to the end, for in this Chapter nothing occurs there but what was agreeable and pleasant enough.

1 AND the famine was sore in the land. 2 And it came to pass when they had eaten up the corn which they had brought out of Egypt, their father said unto them, Go again, buy us a little food. 3 And Judah spake unto him, saying, The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you. 4 If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food. 5 But if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down: for the man said unto us, Ye shall not see my face except your brother be with you. 6 And Israel said, Wherefore dealt you so ill with me, as to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother? 7 And they said, The man asked us straitly of our state, and of our kindred, saying, Is your father yet alive? have ye another brother? and we told him according to the tenor of these words: Could we certainly know that he would say, Bring your brother down? 8 And Judah said unto Israel his father, Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go; that we may live and not die, both we, and thou, and also our little ones. 9 I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: If I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever. 10 For except we had lingred, surely now we had returned this second time.

Here,

Here, 1. *Jacob* urges his Sons to go buy more Corn in *Egypt*, v. 1, 2. The Famine continued, the Corn they had bought was all spent, for it is *Meat that perisheth*: *Jacob*, as a good Master of a Family, is in care to provide for those of his own House, Food convenient; and shall not God provide for his Children, for the Household of Faith? *Jacob* bids them go buy a little Food; now in a time of Scarcity a little must suffice, for Nature is content with a little. 2. *Judah* urges him to consent that *Benjamin* should go down with them, how much soever it was against the Grain with him. Note, It is not at all inconsistent with the Honour and Duty which Children owe their Parents, humbly and modestly to advise them, and as occasion is to reason with them, *Plead with your Mother, plead*, Hof. ii. 2. 1. He insists upon the absolute necessity they were under of bringing *Benjamin* with them, which he, who was a witness to all that had pass'd in *Egypt*, was a more competent Judge of, than *Jacob* could be. *Joseph's* Protestation, v. 3. may be al- luded to, to shew upon what terms we must draw nigh to God; unless we bring Christ along with us in the Arms of our Faith, we cannot see the Face of God with Comfort. 2. He engages to take all possible Care of him, and to do his utmost for his safety, v. 8, 9. *Judah's* Conscience had lately smitten him for what he had done a great while ago against *Joseph*, Chap. lxii. 21. and as an Evidence of the Truth of his Repen- tance he is ready to undertake as far as a Man could do it, for *Benjamin's* Security. He will not only not wrong him, but will do all he can to protect him. This is Restitution as the case will admit; when he knew not how he could retrieve *Joseph*, he would make some amends for the irreparable In- jury he had done him, by doubling his Care concerning *Ben- jamin*.

11 And their father *Israel* said unto them, If it must be so now, do this; take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts and almonds. 12 And take double money in your hand: and the money that was brought again in the mouth of your sacks, carry it again in your hand; peradventure it was an oversight. 13 Take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man. 14 And God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and *Benjamin*: If I be bereaved of my children, I am be- reaved.

Observe here, 1. *Jacob's* Perswadableness. He would be ruled by Reason, tho' they were his Inferiors that urged it. He saw the necessity of the Case, and since there was no Remedy he consented to yield to the Necessity, v. 11. If it must be so now, take your Brother. If no Corn can be had but upon those Terms, as good expose him to the perils of the Journey, as suffer our selves and Families, and *Benjamin*, among the rest, to perish for want of Bread: Skin for Skin, and all that a Man has, even a *Benjamin*, the dearest of all, will he give for his Life. No Death so dreadful as that by Famine, Lam. iv. 9. *Jacob* had said, Chap. xlii. 38. my Son shall not go down, but now he is over-perswaded to consent. Note, It is no Fault, but our Wisdom and Duty to alter our Purposes and Resolutions when there is a good Reason for our so doing: Constancy is a Vir- tue, but Obstinacy is not. 'Tis God's Prerogative not to re- pent, and to make unchangeable resolves. 2. *Jacob's* Prudence, and Justice, which appeared in three things. (1.) He sent back the Money that they had found in the Sack's Mouth, with this discreet Construction of it, peradventure it was an oversight. Note, Honesty obliges us to make Restitution, not only of that which comes to us by our own Fault, but of that which comes to us by others Mistakes. Tho' we get it by oversight, if we keep it when the oversight is discover'd, it is kept by deceit. In the stating of Accounts Errors must be excepted, even those that make for us, as well as those that make against us. *Jacob's* Words furnish us with a favourable Construction to put upon that which we are tempted to resent as an Injury and Affront, pass it by, and say, Peradventure it was an oversight. (2.) He sent double Money, as much again as they took the time before, upon Supposition that the Price of Corn might be risen, or that if it should be insisted upon they might pay a Ransom for *Simeon*, or his Prison Fees. Or, to shew a generous Spirit, that they might be the more likely to find generous Treatment with the Man, the Lord of the Land. (3.) He sent a Present of such things as the Land afforded, and were scarce in *Egypt*; Balm and Honey, &c. v. 11. the Commodities that *Canaan* exported, Gen. xxxvii. 25. Note, 1. Providence dispenseth its Gifts variously. Some Coun- tries produce one Commodity, others another, that Commerce may be preserved. 2. Honey and Spice will never make up the

want of Bread-Corn. The Famine was sore in *Canaan*, and yet they had Balm and Myrrh, &c. we may live well enough upon plain Food without Dainties, but we cannot live upon Dainties without plain Food. Let us thank God that that which is most needful and useful is generally most cheap and common. 3. A Gift in secret pacifies Wrath, Pr. xxi. 14. *Jacob's* Sons were un- justly accused as Spies, yet *Jacob* is willing to be at the Expence of a Present to pacify the Accuser. Sometimes we must not think much to buy Peace, even there where we may justly de- mand it, and insist upon it as our Right. 4. *Jacob's* Piety appear- ing in his Prayer, v. 14. God Almighty give you Mercy before the Man! *Jacob* had formerly turned an angry Brother into a kind one with a Present and a Prayer, and here he betakes himself to the same tried Method, and it sped well. Note, Those that would find Mercy with Men must seek it of God, who has all Hearts in his Hands, and turns them as he pleaseth. 5. *Jacob's* Patience, he concludes all with this, If I be bereaved of my Children, I am bereaved, if I must part with them thus one after another, I must acquiesce and say, The Will of the Lord be done. Note, It is our Wisdom to reconcile our selves to the sorest Afflictions, and make the best of them, for there is nothing got by striving with our Maker, 2 Sam. xv. 25, 26.

15 And the men took that present, and they took double money in their hand, and *Benjamin*; and rose up, and went down to *Egypt*, and stood before *Joseph*. 16 And when *Joseph* saw *Benjamin* with them, he said to the ruler of his house, Bring these men home, and slay, and make ready: for these men shall dine with me at noon. 17 And the man did as *Joseph* bade: and the man brought the men into *Joseph's* house. 18 And the men were afraid, because they were brought into *Joseph's* house, and they said, Because of the money that was returned in our sacks at the first time, are we brought in, that he may seek occasion a- gainst us, and fall upon us; and take us for bond- men, and our asses. 19 And they came near to the steward of *Joseph's* house, and they com- muned with him at the door of the house, 20 And said, O sir, we came down indeed at the first time to buy food. 21 And it came to pass when he came to the inn, that we opened our sacks, and behold, every mans money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight; and we have brought it again in our hand. 22 And other money have we brought down in our hands to buy food: we cannot tell who put our money in our sacks. 23 And he said, Peace be to you, fear not: your God and the God of your father hath given you treasure in your sacks: I had your money. And he brought *Simeon* out unto them. 24 And the man brought the men into *Joseph's* house, and gave them water, and they washed their feet, and he gave their asses provender. 25 And they made ready the present against *Joseph* came at noon: for they heard that they should eat bread there.

Jacob's Sons having got leave to take *Benjamin* with them, were observant of the orders their Father had given them, and went down the second time into *Egypt* to buy Corn. If we should ever know what a Famine of the Word means, let us not think much to travel as far for Spiritual Food as they did here for Corporal Food. Now here we have an Account of what pass'd between them and *Joseph's* Steward, who some conjecture was in the Secret, and knew them to be *Joseph's* Brethren, and helped to humor the thing; I rather think not, because no Man must be present when *Joseph* afterwards made himself known to them, Chap. xlv. 1.

1. *Joseph's* Steward has orders from his Master (who was bu- sic selling Corn, and receiving Money) to take them to his House, and make ready for their Entertainment. Tho' *Joseph* saw *Benjamin* there, he would not leave his Work at working time, nor trust another with it. Note, Business must take place of Civility in its Season. Our needful Employments must not be neglected, no, not to pay respect to our Friends.

2. Even this frightened them, v. 18. they were afraid because they were brought into *Joseph's* House. The just Challenges of their

their own Consciences, and Joseph's violent Suspicions of them forbid them to expect any Favour, and suggested to them, that this was done with an ill design upon them. *Note*, Those that are *guilty* and *timorous* are apt to make the worst of every thing. Now they thought they should be reckoned with about the Money in the Sack's mouth, and should be charged as Cheats, and Men not fit to be dealt with, who had taken advantage of the Hurry of the Market to carry off their Corn unpaid for. They therefore lay the Case before the Steward, that he being apprized of it, might stand between them and danger. And they had Proof sufficient of their Honesty, that before they were charged with it they produced it. *Note*, Integrity and Uprightness will preserve us, and will clear it self as the light of the Morning.

3. The Steward encourag'd them, *v. 23. Peace be to you, fear not*; tho' he knew not what his Master drove at, yet he was aware, these were Men he meant no ill to, while he thus amus'd them; and therefore he directs them to look at the Divine Providence in the return of their Money, *your God, and the God of your Father, has given you treasure in your Sacks*. Observe, (1.) Hereby he shews that he had no Suspicion at all of Dishonesty in them: For what we get by Deceit we cannot say, *God gives it us*. (2.) Hereby he silences their further Enquiry about it; ask not how it came thither, Providence brought it you, and let that satisfy you. (3.) It appears by what he said, that by his good Master's Instructions he was brought to the Knowledge of the true God, the God of the Hebrews. It may justly be expected that those who are Servants in Religious Families should take all fit Occasions to speak of God and his Providence with Reverence and Seriousness. (4.) He directs them to look up to God, and acknowledge his Providence in the good Bargain they had: We must own our selves indebted to God, as *our God and the God of our Fathers* (a God in Covenant with us and them) for all our Successes and Advantages, and the Kindnesses of our Friends; for every Creature is that to us, and no more than God makes it to be. The Steward encouraged them not only in Words but Deeds, for he made very much of them till his Master came, *v. 24.*

26 And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and bowed themselves to him to the earth. 27 And he asked them of their welfare, and said, Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive? 28 And they answered, Thy servant our father is in good health, he is yet alive: and they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance. 29 And he lift up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mothers son, and said, Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son. 30 And Joseph made haste; for his bowels did yern upon his brother: and he sought where to weep, and he entered into his chamber, and wept there. 31 And he washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself, and said, Set on bread. 32 And they set on for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians, which did eat with him, by themselves: because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians. 33 And they sat before him, the first-born according to his birth-right, and the youngest according to his youth: and the men marvelled one at another. 34 And he took and sent messes unto them from before him: but Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were merry with him.

Here's, 1. The great Respect that Joseph's Brethren paid to him; when they brought him the Present they bowed themselves before him, *v. 26.* and again when they gave him an Account of their Father's Health, they made Obeisance, and called him, *Thy Servant our Father*, *v. 28.* Thus were Joseph's Dreams fulfilled more and more, and even the Father by the Sons bowed before him, according to the Dream, *Chap. xxxvii. 10.* Probably Jacob had directed them if they had Occasion to speak of him to the Man, the Lord of the Land, to call him his Servant.

2. The great Kindness that Joseph shew'd to them, while they little thought 'twas a Brotherly Kindness. Here's, 1. His Kind

Enquiry concerning Jacob, *Is he yet alive?* A very fit Question to be asked concerning any, especially concerning old People, for we are dying daily, 'tis strange we are yet alive: Jacob had said many Years before, *I will go to the Grave to my Son*, but he is yet alive; we must not dye when we will. 2. The kind Notice he took of Benjamin, his own Brother. (1.) He put up a Prayer for him, *v. 29. God be gracious unto thee, my Son*. Joseph's Favour tho' he was the Lord of the Land, would do him little good unless God were Gracious to him: Many seek the Ruler's Favour, but He directs him to seek the Favour of the Ruler of Rulers. (2.) He sheds some Tears for him, *v. 30.* His natural Affection to his Brother, his Joy to see him; his Concern to see him and the rest of 'em in Distress for Bread, and the Remembrance of his own Grievs since he last saw him, wrought a very great Commotion in him, which perhaps was the more uneasy because he endeavoured to stifle and suppress it; but he was forc'd to retire into his Closet, there to give vent to his Passion by Tears. *Note*, 1. Tears of Tenderness and Affection are no Disparagement at all even to Great and Wife Men. 2. Gracious Weepers should not proclaim their Tears, *My Soul shall weep in Secret*, saith the Prophet, *Jer. xlii. 17. Peter went out and wept bitterly*. See *Matt. vi. 17.* 3. His kind Entertainment of them all, when his Passion of weeping was over, so that he could refrain himself, he sat down to Dinner with them, treated them nobly, and yet contrives every thing to amuse them. 1. He ordered three Tables to be spread, one for his Brethren, and another for the Egyptians that din'd with him, for so different were their Customs that they did not care to eat together; another for himself, who durst not own himself a Hebrew, and yet would not sit with the Egyptians. See here an Instance, (1.) Of Hospitality and good House-keeping, which is a very commendable thing, according as the Ability is. (2.) Of Compliance with Peoples Humours, even whimsical ones (as Bishop Patrick calls this of the Egyptians not eating with the Hebrews;) Tho' Joseph was the Lord of the Land, and Orders were given that all People should obey him, yet he would not force the Egyptians to eat with the Hebrews, against their Mind, but let them enjoy their Humours; Spirits truly generous hate to impose. (3.) Of the early distance between Jews and Gentiles, one Table would not hold 'em. 2. He placed his Brethren according to their Seniority, *v. 33.* as if he could certainly divine. Some think they placed themselves so according to their Custom; but if so, I see not why such particular Notice is taken of it, especially as a thing they marvelled at. 3. He gave them a very plentiful Entertainment, sent Messes to them from his own Table, *v. 34.* This was the more generous in him, and the more obliging to them, because of the present Scarcity of Provisions. In a Day of Famine 'tis enough to be fed, but they here were feasted. Perhaps they had not had such a good Dinner of many Months. 'Tis said, they drank and were merry; their Cares and Fears were now over, and they eat their Bread with Joy, concluding they were now upon good Terms with the Man, the Lord of the Land. If God accept our Works, our Present, we have Reason to be cheerful. Yet when we sit as they here did to eat with a Ruler, we should consider what is before us, and not indulge our Appetite, or be desirous of Dainties, *Prov. xxiii. 1, 2, 3.* Joseph gave them to understand that Benjamin was his Favourite, for his Mess was five Times as much as any of theirs; not as if he would have him eat so much more than the rest, for then he must eat more than would do him good; and it's no Act of Friendship, but an Injury and Unkindness rather, to press any either to eat or to drink to excess. But thus he would testify his particular Respect for him, that he might try whether his Brethren would envy Benjamin his larger Messes, as formerly they had envied him his finer Coat. And it must be our Rule in such Cases to be content with what we have, and not to grieve at what others have.

C H A P. XLIV.

Joseph having entertained his Brethren dismissed them: But here we have them brought back in a greater fright than any they had been in yet. Observe, 1. What Method he took, both to humble them further, and also to try their Affection to his Brother Benjamin, by which he would be able to judge of the sincerity of their Repentance for what they had done against him, which he was desirous to be satisfied of before he manifested his Reconciliation to them. This he contrived to do by bringing Benjamin into Distress, *v. 1-17.* 2. The good success of the Experiment; he found them all heartily concerned, and Judah particularly, both for the Safety of Benjamin, and for the Comfort of their aged Father, *v. 18-34.*

1 AND he commanded the steward of his house, saying, Fill the mens sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put every mans money in his sacks mouth. 2 And put my cup, the silver cup, into the sacks mouth of the youngest,

youngest, and his corn-money : and he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken. 3 As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away, they and their asses. 4 And when they were gone out of the city, and not yet far off, Joseph said unto his steward, Up, follow after the men ; and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them, Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good ? 5 Is not this it, in which my lord drinketh ? and whereby indeed he divineth ? ye have done evil in so doing. 6 And he overtook them, and he spake unto them these same words. 7 And they said unto him, Wherefore saith my lord these words ? God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing. 8 Behold, the money which we found in our sacks mouths, we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan : how then should we steal out of thy lords house silver or gold ? 9 With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him dye, and we also will be my lords bond-men. 10 And he said, Now also let it be according unto your words : he with whom it is found shall be my servant ; and ye shall be blameless. 11 Then they speedily took down every man his sack to the ground, and opened every man his sack. 12 And he searched, and began at the eldest, and left at the youngest : and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. 13 Then they rent their clothes, and laded every man his ass, and returned to the city. 14 And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house (for he was yet there) and they fell before him on the ground. 15 And Joseph said unto them, What deed is this that ye have done ? wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine ? 16 And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord ? what shall we speak ? or how shall we clear our selves ? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants : behold, we are my lords servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found. 17 And he said, God forbid that I should do so : but the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant ; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father.

Here, 1. Joseph heaps further Kindnesses upon his Brethren, fills their Sacks, and returns their Money, and sends them away Merry enough. But, 2. He exerciseth them with further Trials : Our God thus humbles those whom he loves and loads with Benefits. Joseph ordered his Steward to put a fine Silver Cup which he had, (and which 'tis likely was used at his Table when they din'd with him) into Benjamin's Sack's mouth, that it might seem as if he had stolen it from the Table, and put it there himself, after his Corn was delivered him. If Benjamin had stolen it, it had been the basest piece of Dishonesty and Ingratitude that could be ; and if Joseph, by ordering it to be put there, had designed really to take Advantage against him, it had been in him most horrid Cruelty and Oppression ; but it proved in the issue there was no harm done, nor any designed on either side. Observe, 1. How the pretended Criminals were pursued and arrested, on Suspicion of having stolen a Silver Cup. The Steward charged them with Ingratitude, rewarding Evil for Good ; with Folly, in taking away a Cup of daily use, and which therefore would soon be missed, and diligent search made for it ; for so it may be read, v. 5. Is not that it in which my Lord drinketh (as having a particular Fondness for it) and for which he would search thoroughly ? Or, by which leaving it carelessly at your Table he would make trial, whether you were Honest Men or no. 2. How they pleaded for themselves ; they solemnly protested their Innocency, and detestation of so ill a thing, v. 7. urg'd it as an instance of their Honesty, that they had brought their Money back, v. 8. proffer'd to submit to the severest punishment if they should be found Guilty, v. 9, 10. 3. How the Theft was fastned upon Benjamin, in his Sack the Cup was found, to whom Joseph had been particularly kind. Benjamin, no doubt, was ready to deny upon Oath the taking of the Cup, and we

may suppose him as little liable to suspicion as any of them ; but 'tis in vain to confront such notorious Evidence, the Cup is found in his Custody ; they dare not arraign Joseph's Justice, nor so much as suggest that perhaps he that had put their Money in their Sack's Mouth had put the Cup there, but they throw themselves upon Joseph's Mercy. And, 4. Here's their humble Submission, v. 16. (1.) They acknowledge the Righteousness of God : God hath found out the Iniquity of thy Servants ; perhaps referring to the Injury they had formerly done to Joseph, for which they thought God was now reckoning with them. Note, Even in those Afflictions wherein we apprehend our selves wronged by Men, yet we must own that God is righteous, and finds out our Iniquity. (2.) They surrender themselves Prisoners to Joseph, we are my Lord's Servants. Now Joseph's Dreams were accomplished to the utmost, their bowing so oft, and doing obeisance, might be looked upon but as Complement, and no more but what other Strangers did ; but the Construction they themselves in their Pride had put upon his Dreams was, shall thou have Dominion over us ? Chap. xxxvii. 8. and in that sense it is now at length fulfilled, they own themselves his Vassals : Since they did invidiously so understand it, so it shall be fulfilled in them. 5. Joseph with an air of Justice gives Sentence, that Benjamin only should be kept in Bondage, and the rest should be dismissed, for why should any suffer but the Guilty ? Perhaps Joseph intended hereby to try Benjamin's Temper, whether he could bear such a hardship as this with the Calmness and Composedness of Mind that became a Wise and Good Man ; in short, whether he were indeed his own Brother in Spirit as well as Blood, for Joseph himself had been falsely accus'd, and suffer'd hard things by it, and yet kept Possession of his own Soul : However, 'tis plain he intended hereby to try the Affection of his Brethren to him, and to their Father. If they had gone away contentedly and left Benjamin in Bonds, no doubt but Joseph would soon have prefer'd him, and sent notice to Jacob, and would have left the rest of his Brethren justly to suffer for their hard-heartedness ; but they proved to be better affected to Benjamin than he feared. Note, We cannot judge what Men are by what they have been formerly, nor what they will do, by what they have done : Age and Experience may make Men Wiser and Better. They had sold Joseph, yet would not now abandon Benjamin : The worst may mend in time.

18 Then Judah came near unto him, and said, Oh my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lords ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant : for thou art even as Pharaoh. 19 My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother ? 20 And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one : and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother ; and his father loveth him. 21 And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him. 22 And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father : for if he should leave his father, his father would dye. 23 And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, you shall see my face no more. 24 And it came to pass, when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord. 25 And our father said, Go again, and buy us a little food. 26 And we said, We cannot go down : if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down ; for we may not see the mans face, except our youngest brother be with us. 27 And thy servant my father said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two sons. 28 And the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces ; and I saw him not since. 29 And if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. 30 Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad be not with us ; (seeing that his life is bound up in the lads life) 31 It shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will dye : and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with

with sorrow to the grave. 32 For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever. 33 Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide in stead of the lad, a bond-man to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. 34 For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father.

We have here a most ingenious and pathetic Speech which Judah made to Joseph on Benjamin's behalf, to obtain his Discharge from the Sentence pass'd upon him; either Judah was a better Friend to Benjamin than the rest were, and more solicitous to bring him off; or, he thought himself under greater Obligations to endeavour it than the rest, because he had pass'd his Word to his Father for his safe return; or, the rest chose him for their Spokesman, because he was a Man of better Sense, and better Spirit, and had a greater command of Language than any of them. His Address, as it is here recorded, is so very Natural, and so expressive of his present Passion, that we cannot but suppose Moses, who wrote it so long after, to have written it under the special Direction of him that made Man's Mouth. A great deal of unaffected Art, and unstudied unforced Rhetorick there is in this Speech.

1. He address'd himself to Joseph with a great deal of respect and deference, calls him his Lord, himself and his Brethren his Servants, begs his patient hearing, and passeth a mighty Complement upon him, *thou art even as Pharaoh*, whose Favour we desire, and whose Wrath we dread as we do Pharaoh's. Religion doth not destroy good Manners, and 'tis Prudence to speak those fair at whose Mercy we lie: Titles of Honour to those that are intitled to them are not flattering Titles.

2. He represented Benjamin as one well worthy of his Compassionate Consideration, v. 20. he was a little one, compared with the rest of them; the youngest, not acquainted with the World, nor ever enured to hardship, having been always brought up tenderly with his Father. It made the case the more piteous, that he alone was left of his Mother, and his Brother was dead, viz. Joseph; little did Judah think what a tender point he touch'd upon now. Judah knew that Joseph was sold, and therefore had reason enough to think that he was alive; however, he could not be sure that he was dead, but they had made their Father believe he was dead, and now they had told that Lie so long, that they had forgot the Truth, and began to believe it themselves.

3. He urg'd it very closely that Joseph had himself constrained them to bring Benjamin with them, had express'd a desire to see him, v. 21. had forbidden them his Presence unless they brought Benjamin with them, v. 23, 26. all which intimated, that he design'd him some Kindness, and must he be brought with so much Difficulty to the Preferment of a perpetual Slavery? Was he not brought to Egypt in obedience, purely in obedience to the command of Joseph, and would not he shew him some Mercy? Some observe that Jacob's Sons in reasoning with their Father had said, *We will not go down*, unless Benjamin go with us, Chap. xliii. 5. but when Judah comes here to relate the Story, he expresseth it more decently, *We cannot go down*, with any expectation to speed well. Indecent Words, spoke in haste to our Superiors, should be recalled and amended.

4. The great Argument he insists upon was the insupportable Grief it would be to his Aged Father, if Benjamin should be left behind in Servitude: His Father loves him, v. 20. This they had pleaded against Joseph's insisting on his coming down, v. 22. *if he should leave his Father, his Father would dye*, much more if now he be left behind never more to return to him. This the old Man, of whom they spake had pleaded against his going down, v. 29. *if Mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray Hairs*, that Crown of Glory, with sorrow to the Grave. This therefore Judah presseth with a great deal of earnestness, *his Life is bound up in the Lad's Life*, v. 30. when he sees that the Lad is not with us, he will faint away and die immediately, v. 31. or will abandon himself to such a Degree of Sorrow as will in a few days make an end of him. And (lastly) Judah pleads, that for his part he could not bear to see this, v. 34. *Let me not see the Evil that shall come on my Father*. Note, It is the Duty of Children to be very tender of their Parents Comfort, and to be afraid of every thing that may be an Occasion of Grief to them. Thus the Love that descended first, must again ascend, and something must be done towards a recompence for their Care.

5. Judah, in Honour to the Justice of Joseph's Sentence, and to shew his Sincerity in this Plea, offers himself to become a Bond-man instead of Benjamin, v. 33. Thus the Law would be satisfied, Joseph would be no loser, for we may suppose Judah

a more able Bodied Man than Benjamin, and fitter for Service, Jacob would better bear that than the loss of Benjamin. Now so far was he from grieving at his Father's particular Fondness for Benjamin, that he is himself willing to be a Bond-man to indulge it.

Now, had Joseph been as Judah supposed him, an utter Stranger to the Family, yet even common Humanity could not but be wrought upon by such powerful Reasonings as these, for nothing could be said more moving, more tender; 'twas enough to melt a Heart of Stone: But to Joseph, who was nearer akin to Benjamin than Judah himself was, and who, at this time, felt a greater Passion both for him and for his Aged Father, than Judah did, nothing could be more pleasingly nor more happily said. Neither Jacob nor Benjamin needed an Intercessor with Joseph, for he himself loved them.

Upon the whole matter let us take notice, 1. How prudently Judah suppress'd all mention of the Crime that was charged upon Benjamin. Had he said any thing by way of Acknowledgment of it, he had reflect'd on Benjamin's Honesty, and seem'd too forward to suspect that: Had he said any thing by way of denial of it, he had reflect'd on Joseph's Justice, and the Sentence he had pass'd; therefore he wholly waves that Head, and appeals to Joseph's Pity; compare with this that of Job, in humbling himself before God, Job ix. 15. *Though I were righteous, yet would I not answer. I would not argue but petition, I would make Supplication to my Judge*. 2. What good Reason dying Jacob had to say, *Judah, thou art he whom thy Brethren shall praise*, Chap. xlix. 8. for he excelled them all in Boldness, Wisdom, Eloquence, and especially Tenderness for their Father and Family. 3. Judah's faithful Adherence to Benjamin now in his Distress, was recompens'd long after by the constant Adherence of the Tribe of Benjamin, to the Tribe of Judah, when all the other ten Tribes deserted it. 4. How fitly doth the Apostle, when he is discoursing of the Mediation of Christ, observe, *That our Lord sprang out of Judah*, Heb. vii. 14. for, like his Father Judah, he not only made Intercession for Transgressors, but he became a Surety for them, as it follows there, v. 22. testifying therein a very tender Concern both for his Father and for his Brethren.

CHAP. XLV.

'Tis pity this Chapter and that foregoing should be parted, and read asunder. There we had Judah's Intercession for Benjamin, with which we may suppose the rest of his Brethren signified their Concurrence; Joseph let him go on without Interruption, heard all he had to say, and then answer'd it all in one Word, I am Joseph. Now he found his Brethren humbled for their Sins, mindful of himself (for Judah had mentioned him twice in his Speech) respectful to their Father, and very tender of their Brother Benjamin; now they were ripe for the Comfort he design'd them, by making himself known to them, which we have the Story of in this Chapter. It was to Joseph's Brethren as clear shining after Rain, nay, it was to them as Life from the Dead. Here's, 1. Joseph's discovery of himself to his Brethren, and his Discourse with them upon that Occasion, v. 1--15. 2. The Orders Pharaoh heretofore gave to fetch Jacob and his Family down to Egypt, and Joseph's dispatch of his Brethren accordingly back to his Father with these Orders, v. 16--24. 3. The joyful tidings of this brought to Jacob, v. 25--28.

1. Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cry'd, Cause every man to go out from me: and there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. 2 And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard. 3 And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; Doth my father yet live? and his brethren could not answer him: for they were troubled at his presence. 4 And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you; and they came near: and he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. 5 Now therefore be not grieved nor angry with your selves that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you, to preserve life. 6 For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest. 7 And God sent me before you, to preserve you a post-

a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. 8 So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. 9 Haste you, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt; come down unto me, tarry not. 10 And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy childrens children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast. 11 And there will I nourish thee (for yet there are five years of famine,) lest thou and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty. 12 And behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you. 13 And you shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that you have seen; and ye shall haste, and bring down my father hither. 14 And he fell upon his brother Benjamins neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. 15 Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him.

Judah and his Brethren were waiting for an Answer, and could not but be amazed to discover, instead of the Gravity of a Judge, the natural Affection of a Father, or Brother.

1. Joseph ordered all his Attendants to withdraw, v. 1. The private Conversations of Friends are the most free: When Joseph would put on Love, he puts off State, which it was not fit his Servants should be witnesses of. Thus Christ graciously manifests himself and his loving-kindness to his People out of the Sight and Hearing of the World.

2. Tears were the Preface or Introduction to his Discourse, v. 2. He had damm'd up this Stream a great while, and with much ado, but now it swelled so high, that he could no longer contain, but he wept aloud, so that those whom he had forbid to see him, could not but hear him. These were Tears of Tenderness, and strong Affection, and with these he threw off that Austerity with which he had hitherto carried himself towards his Brethren, for he could bear it no longer. This represents the Divine Compassion towards returning Penitents, as much as that of the Father of the Prodigal, Luk. xv. 20. Hof. xi. 8, 9.

3. He very abruptly (as one uneasy till it was out) tells them who he was, I am Joseph: They knew him only by his Egyptian name, Zaphnath-paaneah, his Hebrew name being lost and forgot in Egypt, but now he teaches them to call him by that, I am Joseph; nay, that they might not suspect 'twas another of the same name, he explains himself, v. 4. I am Joseph your Brother. This would both humble them yet more for their Sin in selling him, and would encourage them to hope for kind Treatment. Thus when Christ would convince Paul, he said, I am Jesus, and when he would comfort his Disciples, he said, It is I, be not afraid. This word at first startled Joseph's Brethren, they started back through Fear, or at least stood still astonished, but Joseph called kindly and familiarly to them, Come near, I pray you. Thus when Christ manifests himself to his People he encourages them to draw near to him, with a true Heart. Perhaps being about to speak of their selling of him, he would not speak aloud, lest the Egyptians should over-hear, and it should make the Hebrews to be yet more an Abomination to them, therefore he would have them come near that he might whisper with them, which, now the Tide of his Passion was a little over he was able to do, whereas at first he could not but cry out.

4. He endeavours to sweeten their Grief for the Injuries they had done him, by shewing them that whatever they designed, God meant it for good, and had brought much good out of it, v. 5. Be not grieved or angry with yourselves: Sinners must grieve and be angry with themselves for their Sins, yea, tho' God by his Power, bring good out of them, for that's no Thanks to the Sinner; but true Penitents should be greatly affected with it, when they see God bringing good out of Evil, Meats out of the Easter. Tho' we must not with this Consideration extenuate our own Sins, and so take off the Edge of our Repentance, yet it may do well thus to extenuate the Sin of others, and so take off the Edge of our angry Repentments. Thus Joseph doth here: His Brethren needed not to fear that he would revenge upon them an Injury which God's Providence had made to turn so much to his Advantage, and that of his Family. Now he tells them how long the Famine was likely to last, five years, yet, v. 6.

V O L. I.

what a Capacity he was in of being kind to his Relations and Friends, which is the greatest Satisfaction that Wealth and Power can give to a Good Man, v. 8. See what a favourable colour he puts upon the Injury they had done him, God sent me before you, v. 5, 7. Note, (1.) God's Israel is the particular Care of God's Providence: Joseph reckoned that his Advancement was not so much design'd to save a whole Kingdom of Egyptians, as to preserve a small Family of Israelites; for the Lord's Portion is his People; whatever goes with others they shall be secured. (2.) Providence looks a great way forward, and has a long Reach; even long before the Years of Plenty Providence was preparing for the Supply of Jacob's House in the Years of Famine. The Psalmist praiseth God for this, Ps. cv. 17. He sent a Man before them, even Joseph. God sees his Work from the beginning to the end, but we do not, Eccl. iii. 11. How admirable are the Projects of Providence! How remote its Tendencies! What Wheels are there within Wheels, and yet all directed by the Eyes in the Wheels, and the Spirit of the living Creature! Let us therefore judge nothing before the time. (3.) God often works by Contraries: The Envy and Contention of Brethren threatens the Ruine of Families, yet that proves the Occasion of preserving Jacob's Family. Joseph had never been the Shepherd and Stone of Israel, if his Brethren had not sold him, and hated him. Even those that had wickedly sold Joseph into Egypt, yet themselves reaped the Benefit of the good God brought out of it; as those that put Christ to Death were many of them saved by his Death. (4.) God must have all the Glory of the seasonable Preservations of his People, by what Way soever they are effected, v. 8. It was not you that sent me hither, but God. As on the one hand they must not fret at it because it ended so well, so on the other Hand they must not be proud of it, because it was God's doing, and not theirs. They designed by selling him into Egypt to defeat his Dreams, but God thereby designed to accomplish them, Isa. x. 7. Howbeit he meaneth not so.

5. He promiseth to take care of his Father and all the Family, during the rest of the Years of Famine.

1. He desires that his Father might speedily be made glad with the Tidings of his Life and Honour. His Brethren must hasten to Canaan, and must acquaint Jacob that his Son Joseph was Lord of all Egypt, v. 9. they must tell him of all his Glory there, v. 13. he knew it would be a refreshing Oyl to his hoary Head, and a Sovereign Cordial to his Spirits. If any thing would make him young again, this would. He desires them to give themselves and take with them to their Father all possible Satisfaction of the Truth of these surprising Tidings, v. 12. your Eyes see that it is my Mouth. If they would recollect themselves they might remember something of his Features, Speech, &c. and be satisfied.

2. He is very earnest that his Father and all his Family should come to him to Egypt; Come down unto me, tarry not, v. 9. He allots his dwelling in Goshen, that part of Egypt which lay towards Canaan, that they might be mindful of the Country from which they were to come out, v. 10. He promiseth to provide for him, v. 11. I will nourish. Note, It is the Duty of Children, if the Necessity of their Parents do at any time require it, to support and supply them to the utmost of their Ability, and Corban will never excuse 'em, Mar. vii. 11. this is shewing Piety at Home, 1 Tim. v. 4. Our Lord Jesus being, like Joseph, exalted to the highest Honours and Powers of the upper World, 'tis his Will that all that are his should be with him where he is, Joh. xvii. 24. This is his Commandment that we be with him now in Faith and Hope, and a Heavenly Conversation, and this is his Promise that we shall be for ever with him.

6. Endearments were interchanged between him and his Brethren. He began with the youngest, his own Brother Benjamin, who was but about a year old when he was separated from his Brethren; they wept on each others Neck, v. 14. perhaps to think of their Mother Rachel, who died in travail of Benjamin. Rachel, in her Husband Jacob, had been lately weeping for her Children, because in his Apprehension they were not, Joseph gone, and Benjamin going; And now they are weeping for her, because she was not. After he had embraced Benjamin, he in like manner caressed them all, v. 15. and then his Brethren talked with him freely and familiarly of all the Affairs of their Father's House. After the Tokens of true Reconciliation follow the Instances of a sweet Communion.

16 And the fame thereof was heard in Pharaohs house, saying, Josephs brethren are come: and it pleased Pharaoh well, and his servants. 17 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Say unto thy brethren, This do ye; lade your beasts, and go, get you unto the land of Canaan, 18 And take your father and your households, and come unto me: and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt,

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and ye shall eat the fat of the land. 19 Now thou art commanded, this do ye; take ye waggons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father, and come. 20 Also regard not your stuff: for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours. 21 And the children of Israel did so: and Joseph gave them waggons, according to the commandment of Pharaoh, and gave them provision for the way. 22 To all of them he gave each man changes of raiment: but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver, and five changes of raiment. 23 And to his father he sent after this manner; ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten she asses laden with corn, and bread and meat for his father by the way. 24 So he sent his brethren away, and they departed: and he said unto them, See that ye fall not out by the way.

Here's, 1. The Kindness of Pharaoh to Joseph, and to his Relations for his sake; he bid his Brethren welcome, v. 16. tho' it was a time of Scarcity, and they were likely to be a Charge to him. Nay, because it pleased Pharaoh, it pleased his Servants too, at least they pretended to be pleased because Pharaoh was. He engaged Joseph to send for his Father down to Egypt, and promised to furnish them with all Conveniences both for his Removal thither, and his Settlement there. If the good of all the Land of Egypt (as it was now better stock'd than any other Land, thanks to Joseph, under God) would suffice him, he was welcome to it all, 'twas all his own, even the fat of the Land, v. 18. so that they need not regard their stuff, v. 20. What they had in Canaan he reckoned but stuff in Comparison with what he had for them in Egypt, and therefore if they should be constrained to leave some of that behind them, let them not be discontented, Egypt would afford them enough to make up the Losses of their Remove. Thus those for whom Christ intends shares in his Heavenly Glory, ought not to regard the stuff of this World: The best of Enjoyments are but stuff, but lumber; we cannot make sure of it while we are here, much less can we carry it away with us, let us not therefore be solicitous about it, nor set our Eyes or Hearts upon it, there are better things reserved for us in that blessed Land whither our Joseph is gone to prepare a place.

2. The kindness of Joseph to his Father and Brethren: Pharaoh was respectful to Joseph in Gratitude, because he had been an Instrument of much good to him and his Kingdom, not only preserving it from the common Calamity, but helping to make it considerable among the Nations, for all their Neighbours would say, surely the Egyptians are a Wife and an Understanding People that are so well stock'd in a Time of Scarcity: For this reason Pharaoh never thought any Thing too much he could do for Joseph. Note, There is a Gratitude owing even to Inferiors: And when any have shewed us Kindness we should study to requite it, not only to them, but to their Relations. And Joseph likewise was respectful to his Father and Brethren in Duty, because they were his near Relations, tho' his Brethren had been his Enemies, and his Father long a Stranger. 1. He furnished them for Necessity, v. 21. He gave them Waggons and Provision for the Way, both going and coming, for we never find that Jacob was very rich, and at this Time when the Famine prevailed, we may suppose he was rather Poor. 2. He furnished them for Ornament and Delight. To his Brethren he gave two Suits a-piece of good Clothes, to Benjamin five Suits, and Money besides in his Pocket, v. 22. And to his Father he sent a very handsome Present of the Varieties of Egypt, v. 23. Note, Those that are Weakly should be Generous, and devise liberal Things; what's an Abundance good for, but to do good with it? 3. He dismissed them with a seasonable Caution, v. 24. See that ye fall not out by the way. He knew they were but too apt to be quarrelsome, and what had lately passed which revived the Remembrance of what they had done formerly against their Brother, might give them occasion to quarrel: Joseph had observed them to contest about it, chap. xlii. 22. To one they would say, 'twas you that first upbraided him with his Dreams, to another, 'twas you that said, let us kill him, to another, 'twas you that stript him of his fine Coat; to another, 'twas you that threw him into the Pit, &c. Now Joseph having forgiven them all, lays this Obligation upon them, not to upbraid one another. This Charge our Lord Jesus has given to us, that we love one another, that we live in Peace, that whatever occurs, or whatever former Occurrences are remembered, we fall not out. For, 1. We are Brethren, we have all one Father. 2. We are his Brethren, and we shame our Relation to him who is our Peace, if we fall out. 3. We are all Guilty, verily Guilty, and instead of quarrelling with one another, have a great deal of Reason to fall out with our selves, 4.

We are, or hope to be, forgiven of God, whom we have all offended, and therefore should be ready to forgive one another. 5. We are, by the Way, a Way that lies through the Land of Egypt, where we have many Eyes upon us, that seek Occasion and Advantage against us: A Way that leads to Canaan, where we hope to be for ever in perfect Peace.

25 And they went up out of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father, 26 And told him, saying, Joseph is yet alive, and he is governour over all the land of Egypt. And Jacobs heart fainted, for he believed them not. 27 And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them: and when he saw the waggons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived. 28 And Israel said, It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I dye.

We have here the good News brought to Jacob.

1. The Relation of it at first sunk his Spirits; when without any Preamble his Sons came in crying, Joseph is yet alive, each striving which should first proclaim it; perhaps he thought they bantered him, and the Affront grieved him; or, the very mention of Joseph's Name revived his Sorrows, so that his Heart fainted, v. 26. 'twas a good while before he came to himself. He was in such Care and Fear about the rest of them, that as this it would have been joy enough to him to hear that Simon was released, and Benjamin is come safe home; for he had been ready to despair concerning both these; but to hear that Joseph is alive is too good News to be true, he fainted, for he believed it not. Note, We faint because we do not believe; David himself had fainted if he had not believed, Ps. xxvii. 13.

2. The Confirmation of it by Degrees revived his Spirit; Jacob had easily believed his Sons formerly when they told him Joseph is dead, but he can hardly believe 'em now they tell him, Joseph is alive. Weak and tender Spirits are influenced more by Fear than Hope, and are more apt to receive Impressions that are discouraging than encouraging. But at length Jacob is convinced of the Truth of the Story, especially when he sees the Waggons which were sent to carry him, for seeing is believing, then his Spirit revived. Death is as the Waggons which are sent to fetch us to Christ, the very Sight of it approaching should revive us. Now Jacob is called Israel, v. 28. for he begins to recover his wonted Vigor. (1.) It pleases him to think that Joseph is alive. He saith nothing of Joseph's Glory, which they had told him of, 'twas enough to him that Joseph was alive. Note, Those that would be content with lesser Degrees of Comfort are best prepared for greater. (2.) It pleases him to think of going to see him. Tho' he was old, and the Journey long, yet he would go see Joseph, because Joseph's Business would not permit him to come to see him. Observe, he will go see him, not I will go live with him; Jacob was old, and did not expect to live long, but I will go see him before I dye, and then let me depart in Peace; let my Eyes be refreshed with this Sight before they are closed, and then it is enough, I need no more to make me happy in this World. Note, It is good for us all to make Death familiar to us, and to speak of it as near, that we may think how little we have to do before we dye, that we may do it with all our might, and may enjoy our Comforts as those that must quickly dye and leave 'em.

CHAP. LXVI.

Jacob is here removing to Egypt in his old Age, forced thither by a Famine, and invited thither by a Son. Here, 1. God sends him thither, v. 1-4. 2. All his Family goes with him thither, v. 5-27. 3. Joseph bids him welcome thither, v. 28-34.

1 AND Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beer-sheba, and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac. 2 And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob: And he said, Here am I. 3 And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation. 4 I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes.

The Divine Precept is, In all thy ways acknowledge God, and the Promise annexed to it is, He shall direct thy Paths. Jacob has here a very great Concern before him, not only a Journey, but a Remove, to settle in another Country: a change which was very surprizing to him, for he never had any other Thoughts but to live and die in Canaan, and which would be of great Consequence to his Family, for a long time to come. Now here we are told,

1. How he acknowledged God in this way. He came to Beer-sheba, from Hebron, where he now dwelt, and there he offered *Sacrifices to the God of his Father Isaac*, v. 1. He chose that Place in Remembrance of the Communion which his Father and Grandfather had with God in that Place. Abraham called on God there, Gen. xxi. 33. so did Isaac, Gen. xxvi. 35. and therefore Jacob made it the Place of his Devotion, the rather because it lay in his way. In his Devotion, (1.) He had an Eye to God, as the *God of his Father Isaac*, i. e. a God in Covenant with him, for by Isaac the Covenant was entail'd upon him. God had forbidden Isaac to go down to Egypt when there was a Famine in Canaan, Gen. xxvi. 2. which perhaps Jacob calls to mind, when he consults God as the *God of his Father Isaac*, with this Thought, Lord, tho' I am very desirous to see Joseph, yet if thou forbid me to go down to Egypt as thou didst my Father Isaac, I will submit, and very contentedly stay where I am. (2.) He offered *Sacrifices*, extraordinary Sacrifices, besides those at his stated times: These Sacrifices were offered, 1. By way of Thanksgiving for the late blessed Change of the Face of his Family for the good News he had received concerning Joseph, and the Hopes he had of seeing him. *Note*, We should give God thanks for the Beginnings of Mercy, tho' they are not yet perfected, and this is a decent Way of begging further Mercy. 2. By way of Petition for the Presence of God with him in his intended Journey: He desired by these Sacrifices to make his Peace with God, to obtain the Forgiveness of Sin, that he might take no Guilt along with him in this Journey, for that's an ill Companion. By Christ, the great Sacrifice, we must reconcile our selves to God, and offer up our Requests to him. 3. By way of Consultation: The Heathen consulted their Oracles by Sacrifice. Jacob would not go till he had asked God's leave; shall I go down to Egypt, or back to Hebron? Such must be our Enquiries in doubtful Cases, and tho' we cannot expect immediate Answers from Heaven, yet if we diligently attend to the Directions of the Word, Conscience and Providence, we shall find it is not in vain to ask Counsel of God.

2. How God did direct his Paths: *In the Visions of the Night* (probably the very next Night after he had offered his Sacrifices (as 2 Chron. i. 7.) *God spake unto him*, v. 2. *Note*, Those who desire to keep up Communion with God, shall find that it never fails on his Side. If we speak to him as we ought, he will not fail to speak to us. God called him by Name, by his old Name, Jacob, Jacob, to mind him of his low Estate; his present Fears did scarce become an Israel: Jacob, like one well acquainted with the Visions of the Almighty, and ready to obey them, answers, *Here am I*, ready to receive Orders: And what has God to say to him?

1. He renews the Covenant with him; *I am God, the God of thy Father*, v. 3. i. e. I am what thou ownest me to be: Thou shalt find me a God, a Divine Wisdom and Power engag'd for thee; and thou shalt find me the *God of thy Father*, true to the Covenant made with him.

2. He encourages him to make this Remove of his Family; *fear not to go down into Egypt*. It seems tho' Jacob upon the first Intelligence of Joseph's Life and Glory in Egypt, resolv'd without any Hesitation, *I will go and see him*, yet upon second Thoughts he saw some Difficulties in it, which he knew not well how to get over. *Note*, Even those Changes that seem to have in them the greatest Joys and Hopes, yet we have an Alloy of Cares and Fears, *nulla est sincera voluptas*; we must always rejoice with trembling. Jacob had many careful Thoughts about this Journey, which God took Notice of. 1. He was old, 130 years old; and it is mentioned as one of the Infirmities of old People, that they are afraid of that which is high, and Fears are in the way, Eccl. xii. 5. 'Twas a long Journey, and Jacob was unfit for Travel, and perhaps remembered that his Beloved Rachel died in a Journey. 2. He feared lest his Sons should be tainted with the Idolatry of Egypt, and forget the God of their Fathers, or enamoured with the Pleasures of Egypt, and forget the Land of Promise. 3. Probably he thought of what God had said to Abraham concerning the Bondage and Affliction of his Seed, Gen. xv. 13. and was apprehensive that his Remove to Egypt would issue in that. Present Satisfaction should not take us off from the Consideration and Prospect of future Inconveniences, which possibly may arise from that which now appears most promising. 4. He could not think of laying his Bones in Egypt. But, whatever his Discouragements were, this was enough to answer them all, *Fear not to go down into Egypt*.

3. He promises him Comfort in the Remove. (1.) That he should multiply in Egypt; *I will there*, where thou fearest that thy Family will sink and be lost, *make it a great Nation*. That's the Place infinite Wisdom has chosen for the Accomplishment of that Promise. (2.) That he should have God's Presence with him, *I will go down with thee into Egypt*. *Note*, Those that go where God sends them, shall certainly have God with them, and that's enough to secure 'em where-ever they are, and to silence their Fears; we may safely venture even into Egypt if God go down with us. 3. That neither he nor his should be lost in Egypt, *I will surely bring thee up again*: Tho' Jacob dy'd in Egypt, yet this Promise was fulfilled. (1.) In the bringing up of his Body to be buried in Canaan, about which it appears he was

very solicitous. (2.) In the bringing up of his Seed to be settled in Canaan. Whatever low or darksome Valley we are called into to at any time, we may be confident if God go down with us into it, he will surely bring us up again. If he go with us down to Death, he will surely bring us up again to Glory. 4. That living and dying his beloved Joseph should be a Comfort to him. *Joseph should put his Hand upon thine Eyes*. This is a Promise that Joseph should live as long as he lived, that he should be with him at his death, and close his Eyes with all possible Tenderness and Respect, as the dearest Relations used to do. Probably Jacob, in the Multitude of his Thoughts within him had been wishing that Joseph might do this last Office of Love for him; (*Ille meos oculos comprimat*) and God thus answered him in the Letter of his Desire. Thus God sometimes gratifies the innocent Wishes of his People, and makes not only their Death happy, but the very Circumstances of it agreeable.

5 And Jacob rose up from Beer-sheba: and the sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, and their little ones, and their wives, in the waggons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him. 6 And they took their cattle, and their goods which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt; Jacob, and all his seed with him: 7 His sons, and his sons sons with him, his daughters, and his sons daughters, and all his seed brought he with him into Egypt. 8 And these are the names of the children of Israel, which came into Egypt, Jacob and his sons: Reuben Jacob's first-born. 9 And the sons of Reuben: Hanoch, and Phallu, and Hezron, and Carmi. 10 And the sons of Simeon; Jemuel, and Jamin, and Ohad, and Jachin, and Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanitish woman. 11 And the sons of Levi; Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. 12 And the sons of Judah; Er, and Onan, and Shalah, and Pharez, and Zerah: but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan. And the Sons of Pharez, were Hezron and Hamul. 13 And the sons of Issachar; Tola, and Phuvah, and Job, and Shimron. 14 And the sons of Zebulun; Sered, and Elon, and Jahleel. 15 These be the sons of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob in Padan-aram, with his daughter Dinah: all the souls of his sons and his daughters, were thirty and three. 16 And the sons of Gad; Ziphion, and Haggai, Shuni, and Ezbon, Eri, and Arodi, and Areli. 17 And the sons of Asher; Jimnah, and Ishuah, and Isui, and Beriah, and Serah their sister: and the sons of Beriah; Heber, and Malchiel. 18 These are the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to Leah his daughter: and these she bare unto Jacob, even sixteen souls. 19 The sons of Rachel Jacobs wife; Joseph, and Benjamin. 20 And unto Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and Ephraim, which Asenath the daughter of Poti-pherah priest of On bare unto him. 21 And the sons of Benjamin were Belah, and Becher, and Ashbel, Gera, and Naaman, Ehi, and Rosh, Muppim, and Huppim, and Ard. 22 These are the sons of Rachel, which were born to Jacob: all the souls were fourteen. 23 And the sons of Dan; Hushim. 24 And the sons of Naphtali; Jahzeel, and Guni, and Jezer, and Shilem. 25 These are the sons of Bilhah, which Laban gave unto Rachel his daughter, and she bare these unto Jacob: all the souls were seven. 26 All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his loyns, besides Jacobs sons wives, all the souls were threescore and six; 27 And the sons of Joseph which were born him in Egypt, were two souls: all the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten.

Old Jacob is here sitting; little did he think of ever leaving Canaan: He expected, no doubt, to *die in his Nest*, and to leave his Seed in actual Possession of the Promised Land: But Providence orders it otherwise. *Note*, Those that think themselves well settled may yet be unsettled in a little time; even old People, who think of no other Remove but that to the Grave, which Jacob had much upon his Heart, (*chap. xxxvii. 35--xlii. 38.*) sometimes live to see great Changes in their Family. 'Tis good to be ready not only for the Grave, but for whatever may happen betwixt and the Grave.

Observe, 1. How Jacob was conveyed; not in a Chariot, tho' Chariots were then used, but in a Waggon, *v. 5.* Jacob had the Character of a plain Man, who did not affect any thing Stately or Magnificent: His Son rode in a Chariot, *chap. xli. 43.* but a Waggon would serve him.

2. The Removal of what he had with him. (1.) His Effects, *v. 6.* Cattle and Goods; these he took with him, that he might not wholly be beholden to Pharaoh for a Livelihood, and that it might not afterwards be said of them, that they came Beggars to Egypt. (2.) His Family, *all his Seed, v. 7.* 'Tis probable they continued to live together in common with their Father, and therefore when he went they all went; which perhaps they were the more willing to do, because tho' they had heard that the Land of Canaan was promised them, yet to this Day they had none of it in Possession: We have here a particular Account of the Names of Jacob's Family; his Sons Sons, most of which are afterwards mentioned, as Heads of Houses, in the several Tribes: See *Num. xxvi. 5, &c.* Bishop Patrick observes, that Issachar called his eldest Son *Tola*, which signifies a Worm, probably because when he was born he was a very little weak Child, a Worm, and no Man, not likely to live, and yet there sprang from him a very numerous Off-spring, *1 Chron. vii. 2.* *Note*, Living and Dying do not go by Probability. The whole Number that went down into Egypt were 66, *v. 16.* to which add Joseph and his two Sons, who were there before, and Jacob himself, the Head of the Family, and you have the Number of 70, *v. 27.* The Septuagint make them 75, and Stephen follows them, *Act. vii. 14.* The Reason of which we leave to the Conjecture of the Critics: But let us observe, 1. That Masters of Families ought to take Care of all under their Charge, and to provide for those of their own House Food convenient both for Body and Soul; when Jacob himself removed to a Land of Plenty he would not leave any of his Children behind him to starve, in a barren Land. 2. Tho' the Accomplishment of Promises is always sure, yet it is often slow. 'Twas now 215 years since God had promised Abraham to make of him a great Nation, *chap. xii. 2.* and yet that Branch of his Seed; on which the Promise was entailed, was as yet increased but to 70, of which this particular Account is kept, that the Power of God in multiplying these 70 to so vast a Multitude even in Egypt may be the more illustrious; when he pleases a little one shall become a thousand, *Isa. lx. 22.*

28 And he sent Judah before him unto Joseph, to direct his face unto Goshen; and they came into the land of Goshen. 29 And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goshen; and presented himself unto him: and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while. 30 And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive. 31 And Joseph said unto his brethren, and unto his fathers house, I will go up, and shew Pharaoh, and say unto him, My brethren, and my fathers house, which were in the land of Canaan, are come unto me: 32 And the men are shepherds, for their trade hath been to feed cattle; and they have brought their flocks and their herds, and all that they have. 33 And it shall come to pass when Pharaoh shall call you, and shall say, What is your occupation? 34 That ye shall say, Thy servants trade hath been about cattle, from our youth even until now, both we and also our fathers: that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians.

(1.) We have here the joyful Meeting between Jacob and his Son Joseph; in which observe, Jacob's Prudence in sending Judah before him to Joseph, to give him Notice of his Arrival in Goshen. This was a Piece of Respect owing to the Government, under the Protection of which these Strangers were come to put themselves, *v. 18.* We should be very careful not to give Offence to any, especially not to the higher Powers. 2. Joseph's filial Respect to him. He went in his Chariot to meet him, and in the Interview shewed, (1.) How much he honoured him. He pre-

sented himself unto him. *Note*, It is the Duty of Children to reverence their Parents, yea, tho' Providence as to outward Condition hath advanced them above their Parents. (2.) How much he loved him; Time did not wear out the Sense of his Obligations, but his Tears which he shed abundantly upon his Father's Neck for Joy to see him, were real Indications of the sincere and strong Affection he had for him. See how near Sorrow and Joy are to each other in this World, when Tears serve for the Expressions of both: In t'other World Weeping will be restrained to Sorrow only, in Heaven there is perfect Joy, but no Tears of Joy; all Tears, even those shall there be wiped away, because the Joys there are, as no Joys here are, without any Alloy. 'Twas observed when Joseph embraced Benjamin, that he wept upon his Neck, but when he embraced his Father, he wept upon his Neck a good while; his Brother Benjamin was dear, but his Father Jacob must be dearer. 3. Jacob's great Satisfaction in this Meeting, *v. 30.* Now let me die. Not but that it was further desirable to live with Joseph, and to see his Honour and Usefulness, but he had so much Pleasure and Satisfaction in this first Meeting, that he thought it too much to desire or expect any more in this World, where our Comforts must always be imperfect. Jacob wished to die now presently, and yet lived 17 Years longer, which as our Lives go now is a considerable Part of a Man's Age. *Note*, Death will not always come just when we call for it, whether in a Passion of Sorrow, or in a Passion of Joy. Our Times are in God's Hand, and not in our own; we must die just when God pleases, and not either just when we are surfeited with the Pleasures of Life, or just when we are overwhelmed with its Griefs.

(2.) We have here Joseph's prudent Care concerning his Brethren's Settlement. 'Twas Justice to Pharaoh to let him know that such a Colony was come to settle in his Dominions: *Note*, If others repose a Confidence in us, we must not be so base and disingenuous as to abuse it by imposing upon them. If Jacob and his Family should come to be a Charge to the Egyptians, yet it shall never be said that they came among them clandestinely and by stealth. Thus Joseph took Care to pay his Respects to Pharaoh, *v. 31.* But how shall he dispose of his Brethren? Time was when they were contriving to be rid of him, now he is contriving to settle them to their Satisfaction and Advantage; this is rendring Good for Evil. Now, 1. He would have them to live by themselves, separate as much as might be from the Egyptians in the Land of Goshen, which lay nearest to Canaan, and which perhaps was more thinly peopled by the Egyptians, and well furnished with Pastures for Cattle. He desired they might live separately, that they might be in the less Danger both of being infected by the Vices of the Egyptians, and of being insulted by the Malice of the Egyptians. Shepherds it seems were an Abomination to the Egyptians, i.e. they looked upon them with Contempt, and scorn'd to converse with them, and he would not send for his Brethren to Egypt to be trampled upon. And yet, 2. He would have them to continue Shepherds, and not be ashamed to own that as their Occupation before Pharaoh. He could have employed them under himself in the Corn Trade, or perhaps by his Interest in the King might have procured Places for them at Court or in the Army, and some of them at least were deserving enough; but such Preferments would have exposed them to the Envy of the Egyptians, and would have tempted them to forget Canaan, and the Promise made unto their Fathers, therefore he contrives to continue them in their old Employment. *Note*, 1. An Honest Calling is no Disparagement, nor ought we to account it so either in our selves, or in our Relations, but rather reckon it a Shame to be Idle, or to have nothing to do. 2. It is generally best for People to abide in the Callings that they have been bred to, and us'd to, *1 Cor. vii. 24.* What Employment and Condition God in his Providence hath allotted for us, let us accommodate our selves to it, and satisfy our selves with it, and not mind high things. 'Tis better be the Credit of a mean Post, than the Shame of a high One.

C H A P. XLVII.

In this Chapter we have Instances, 1. Of Joseph's Kindness and Affection to his Relations, presenting his Brethren first, and then his Father, to Pharaoh, *v. 1--10.* settling them in Goshen, and providing for them there, *v. 11--12.* paying his Respects to his Father when he sent for him, *v. 27--31.* 2. Of Joseph's Justice between Prince and People in a very critical Affair; selling Pharaoh's Corn to his Subjects with reasonable Profit to Pharaoh, and yet without any Wrong to them, *v. 13--26.* Thus he approved himself Wise and Good, both in his private and in his public Capacity.

Then Joseph came and told Pharaoh, and said, My father and my brethren, and their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have, are come out of the land of Canaan; and behold, they are in the land of Goshen. 2 And he took some of his brethren, even five men, and presented them un-

to Pharaoh. 3 And Pharaoh said unto his brethren, What is your occupation? And they said unto Pharaoh, Thy servants are shepherds, both we and also our fathers. 4 They said moreover unto Pharaoh, For to sojourn in the land we are come: for thy servants have no pasture for their flocks, for the famine is sore in the land of Canaan: now therefore we pray thee, let thy servants dwell in the land of Goshen. 5 And Pharaoh spake unto Joseph, saying, Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee: 6 The land of Egypt is before thee; in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell, in the land of Goshen let them dwell: and if thou knowest any man of activity amongst them, then make them rulers over my cattle. 7 And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh: and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. 8 And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How old art thou? 9 And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years; few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage. 10 And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh. 11 And Joseph placed his father and his brethren, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded. 12 And Joseph nourished his father and his brethren, and all his fathers household with bread, according to their families.

Here's, 1. The Respect Joseph as a Subject shewed to his Prince. Tho' he was his Favourite, and prime Minister of State, and had particular Orders from him to send for his Father down to Egypt, yet he would not suffer him to settle till he had given Notice of it to Pharaoh, v. 1. Christ our Joseph disposeth of his Followers in his Kingdom as it is prepared of his Father, saying, *It is not mine to give*, Mat. xx. 23.

2. The Respect Joseph as a Brother shewed to his Brethren, notwithstanding all the Unkindnesses he had formerly received from them. 1. Tho' he was a great Man, and they were comparatively mean and despicable, especially in Egypt, yet he owned them. Let those that are rich and great in the World, learn hence not to overlook or despise their Poor Relations. Every Branch of the Tree is not a Top-branch, but because it is a lower Branch is it therefore not of the Tree? Our Lord Jesus, like Joseph here, is not ashamed to call us Brethren. 2. They being Strangers and no Courtiers, he introduced some of them to Pharaoh, to kiss his Hand, as we say, intending thereby to put an Honour upon them among the Egyptians. Thus Christ presents his Brethren in the Court of Heaven, and improves his Interest for them, tho' in themselves unworthy and an Abomination to the Egyptians. Being presented by Pharaoh, according to the Instructions which Joseph had given 'em, they tell him,

(1.) What was their Business. That they were Shepherds, v. 3. Pharaoh asked them (and Joseph knew it would be one of his first Questions, Chap. xvi. 33.) *What is your Occupation?* He takes it for granted they had something to do, else Egypt should be no place for them, no Harbour for idle Vagrants: If they would not Work they should not eat of his Bread in this Time of Scarcity. Note, 1. All that have a place in the World should have an Employment in it according to their Capacity, some Occupation or other, Mental or Manual. Those that need not work for their Bread, yet must have something to do to keep them from Idleness. 2. Magistrates should enquire into the Occupation of their Subjects, as those that have the Care of the publick Welfare, for idle People are as Drones in the Hive, unprofitable Burthens of the Commonwealth.

(2.) What was their Business in Egypt: to sojourn in the Land, v. 4. not to settle there for ever, only to sojourn there for a time, while the Famine prevailed so in Canaan, which lay high; that it was not habitable for Shepherds, the Grass being burnt up much more than in Egypt, which lay low, and where the Corn chiefly failed, but there was tolerable good Pasture. 3. He obtained for them a Grant of Settlement in the Land of Goshen, v. 5. 6. This was an Instance of Pharaoh's Gratitude to Joseph: Because he had been such a Blessing to him and his Kingdom, he would be kind to his Relations purely for his sake. He offered them Preferment as Shepherds, over his Cattle, provided they were Men

of Activity, for 'tis the Man who is diligent in his Business that shall stand before Kings. And whatever our Profession or Employment is, we should aim to be excellent in it, and to approve our selves ingenious and industrious.

3. The Respect Joseph as a Son shewed to his Father.

1. He presented him to Pharaoh, v. 7. And here, (1.) Pharaoh asks Jacob a common Question, *How old art thou?* v. 8. a Question usually put to old Men, for it is natural to us to admire old Age, and to reverence it, Lev. xix. 32. as it is very unnatural and unbecoming to despise it, Isa. iiii. 5. Jacob's Countenance no doubt shewed him to be very old, for he had been a Man of Labour and Sorrow: In Egypt People were not so long-lived as in Canaan, and therefore Pharaoh looks upon Jacob with wonder; He was as a Shew in his Court. When we are reflecting upon our selves this should come into the Account, *How old we are?* (2.) Jacob gives Pharaoh an uncommon Answer, v. 9. Where he speaks as became a Patriarch, with an Air of Seriousness, for the Instruction of Pharaoh. Tho' our Speech be not always of Grace, yet it must thus be always with Grace. Observe here, 1. He calls his Life a Pilgrimage, looking upon himself as a Stranger in this World, and a Traveller towards another World: This Earth his Inn, not his Home. To this the Apostle refers, Heb. xii. 13. *they confessed that they were Strangers and Pilgrims*. He reckoned himself not only a Pilgrim now he was in Egypt, a strange Country in which he never was before, but his Life even in the Land of his Nativity was a Pilgrimage, and those who so reckon it can the better bear the Inconveniences of Banishment from their Native Soil; They are but Pilgrims still, and so they were always. 2. He reckons his Life by Days; for even so it is soon reckoned, and we are not sure of the Continuance of it for a Day to an end, but may be turned out of this Tabernacle at less than an Hour's warning. Let us therefore number our Days, Ps. xc. 12. and measure them, Ps. xxxix. 4. 3. The Character he gives of them was, (1.) That they were few. Tho' he had now lived 130 Years, they seemed to him but as a few Days, in Comparison with the Days of Eternity, the Eternal God, and the Eternal State, in which a Thousand Tears (longer than ever any Man lived) are but as one Day. (2.) That they were Evil; This is true concerning Man in general, Job xiv. 1. *he is of few days, and full of Trouble*, and being Evil 'tis well they are few; Jacob's Life particularly had been made up of evil Days; The pleasantest Days of his Life were yet before him. (3.) That they were short of the Days of his Fathers: not so many, not so pleasant as their Days. Old Age came sooner upon him than it had done upon some of his Ancestors. Let not the old Man be proud of his Age, and the Crown of his Hoary Hairs, tho' others justly reverence it, no more than the young Man of his Strength or Beauty, for those who are accounted very old attain not to the Years of the Patriarchs. The Hoary Head is then only a Crown of Glory, when it is found in the Way of Righteousness. (4.) Jacob both addresseth himself to Pharaoh, and takes leave of him with a Blessing, v. 7. Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and again, v. 10. Which was not only an Act of Civility, he payed him Respect, and returned him Thanks for his Kindness; But an Act of Piety, he prayed for him, as one having the Authority of a Prophet and a Patriarch. Tho' in worldly Wealth Pharaoh was the greater, yet in Interest with God, Jacob was the greater; He was God's Anointed, Ps. cv. 13. And a Patriarch's Blessing was not a thing to be despised, no not by a potent Prince. Darius valued the Prayers of the Church for himself and for his Sons, Ezr. vi. 10. Pharaoh kindly received Jacob, and whether in the Name of a Prophet or no, thus he had a Prophet's Reward, which sufficiently recompensed him not only for his courteous Converse with him, but for all the other Kindnesses he shewed to him and his.

2. He provided well for him and his; placed him in Goshen, v. 11. nourished him and all his with Food convenient for them, v. 12. This speaks not only Joseph a Good Man, who took this tender Care of his poor Relations, but God a Good God, who raised him up for this Purpose, and put him into a Capacity of doing it, as Esther came to the Kingdom for such a Time as this. What God here did for Jacob, he has in Effect promised to do for all his, that serve him and trust in him, Ps. xxxvii. 19. *in the days of Famine they shall be satisfied*.

13 And there was no bread in all the land: for the famine was very sore, so that the land of Egypt, and all the land of Canaan fainted by reason of the famine. 14 And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, for the corn which they bought: And Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house. 15 And when money failed in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came unto Joseph, and said, Give us bread: for why should we die in thy presence? for the

the money faileth. 16 And Joseph said, Give your cattle; and I will give you for your cattle, if money fail. 17 And they brought their cattle unto Joseph: and Joseph gave them bread in exchange for horses, and for the flocks, and for the cattle of the herds, and for the asses; and he fed them with bread, for all their cattle, for that year. 18 When that year was ended, they came unto him the second year, and said unto him, We will not hide it from my lord, how that our money is spent, my lord also hath our herds of cattle; there is not ought left in the sight of my lord, but our bodies, and our lands. 19 Wherefore shall we die before thine eyes, both we and our land? buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants unto Pharaoh: and give us seed, that we may live and not die, that the land be not desolate. 20 And Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for the Egyptians sold every man his field, because the famine prevailed over them: so the land became Pharaohs. 21 And as for the people, he removed them to cities from one end of the borders of Egypt, even to the other end thereof. 22 Only the land of the priests bought he not: for the priests had a portion assigned them of Pharaoh, and did eat their portion which Pharaoh gave them; wherefore they sold not their lands. 23 Then Joseph said unto the people, Behold, I have bought you this day, and your land for Pharaoh: lo, here is seed for you, and ye shall sow the land. 24 And it shall come to pass in the increase, that you shall give the fifth part unto Pharaoh, and four parts shall be your own, for seed of the field, and for your food, and for them of your households, and for food for your little ones. 25 And they said, Thou hast saved our lives: let us find grace in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaohs servants. 26 And Joseph made it a law over the land of Egypt unto this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth part; except the land of the priests only, which became not Pharaohs.

Care being taken of Jacob and his Family, the Preservation of which was especially designed by Providence in Joseph's Advancement, now an Account is given of the saving of the Kingdom of Egypt too from Ruine, for God is King of Nations, as well as King of Saints, and provideth Food for all Flesh. Joseph now returns to the Management of that great Trust which Pharaoh had lodged in his Hand. It would have been pleasing enough to him to have gone and lived with his Father and Brethren in Goshen, but his Employment would not permit it. When he had seen his Father, and seen him well settled, he applied himself as closely as ever to the Execution of his Office. Note, Even natural Affection must give way to necessary Business. Parents and Children must be content to be absent one from another, when it is necessary on either Side for the Service of God, or the Generation. In Joseph's Transactions with the Egyptians, observe, 1. The Great Extremity that Egypt, and the Parts adjacent were reduced to by the Famine. There was no bread, and they faint, v. 13. they were ready to die, v. 15, 19. (1.) See here what a Dependence we have upon God's Providence; if that suspend it's usual Favours but for a while, we die, we perish, we all perish. All our Wealth would not keep us from starving, if the Rain of Heaven were but withheld for two or three Years. See how much we lye at God's Mercy, and let us keep our selves always in his Love. (2.) See how much we smart by our own Improvidence. If all the Egyptians had done for themselves in the seven Years of Plenty, as Joseph did for Pharaoh, they had not been now in these Straits, but they regarded not the Warning they had of the Years of Famine, concluding that to morrow shall be as this day, next Year as this, and much more abundant. Note, Because Man knows not his Time, his Time of gathering when he has it, therefore his Misery is great upon him when the spending Time comes, Eccl. viii. 6, 7. (3.) See how early God put a Difference between the Egyptians and the Israelites, as afterwards in the Plagues, Exod. viii. 22-29. 4. 26-10. 22. Jacob and his Family, tho' Strangers, were plentifully fed on Free-coft, while the

Egyptians were dying for want. See Isa. lxxv. 13. My Servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry. Happy art thou, O Israel. Who ever want, God's Children shall not, Ps. xxxiv. 10. 2. The Price they were come up to, for their Supply, in this Exigence. 1. They parted with all their Money, which they had hoarded up, v. 14. Silver and Gold would not feed them, they must have Corn. All the Money of the Kingdom was by this Means brought into the Exchequer. 2. When the Money failed they parted with all their Cattle, those for Labour, as the Horses and Asses; And those for Food, as the Flocks and the Herds, v. 17. By this it should seem, That we may better live upon Bread without Flesh, than upon Flesh without Bread. We may suppose they parted the more easily with their Cattle, because they had little or no Grass for them; and now Pharaoh saw in Reality what he had before seen in Vision, nothing but lean Kine. 3. When they had sold their Stocks off their Land, 'twas easy to persuade themselves (rather than starve) to sell their Land too, for what Good will that do them, when they had neither Corn to sow it, nor Cattle to eat it, that therefore was their next Bargain for Corn. 4. When their Land was sold, so that they had nothing to live on, they must of Course sell themselves, that they might live purely upon their Labour, and hold their Lands by the base Tenure of Villainage, at the Courtsey of the Crown. Note, Skin for Skin, and all that a Man hath, even Liberty and Property (those darling Twins) will be give for his Life, for that's Sweet. There are few (tho' perhaps there are some) who would even dare to dye rather than live in Slavery, and Dependence on an Arbitrary Power. And perhaps there are those who in that Case could die by the Sword, in a Heat, that yet could not deliberately die by Famine, which is much worse, Lam. iv. 9. Now, it was a great Mercy to the Egyptians that in this Distress they could have Corn at any Rate; If they had all died for Hunger their Lands perhaps would have escheated to the Crown of Course, for Want of Heirs, they therefore resolved to make the best of bad. 3. The Method which Joseph took to accommodate the Matter between Prince and People, so that the Prince might have his just Advantage, and yet the People not be quite ruined. 1. For their Lands, he needed not come to any Bargain with them while the Years of Famine lasted, but when these were over (for God will not contend for ever, nor will he be always Wrath) he came to an Agreement which it seems both sides were pleased with, That the People should occupy and enjoy the Lands as he thought fit to assign them, and should have Seed to sow them with, out of the King's Stores to their own proper Use and Behoof, yielding and paying only a fifth Part of the yearly Profits as a Chief Rent to the Crown. This became a standing Law, v. 26. And it was a very good Bargain to have Food for their Lands, when otherwise they and theirs must have starved, and then to have their Lands again upon such easy Terms. Note, Those Ministers of State are worthy of double Honour both for Wisdom and Integrity, that keep the Ballance even between Prince and People, so that Liberty and Property may not intrench upon Prerogative, nor the Prerogative bear hard upon Liberty and Property: In the Multitude of such Counsellors there is Safety. If afterwards the Egyptians thought it hard to pay so great a Duty to the King out of their Lands, they must remember not only how just but how kind the first imposing of it was. They might thankfully pay a fifth where all was due. 'Tis observable how faithful Joseph was to him that appointed him: He did not put the Money into his own Pocket, nor entail the Lands upon his own Family, but converted both entirely to Pharaoh's Use: And therefore we do not find that his Posterity went out of Egypt any richer than the rest of their poor Brethren. Those in publick Trusts, if they raise great Estates must take heed that it be not at the Expence of a good Conscience, which is much more valuable.

2. For their Persons, he removed them to Cities. v. 21. He transplanted them to shew Pharaoh's Sovereign Power over them, and that they might in Time forget their Titles to their Lands, and be the easier reconciled to their new Condition of Servitude. The Jewish Writers say, he removed them thus from their former Habitations, because they reproach'd his Brethren as Strangers, to silence which Reproach they were all made in Effect Strangers. See what Changes a little Time may make with a People; and how soon God can empty those from Vessel to Vessel who were settled upon their Lees. How hard soever this seems to have been upon them, they themselves were at this time sensible of it as a very great Kindness, and were thankful they were not worse used, v. 25. Thou hast saved our Lives. Note, There's good Reason that the Saviour of our Lives should be the Master of our Lives. Thou hast saved us, do what thou wilt with us. 4. The Reservation he made in Favour of the Priests. They were maintained on Free-coft, so that they needed not to sell their Lands, v. 22. All People will thus walk in the Name of their God, they will be kind to those that attend the publick Service of their God, and that minister to them in Holy things, and we should in like Manner honour our God, by esteeming his Ministers highly in Love for their Work's sake.

27 And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions there-in,

in, and grew, and multiplied exceedingly. 28 And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years: so the whole age of Jacob was an hundred forty and seven years. 29 And the time drew nigh that Israel must die: and he called his son Joseph, and said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me; bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt. 30 But I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their burying-place. And he said, I will do as thou hast said. 31 And he said, Swear unto me: And he swear unto him. And Israel bowed himself upon the beds head.

Observe, 1. The Comfort Jacob lived in, v. 27, 28. While the Egyptians were impoverished in their own Land, Jacob was replenished in a strange Land. He lived seventeen Years after he came into Egypt, far beyond his own Expectation, seventeen Years he had nourished Joseph, for so old he was when he was sold from him (Chap. xxxvii. 1.) and now by way of Requital, seventeen Years Joseph nourished him. Observe how kindly Providence ordered Jacob's Affairs; That when he was old and least able to bear Care and Fatigue, he had least Occasion for it, being well provided for by his Son without his own Fore-cast. Thus God considers the Frame of his People.

2. The Care Jacob died in. At last, v. 29. *the time drew nigh that Israel must die.* Israel a Prince with God, that had Power over the Angel, and prevailed, yet must yield to Death. There's no Remedy, he must die; It is appointed for all Men, therefore for him; and there is no Discharge in that War. Joseph supplied him with Bread that he might not die by Famine, but that did not secure him from dying by Age or Sickness. He died by Degrees; his Candle was not blown out, but gradually burnt down to the Socket, so that he saw at some distance the time drawing nigh. Note, It is an improveable Advantage to see the Approach of Death, before we feel its Arrests, that we may be quickened to do what our Hands find to do with all our might: However, it is not far from any of us. Now Jacob's Care, as he saw the Day approaching, was about his Burial, not the Pomp of it, he was no Way solicitous about that, but the Place of it.

1. He would be buried in Canaan, not in a Humour, because Canaan was the Land of his Nativity, but in Faith, because it was the Land of Promise, which he desired thus as it were to keep Possession of till the time should come when his Posterity should be Masters of it. And because it was a Type of Heaven, that better Country which he that said these Things declared plainly that he was in Expectation of, Heb. xi. 14. He aimed at a Good Land, which would be his Rest and Bliss on the other side Death.

2. He would have Joseph sworn to bring him thither to be buried, v. 29, 31. That Joseph being under such a solemn Obligation to do it, might have that to answer to the Objections which otherwise might have been made against it; And for the greater Satisfaction of Jacob now in his dying Minutes. Nothing will better help to make a Death-bed easy, than the certain Prospect of a Rest in Canaan after Death.

3. When this was done, Israel bowed himself upon the Beds-head, yielding himself as it were to the stroke of Death, now let it come, and it shall be welcome, or worshipping God, as it is explained, Heb. xi. 21. giving God thanks for all his Favours, and particularly for this. That Joseph was ready not only to put his Hand upon his Eyes to close them, but under his Thigh to give him the Satisfaction he desired concerning his Burial. Thus they that go down to the Dust should with humble thankfulness bow before God, the God of their Mercies, Ps. xxii. 29.

C H A P. XLVIII.

The time drawing nigh that Israel must die, having in the former Chapter given order about his Burial, in this he takes leave of his Grand-children by Joseph, and in the next of all his Children. Thus Jacob's dying Words are recorded, because he then speaks by a Spirit of Prophecy; Abraham's and Isaac's are not. God's Gifts and Graces shine forth much more in some Saints than in others upon their Death-beds. The Spirit like the Wind blows where it listeth. In this Chapter, 1. Joseph hearing of his Father's Sickness, goes to visit him, and takes his two Sons with him, v. 1, 2. 2. Jacob solemnly adopts his two Sons, and takes them for his own, v. 3--7. 3. He blest them, v. 8--16. 4. He explains and justifies the crossing of his Hands in blessing them, v. 17--20. 5. He leaves a particular Legacy to Joseph, v. 21, 22.

1 AND it came to pass after these things, that one told Joseph, Behold, thy father is sick: and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and

Ephraim. 2 And one told Jacob, and said, Behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee: and Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed. 3 And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the Land of Canaan, and blessed me, 4 And said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people, and will give this land to thy seed after thee, for an everlasting possession. 5 And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt, before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine: as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine. 6 And thy issue which thou begetteth after thee, shall be thine, and shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance. 7 And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan, in the way, when yet there was but a little way to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath, the same is Beth-lehem.

Here, 1. Joseph upon Notice of his Father's Illness goes to see him; Tho' a Man of Honour and Business, yet he will not fail to shew this due Respect to his aged Father, v. 1. Visiting the Sick to whom we lie under Obligations, or may have Opportunity of doing Good, either for Body or Soul, is our Duty. The sick Bed is a proper Place both for giving Comfort and Counsel to others, and receiving Instruction our selves. Joseph took his two Sons with him that they might receive their dying Grandfather's Blessing, and that what they might see in him, and hear from him, might make an abiding Impression upon them. Note, (1.) It is good to acquaint young People that are coming into the World with the aged Servants of God that are going out of it, whose dying Testimony to the Goodness of God, and the Pleasantness of Wisdom's Ways, may be a great Encouragement to the rising Generation. Manasseh and Ephraim (I dare say) would never forget what passed at this Time. (2.) Pious Parents are desirous of a Blessing not only for themselves but for their Children. O that they may live before God! Joseph had been above all his Brethren kind to his Father, and therefore had Reason to expect particular Favour from him.

2. Jacob upon Notice of his Son's Visit prepared himself as well as he could to entertain him, v. 2. He did what he could to rouse his Spirits, and to stir up the Gift that was in him; what little was left of Bodily Strength he put it forth to the utmost, and sat upon the Bed. Note, It is very good for sick and aged People to be as lively and cheerful as they can, that they may not faint in the Day of Adversity. Strengthen thy self, as Jacob here, and God will strengthen thee; Hearten thy self, and help thy self, and God will help and hearten thee. Let the Spirit sustain the Infirmary.

3. In Recompence to Joseph for all his Respects to him he adopted his two Sons. In this Charter of Adoption there's, 1. A particular Recital of God's Promise to him, to which this had Reference: God blessed me, v. 3. and let that Blessing be entailed upon them. God had promised him two Things, a numerous Issue, and Canaan for an Inheritance, v. 4. and Joseph's Sons, pursuant hereunto should each of them multiply into a Tribe, and each of them have a distinct Lot in Canaan, equal with Jacob's own Sons. See how he blessed them by Faith in that which God had said to him, Heb. xi. 21. Note, In all our Prayers both for our selves and for our Children, we ought to have a particular Eye to, and Remembrance of God's Promises to us.

2. An express Reception of Joseph's Sons into his Family, Thy two Sons are mine, v. 5. not only my Grand-children, but as my own Children. Tho' they were born in Egypt, and their Father then separated from his Brethren, which might seem to have cut them off from the Heritage of the Lord, yet Jacob takes them in and owns them for visible Church-Members. He explains it v. 16. Let my Name be named upon them, and the Name of my Father, q. d. Let them not succeed their Father, in his Power and Grandeur here in Egypt, but let them succeed me in the Inheritance of the Promise made to Abraham, which Jacob looked upon as much more valuable and honourable, and would have them to prize and covet it accordingly. Thus the aged dying Patriarch teaches these young Gentlemen now they were come to Age (being about Twenty-one Years Old) not to look upon Egypt as their Home, nor to incorporate themselves with the Egyptians, but to take their Lot with the People of God, as Moses after in the like Temptation, Heb. xi. 24, 25, 26. And because it would be a Piece of Self-denial in them who stood so fair for Preferment in Egypt, to adhere to the despised Hebrews to encourage them, he constitutes each of them the Head of a Tribe.

Tribe. *Note.* Those are worthy of double Honour, who thro' God's Grace break through the Temptations of worldly Wealth and Preferment to embrace Religion in Disgrace and Poverty. *Jacob* will have *Ephraim* and *Manasseh* to believe, that 'tis better be low, and in the Church, than high, and out of it; to be called by the Name of poor *Jacob*, better than to be called by the Name of Rich *Joseph*.

3. A *Proviso* inserted concerning his Children he might afterwards have, that they should not be accounted Heads of Tribes, as *Ephraim* and *Manasseh* were, but should fall in with either the one or the other of their Brethren, v. 6. It doth not appear that *Joseph* had any more Children, however it was *Jacob's* Prudence to give this Direction, for the preventing of Contest and Mismanagement. *Note.* In making Settlements it's good to take Advice, and to provide for what may happen, while we cannot foresee what will happen. Our Prudence must attend God's Providence.

4. Mention is made of the Death and Burial of *Rachel*, *Joseph's* Mother, and *Jacob's* best beloved Wife, v. 7. referring to that Story, *Gen.* xxxv. 19. *Note.* (1.) When we come to dye our selves, it's good to call to mind the Death of our dear Relations and Friends, that are gone before us, to make Death and the Grave the more familiar to us. See *Num.* xxvii. 13. Those that were to us as our own Souls, are dead and buried, and shall we think much to follow them in the same Path? (2.) The Removal of dear Relations from us is an Affliction, the Remembrance of which cannot but abide with us a great while. Strong Affections in the Enjoyment cause long Afflictions in the Loss.

8 And *Israel* beheld *Joseph's* sons, and said, Who are these? 9 And *Joseph* said unto his father, They are my sons, whom God hath given me in this place: And he said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them. 10 (Now the eyes of *Israel* were dim for age, so that he could not see:) And he brought them near unto him; and he kissed them, and embraced them. 11 And *Israel* said unto *Joseph*, I had not thought to see thy face: and lo, God hath shewed me also thy seed. 12 And *Joseph* brought them out from between his knees, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth. 13 And *Joseph* took them both, *Ephraim* in his right hand towards *Israel's* left hand, and *Manasseh* in his left hand towards *Israel's* right hand, and brought them near unto him. 14 And *Israel* stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon *Ephraim's* head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon *Manasseh's* head: guiding his hands wittingly; for *Manasseh* was the first-born. 15 And he blessed *Joseph*, and said, God, before whom my fathers *Abraham* and *Isaac* did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, 16 The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers *Abraham* and *Isaac*: and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth. 17 And when *Joseph* saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of *Ephraim*, it displeased him: and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from *Ephraim's* head unto *Manasseh's* head. 18 And *Joseph* said unto his father, Not so, my father: for this is the first-born; put thy right hand upon his head. 19 And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it; he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations. 20 And he blessed them that day, saying, In thee shall *Israel* bless, saying, God make thee as *Ephraim*, and as *Manasseh*: and he set *Ephraim* before *Manasseh*. 21 And *Israel* said unto *Joseph*, Behold, I die; but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers. 22 Moreover, I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow.

Here's, 1. The Blessing wherewith *Jacob* blessed the two Sons of *Joseph*, which is the more remarkable, because the Apostle makes such particular Mention of it, *Heb.* xi. 21. when he saith nothing of *Jacob's* Blessing which he pronounced on the rest of his Sons, tho' that also was done in Faith.

Observe here, (1.) That *Jacob* was blind for Age, v. 10. 'Tis one of the common Infirmities of Old Age, They that look out at the Windows are darkned, *Eccl.* xii. 3. 'Tis Folly to walk in the Sight of our Eyes, and to suffer our Hearts to go after them, while we know Death will shortly close them, and we do not know but some Accident between and Death may darken them. *Jacob* like his Father before him when he was old was Dim-sighted. *Note.* 1. Those that have the Honour of Age, must therewith be content to take the Burthen of it. 2. The Eye of Faith may be very clear, even then when the Eye of the Body is very much clouded.

(2.) That *Jacob* was very fond of *Joseph's* Sons. He kissed them and embraced them, v. 10. 'Tis common for old People to have a very particular Affection for their Grand-children, perhaps more than they had for their own when they were little; which *Solomon* gives a Reason for, *Pr.* xvii. 6. Children's Children are the Crown of old Men; with what a Satisfaction doth *Jacob* lay it here, v. 11. I had not thought to see thy Face, having many Years given him up for lost, and lo, God hath shewed me also thy Seed. See here, 1. How these two good Men owned God in their Comforts. *Joseph* saith, v. 9. They are my Sons whom God has given me, and to magnify the Favour he adds, in this place of my Banishment, Slavery, and Imprisonment. *Jacob* saith here, God has shewed me thy Seed. Our Comforts are then doubly sweet to us when we see them coming from God's hand. 2. How often God in his merciful Providences Out-does our Expectations, which greatly magnifies his Favours. He not only prevents our Fears, but exceeds our Hopes. We may apply this to the Promise which is made to us and to our Children: We could not have thought that we should have been taken into Covenant with God our selves, considering how guilty and corrupt we are, and yet lo he has shewed us our Seed also in Covenant with him.

(3.) That before he entails his Blessing, he recounts his Experiences of God's Goodness to him. He had spoken, v. 3. of God's appearing to him. The particular Visits of his Grace, and the special Communion we have sometimes had with him ought never to be forgotten: But, v. 15, 16. He mentions the constant Care which the Divine Providence had taken of him all his Days. (1.) He had fed him all his Life long unto this day, v. 15. *Note.* As long as we have lived in this World we have had continual Experience of God's Goodness to us in providing for the Support of our natural Life. Our Bodies have called for daily Food, and no little has gone to feed us, yet we have never wanted Food commensurate. He that hath fed us all our Life long, surely will not fail us at last. (2.) He had by his Angel redeemed him from all Evil, v. 16. A great deal of Hardship he had known in his Time, but God had graciously kept him from the Evil of his Troubles. Now he was dying he looked upon himself as redeemed from all Evil, and bidding an everlasting Farewell to Sin and Sorrow. Christ the Angel of the Covenant is he that redeems us from all Evil, 2 *Tim.* iv. 18. *Note.* 1. It becomes the Servants of God when they are old and dying, to witness for our God that they have found him gracious. 2. Our Experiences of God's Goodness to us are improveable both for the Encouragement of others to serve God, and for Encouragement to us in blessing them, and praying for them.

(4.) That when he confers the Blessing and Name of *Abraham* and *Isaac* upon them, He recommends the Pattern and Example of *Abraham* and *Isaac* to them, v. 15. He calls God, the God before whom my Fathers *Abraham* and *Isaac* walked, i. e. in whom they believed, whom they observed, and obeyed, and with whom they kept up Communion in instituted Ordinances, according to the Condition of the Covenant, Walk before me, *Gen.* xvii. 1. *Note.* (1.) Those that would inherit the Blessing of their Godly Ancestors, and have the Benefit of God's Covenant with them, must tread in the Steps of their Piety. (2.) It should recommend Religion and the Service of God to us, that God was the God of our Fathers, and they had Satisfaction in walking before him.

(5.) That in blessing them he crossed hands. *Joseph* placed them so as that *Jacob's* Right Hand should be put on the Head of *Manasseh* the eldest, v. 12, 13. But *Jacob* would put it on the Head of *Ephraim* the youngest, v. 14. This displeased *Joseph*, who was willing to support the Reputation of his First-born, and would therefore have removed his Father's Hands, v. 17, 18. But *Jacob* gave him to understand that he knew what he did, and that he did it neither by Mistake, nor in a Humour, nor from a partial Affection to one more than the other, but from a Spirit of Prophecy, and in Compliance with the Divine Counsels. *Manasseh* should be great, but truly *Ephraim* should be greater. When the Tribes were mustered in the Wilderness, *Ephraim* was more numerous than *Manasseh*, and had the Standard of that Squadron. *Num.* i. 32, 33, 35—ii. 18, 20. and is named first, *Pf.* lxxx. 2. *Joshua* was of that Tribe, so was *Jeroboam*. The Tribe of *Manasseh* was divided, one half on one Side *Jordan*, t'other half on t'other Side, which made it the less powerful and considerable. In the Fore-sight of this *Jacob* crossed Hands. *Note.* 1. God

God in bestowing his Blessings upon his People, gives more to some than to others, more Gifts, Graces, and Comforts, and more of the good Things of this Life. 2. He often gives most to those that are least likely. He *chuseth the weak things of the World*; raiseth the Poor out of the Dust. Grace observes not the Order of Nature, nor doth God prefer those whom we think fittest to be preferred, but as it *pleaseth him*. 'Tis observable how oft God by the distinguishing Favours of his Covenant advanced the younger above the Elder; Abel above Cain; Shem above Japheth; Abraham above Nabor and Haran; Isaac above Ishmael; Jacob above Esau; Judah and Joseph were preferred before Reuben; Moses before Aaron; David before his Elder Brethren, and Solomon after him. See 1 Sam. xvi. 7. He tied the Jews to observe the Birth-right, *Deut. xxi. 17.* but he never tyed himself to observe it. Some make this Typical of the Preference given to the Gentiles above the Jews; The Gentile Converts were much more numerous than those of the Jews. See Gal. iv. 27. Thus Free Grace becomes more illustrious.

2. The particular Tokens of his Favour to Joseph. 1. He left with him the Promise of their Return out of Egypt, as a sacred Trust, *v. 21. I dye, but God shall be with you, and bring you again*; accordingly Joseph, when he dy'd, left it with his Brethren, *chap. l. 24.* This Assurance was given them, and carefully preserved among them, that they might neither love Egypt too much when it favoured them, nor fear it too much when it frowned upon them. These words of Jacob furnish us with Comfort, in Reference to the Death of our Friends: *they die, but, (1.) God shall be with us, and his gracious Presence is sufficient to make up the Loss.* They leave us, but he will never fail us. (2.) He will bring us to the land of our Fathers, the Heavenly Canaan, whither our godly Fathers are gone before us. If God be with us while we stay behind in this World, and will receive us shortly to be with them that are gone before to a better World, we ought not to sorrow as those that have no hope.

2. He bestowed one portion upon him above his Brethren, *v. 22.* The Lands bequeathed are defcribed to be those which he took out of the Hand of the Amorite with his Sword, and with his Bow. He purchased them first, *Josh. xxiv. 32.* and it seems was afterwards dispossessed of them by the Amorites, but retok them by the Sword, repelling Force by Force, and recovering his Right by Violence, when he could not otherwise recover it. These Lands he settled upon Joseph: Mention is made of this Grant, *Job. iv. 5.* Pursuant to it this Parcel of Ground was given to the Tribe of Ephraim, as their Right, and the Lot was never cast upon it; and in it Joseph's Bones were buried, which perhaps Jacob had an Eye to, as much as to any thing in this Settlement. Note, It may sometimes be both just and prudent to give some Children Portions above the rest: But a Grave is that which we can most count upon as our own in this Earth.

C H A P. XLIX.

This Chapter is a Prophecy: The likeliest to it we have yet met with was that of Noah, *Gen. ix. 25.* Jacob is here upon his Death-bed, making his Will: He put it off till now, because dying Mens Words use to make deep Impressions, and so to be remember'd long: What he said here he could not say when he would, but as the Spirit gave him Utterance, who chooseth this time that divine Strength might be perfected in his Weakness. The twelve Sons of Jacob were in their day Men of Renown, but the twelve Tribes of Israel which descended and were denominated from them, were much more renowned: We find their Names upon the Gates of the new Jerusalem, *Rev. xxi. 12.* In the Prospect of which their dying Father saith something remarkable of each Son, or of the Tribe that bore his Name. Here's, 1. The Preface, *v. 1, 2.* 2. The Prediction concerning each Tribe, *v. 3--28.* 3. The Charge repeated concerning his Burial, *v. 29--32.* 4. His Death, *v. 33.*

AND Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days. 2 Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father. 3 Reuben, thou art my first-born, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power. 4 Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel, because thou wentest up to thy fathers bed: then defiledst thou it; he went up to my couch.

Here's 1. The Preface to the Prophecy, in which, (1.) The Congregation is called together, *v. 1, 2. Gather yourselves together*; let them all be sent for from their several Employments, to see their Father dye, and to hear his dying Words. 'Twas a Comfort to Jacob, now he was dying, to see all his Children about him, and none missing, tho' he had sometimes thought himself bereaved; 'Twas of Use to them to attend him in his last Moments, that they might learn of him how to dye, as well as how to live: What he said to each, he said in the Hearing of all the rest, for we may profit by the Reproofs, Counsels and Comforts that are principally intended for others. His calling upon them once and again to gather together, intimated both a Precept to them to unite in Love, to keep together, not to mingle with the Egyptians, nor to forsake the assembling of themselves together, and a Prediction that they should not be separated from

each other, as Abraham's Sons and Isaac's were, but should be incorporated, and all make one People. (2.) A general Idea is given of the intended Discourse, *v. 1. that I may tell you that which shall befall you*; not your Persons but your Posterity in the latter days, the Prediction of which would be of Use to those that came after them, for the confirming of their Faith, and the guiding of their Way, at their Return to Canaan, and their Settlement there. We cannot tell our Children what shall befall them, or their Families, in this World; but we can tell them from the Word of God, what will befall them in the last Day of all, according as they carry themselves in this World. (3.) Attention is demanded, *v. 2. hearken to Israel your Father*: Let Israel that has prevailed with God prevail with you. Note, Children must diligently hearken to what their Godly Parents say, particularly when they are dying, *Hear, ye Children, the Instruction of a Father*, which carries with it both Authority and Affection, *Pr. iv. 1.*

2. The Prophecy concerning Reuben: He begins with him, *v. 3.* 4. He was the first-born, but by committing Uncleanness with his Father's Wife, to the great Reproach of the Family, which he ought to have been an Ornament to, he forfeited the Privileges of the Birth-right, and his dying Father here solemnly degrades him; tho' he doth not disown or disinherit him: He shall have all the Privileges of a Son, but not of a first-born: We have Reason to think Reuben had repented of his Sin, and it was pardoned, yet it was a necessary Piece of Justice, in Detestation of the Villany, and for warning to Others, to put this Mark of Disgrace upon him. Now, according to the Method of Degrading, 1. Jacob here puts upon him the Ornaments of the Birth-right, *v. 3.* that he and all his Brethren might see what he had forfeited, and in that might see the evil of the Sin: As the first-born, he was his Father's Joy, almost his Pride, being the beginning of his strength. How welcome he was to his Parents his Name speaks, *Reuben, See a Son.* To him belonged the Excellency of Dignity above his Brethren, and some Power over them. Christ Jesus is the first-born among many Brethren, and to him of Right belongs the most excellent Power and Dignity: His Church also thro' him is a Church of first-born. 2. He then strips him of these Ornaments, *v. 4.* lifts him up, that he may cast him down, by that one word, *Thou shalt not excell*; a Being thou shalt have as a Tribe, but not an Excellency: No Judge, Prophet or Prince are found of that Tribe, nor any Person of Renown, only Dathan and Abiram, who were noted for their impious Rebellion against Moses. That Tribe, as not aiming to excel, meanly chose a Settlement on the other Side Jordan. Reuben himself seems to have lost all that Influence upon his Brethren which his Birth-right intitled him to, for when he spake unto them, they would not hear, *chap. xlii. 22.* Those that have not Understanding and Spirit to support the Honours and Privileges of their Birth, will soon lose them, and retain only the Name of them. The Character fasten'd upon Reuben, for which he is laid under this Mark of Infamy is, that he was unstable as Water. (1.) His Virtue was unstable, he had not the Government of himself, and his own Appetites: Sometimes he would be very regular, and orderly, but at other times he had strange Looses. Note, Instability is the Ruin of Mens Excellency. Men do not thrive because they do not fix. (2.) His Honour consequently was unstable, it departed from him, vanished into Smoke, and became as Water spilt upon the Ground. Note, Those that throw away their Virtue must not expect to save their Reputation. Jacob charges him particularly with the Sin for which he was thus disgrac'd, *thou wentest up to thy Father's Bed.* 'Twas 40 Years ago that he had been guilty of this Sin, yet now 'tis remember'd against him. Note, As Time will not of it self wear off the Guilt of any Sin from the Conscience, so there are some Sins which it will not wipe off the Stain of from the Good Name, especially seventh Commandment Sins. Reuben's Sin left an indelible Mark of Infamy upon his Family; a Dishonour that was a Wound not to be healed without a Scar, *Pr. vi. 32, 33.* Let us never do evil, and then we need not fear being told of it.

5 Simeon and Levi are brethren: instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. 6 O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self-will they digged down a wall. 7 Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.

These were next in Age to Reuben, and they also had been a Grief and Shame to Jacob, when they treacherously and barbarously destroyed the Shechemites, which he here remembers against them. Children should be afraid of incurring their Parents just Displeasure, lest they fare the worse for it long after, and when they would inherit the Blessing be rejected. Observe, 1. The Character of Simeon and Levi, they were Brethren in Disposition, but unlike their Father, they were passionate and revengeful, fierce and wilful; their Swords that should have been only Weapons of Defence, were (as the Margin reads it, *v. 5.*) Weapons of Violence, to do wrong to others, not to save themselves from wrong. Note, It is no new thing for the Temper of Children to differ very much from that of their Parents; we need not think it strange, 'twas so in Jacob's Family. 'Tis not in the Power of Parents, no, not by Education, to form the Dispositions of their Children; Jacob bred his Sons to every thing that was mild and

quiet, and yet they proved to be thus furious. 2. A Proof of this in the Murder of the *Shechemites*, which *Jacob* deeply resented, chap. xxxiv. 30. and retained the Resentment of. They *slew a Man*, *Shechem* himself, and many another, and to effect that they *digged down a Wall*, broke the Houses to plunder them, and murder the Inhabitants. Note, The best Governors cannot always restrain those under their Charge from committing the worst Villanies. And when two in a Family are mischievous, they commonly make one another so much the worse, and 'twere Wisdom to part them. *Simeon* and *Levi*, 'tis probable, were most active in the Wrong done to *Joseph*, which some think *Jacob* has here some Reference to, for in their anger they would have slain that Man. Observe what a mischievous thing *Self-will* is in young People; *Simeon* and *Levi* would not be advised by their aged and experienced Father; no, they would be governed by their own Passion rather than by his Prudence: Young People would better consult their own Interest if they would less indulge their own Will. 3. *Jacob's* Protestation against this barbarous Act of theirs, *O my Soul, come not thou into their Secret*. Hereby he professeth not only his Abhorrence of such Practices in general, but his Innocency particularly in that matter. Perhaps he had been suspected as under-hand aiding and abetting, he therefore thus solemnly expresth his Detestation of the Fact that he might not dye under that Suspicion. Note, 1. Our Soul is our Honour, by its Powers and Faculties we are distinguished from, and dignified above, the Beasts that Perish. 2. We ought, from our Hearts, to detest and abhor all Society and Confederacy with Bloody and Mischievous Men. We must not be ambitious of coming into their Secret, or knowing the depths of Satan. 4. His Abhorrence of those brutish Lusts that led them to this Wickedness, *Cursed be their Anger*: He doth not curse their Persons but their Lusts. Note, 1. Anger is the Cause and Original of a great deal of Sin, and exposeth us to the Curse of God, and his Judgment, *Matt. v. 22*. 2. We ought always in the Expressions of our Zeal carefully to distinguish between the Sinner and the Sin, so as not to love or bless the Sin for the Sake of the Person, nor to hate or curse the Person for the Sake of the Sin. 5. A Token of Displeasure which he foretels their Posterity should lie under for this: *I will divide them*. The *Levites* were scattered throughout all the Tribes, and *Simeon's* lot lay not together, and was so strait that many of that Tribe were forced to disperse themselves in Quest of Settlements and Subsistence. This Curse was afterwards turned into a Blessing to the *Levites*; but the *Simeonites*, for *Zimri's* Sin, *Num. xxv.* had it bound on. Note, Shameful dispersions are the just punishment of Sinful Unions and Confederacies.

8 *Judah*, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise; thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies: thy fathers children shall bow down before thee. 9 *Judah* is a lions whelp; from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? 10 The sceptre shall not depart from *Judah*, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until *Shiloh* come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. 11 Binding his sole unto the vine, and his asses colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes. 12 His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white as milk.

Glorious things are here said of *Judah*. The mention of the Crimes of the three eldest of his Sons had not so put the dying Patriarch out of humour, but that he had a Blessing ready for *Judah*, to whom Blessings belonged. *Judah's* Name signifies Praise, in allusion to which he saith, *Thou art he whom thy Brethren shall praise*, v. 8. God was praised for him, (*Gen. xxix. 35.*) praised by him, and praised in him, and therefore his Brethren shall praise him. Note, Those that are to God for a praise shall be the praise of their Brethren.

'Tis Propheied, 1. That the Tribe of *Judah* should be victorious and successful in War, *thy hand in the neck of thine Enemies*. This was fulfilled in *David*, *Ps. xviii. 40.* 2. That it should be superior to the Rest of the Tribes, not only in it self more Numerous and Illustrious, but having a Dominion over them, *thy Father's Children shall bow down before thee*: *Judah* was the Lawgiver, *Ps. lx. 7.* That Tribe led the Van thro' the Wilderness, and in the Conquest of *Canaan*, *Jud. i. 2.* The Prerogatives of the Birth-right which *Reuben* had forfeited, the excellency of Dignity and Power were thus conferr'd upon *Judah*. Observe, thy Brethren shall bow down before thee, and yet shall praise thee, reckoning themselves happy in having so Wise and Bold a Commander. Note, Honour and Power is then a Blessing to those that have it, when it is not grudg'd and env'y'd, but praised and applauded, and cheerfully submitted to. 3. That it should be a strong and courageous Tribe, and so qualified for Command and Conquest, v. 9. *Judah* is a Lion's Whelp. The Lion is the King of Beasts, the Terror of the Forest when he roars, when he seizes his Prey none can resist him; when he goes up from the Prey none dares pursue him to revenge it; by this 'tis foretold that the Tribe of *Judah* should become very

formidable, and should not only obtain great Victories, but should peaceably and quietly enjoy what was got by those Victories; that they should make War, not for War's sake, but for Peace's sake. *Judah* is compared not to a Lion rampant, always tearing, always raging, always ranging, but to a Lion couchant, enjoying the Satisfaction of his Power and Success, without creating Vexation to others, this is to be truly Great. 4. That it should be the Royal Tribe, and the Tribe from which *Messiah* the Prince shall come, v. 10. *The Sceptre shall not depart from Judah till Shiloh come*. *Jacob* here foresees and foretells, (1.) That the Sceptre should come into the Tribe of *Judah*, which was fulfilled in *David* on whose Family the Crown was entailed. (2.) That *Shiloh* should be of this Tribe: His Seed, that promised Seed in whom the Earth should be blessed. That peaceable prosperous one, or the Saviour, so others translate it, he shall come of *Judah*. Thus dying *Jacob* at a great Distance saw *Christ's* day, and it was his Comfort and Support on his Death-bed. (3.) That after the coming of the Sceptre into the Tribe of *Judah* it should continue in that Tribe, at least a Government of their own till the coming of the *Messiah*, in whom, as the King of the Church, and the great High-Priest, 'twas fit that both the Priesthood and the Royalty should determine. 'Till the Captivity all along from *David's* Time the Sceptre was in *Judah*, and from thence Governors of that Tribe, or of the *Levites* that adher'd to it, which was equivalent, till *Judea* became a Province of the *Roman Empire* just at the time of our Saviour's Birth, and was at that Time taxed as one of the Provinces, *Luk. ii. 1.* And at the Time of his Death the *Jews* expressly owned, *We have no King but Cæsar*. Hence 'tis undeniably infer'd against the *Jews* that our Lord *Jesus* is he that should come, and we are to look for no other, for he came exactly at the time appointed: Many excellent Pens have been admirably well employ'd in explaining and illustrating this famous Prophecy of *Christ*. 5. That it should be a very Fruitful Tribe, especially that it should abound with Milk for Babes, and Wine to make glad the Heart of strong Men, v. 11, 12. Vines so common in the Hedgerows, and so strong that they should tie their Asses to them, and so fruitful that they should load their Asses from them: Wine as plentiful as Water, so that the Men of that Tribe should be very healthful and lively, their Eyes brisk and sparkling, their Teeth white. Much of that which is here said concerning *Judah* is to be applied to our Lord *Jesus*. 1. He is the Ruler of all his Father's Children, and the Conqueror of all his Father's Enemies, and he it is that is the Praise of all the Saints. 2. He is the Lion of the Tribe of *Judah*, as he is called with Reference to this here, *Rev. v. 5.* who having spoiled Principalities and Powers went up a Conqueror, and couched so as none can stir him up when he sat down on the right hand of the Father. 3. To him belongs the Sceptre, he is the Law-giver, and to him shall the gathering of the People be, as the desire of all Nations, *Hag. ii. 7.* who being lifted up from the Earth should draw all Men unto him, *Joh. xii. 32.* and in whom the Children of God that are scattered abroad should meet as the Centre of their Unity, *Joh. xi. 52.* 4. In him there is Plenty of all that which is nourishing and refreshing to the Soul, and which maintains and cheers the Divine Life in it, in him we may have Wine and Milk, the Riches of *Judah's* Tribe, without Money, and without Price, *Isa. lv. 1.*

13 *Zebulun* shall dwell at the haven of the sea: and he shall be for an haven of ships; and his border shall be unto *Zidon*. 14 *Issachar* is a strong ass, couching down between two burdens. 15 And he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute. 16 *Dan* shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of *Israel*. 17 *Dan* shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path; that biteth the horse-heels, so that his rider shall fall backward. 18 I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD. 19 *Gad*, a troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last. 20 Out of *Asher* his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties. 21 *Naphtali* is a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words.

Here we have *Jacob's* Prophecy concerning six of his Sons.

1. Concerning *Zebulun*, that his Posterity should have their Lot upon the Sea-Coast, and should be Merchants and Mariners, and Traders at Sea, v. 13. This was fulfilled, when 2 or 300 Years after, the Land of *Canaan* was divided by *Lot*, and the border of *Zebulun* went up towards the Sea, *Jos. xix. 11.* Had they chosen their Lot themselves, or *Joshua* appointed it, we might have supposed it done with design to make *Jacob's* words good, but being done by *Lot*, it appears that that was divinely disposed, and *Jacob* divinely inspired. Note, The Lot of God's Providence exactly agrees with the Plan of God's Counsel, like a true Copy with the Original. If Prophecy saith, *Zebulun shall be a Haven of Ships*, Providence will to plant him. Note, 1. God appointed the bounds of our Habitation. 2. It is our Wisdom and Duty to accommodate

date our selves to our lot, and to improve it. If Zebulun dwell at the *Haven of the Sea*, let him be for a *Haven of Ships*.

2. Concerning *Issachar*, v. 14, 15. (1.) That the Men of that Tribe should be strong and industrious, fit for Labour, and inclined to Labour, particularly the Toil of Husbandry, like the *Ass* that patiently carries his Burthen, and by using himself to it makes it the easier. *Issachar* submitted to two Burthens, Tillage and Tribute. 'Twas a Tribe that took Pains, and thriving thereby was called upon for Rents and Taxes. (2.) That they should be encouraged in their Labour by the Goodness of the Land that should fall to their lot. (1.) He saw that *Rest at Home was good*. Note, The Labour of the Husbandman is really *Rest* in Comparison with that of Soldiers and Seamen, whose Hurries and Perils are such that those who tarry at Home in the most constant Service have no Reason to envy them. (2.) He saw that the Land was pleasant, yielding not only pleasant Prospects to charm the Eye of the Curious, but pleasant Fruits to recompense his Toils. Many are the Pleasures of a Country Life, abundantly sufficient to balance the Inconveniences of it, if we can but persuade our selves to think so. *Issachar*, in Prospect of Advantage, bowed his Shoulder to bear. Let us, with an Eye of Faith, see the Heavenly Rest to be good; and that Land of Promise to be pleasant, and that will make our present Services easie, and encourage us to bow our Shoulder to them.

3. Concerning *Dan*, v. 16, 17. What is said concerning *Dan* has Reference either, 1. To that Tribe in general; that tho' *Dan* was one of the *Sons of the Concubines*, yet he should be a Tribe governed by Judges of his own as well as other Tribes; and should by Art and Policy, and Surprize gain Advantages against his Enemies, like a Serpent suddenly biting the Heel of the Traveller. Note, (1.) In God's Spiritual Israel there is no Distinction made of Bond or Free, Col. iii. 11. *Dan* shall be incorporated by as good a Charter as any of the other Tribes. (2.) Some, like *Dan*, may excel in the Subtily of the Serpent, as others, like *Judah*, in the Courage of the Lion, and both may do good Service to the Cause of God against the *Canaanites*. Or, It may refer, 2. To *Samson* who was of that Tribe, and judged Israel, i. e. delivered them out of the Hands of the *Philistines*, not as the other Judges, by fighting them in the Field, but by the Vexations and Annoyances he gave them *under-hand*: When he pulled the House down under the *Philistines* that were upon the Roof of it, he made the Horse throw his Rider.

Thus was *Jacob* going on with his Discourse, but now being almost spent with speaking, and ready to faint and dye away, he relieves himself with those Words which come in as a Parenthesis, v. 18. *I have waited for thy Salvation, O Lord*, as those that are fainting are helped by taking a Spoonful of a Cordial, or smelling at a Bottle of Spirits: Or, if he must break off here, and his Breath will not serve him to finish what he intended, with these Words he pours out his Soul into the Bosom of his God, and even breathes it out. Note, The Pious Ejaculations of a warm and lively Devotion, tho' sometimes they may be incoherent, yet they are not therefore to be censured as impertinent; that may be utter'd affectionately which doth not come in methodically. 'Tis no Absurdity when we are speaking to Men, to lift up our Hearts to God. The Salvation he waited for was, (1.) Christ, the promised Seed, whom he had spoken of, v. 10. now he was going to be gathered to his People, he breathes after him to whom the gathering of the People shall be. (2.) Heaven, the better Country, which he declared plainly that he sought, Heb. xi. 13, 14. and continued seeking now he was in Egypt. Now he is going to enjoy the Salvation, he comforts himself with this, that he had waited for the Salvation. Note, 1. It is the Character of a living Saint that he waits for the Salvation of the Lord: Christ, as our Way to Heaven, is to be waited on, and Heaven as our Rest in Christ, is to be waited for. 2. It is the Comfort of a dying Saint, thus to have waited for the Salvation of the Lord, for then he shall have what he has been waiting for: Long looked for will come.

4. Concerning *Gad*, v. 19. He alludes to his Name, which signifies a *Troop*, foresees the Character of that Tribe, that it should be a Warlike Tribe, and so we find, 1 Chr. xii. 8. the *Gadites* were Men of War fit for the Battle. He foresees that the Situation of that Tribe on the other Side *Jordan* would expose it to the Incursions of its Neighbours, *Moabites* and *Ammonites*; and that they might not be proud of their Strength and Valour, he foretells that the Troops of their Enemies should, in many Skirmishes, overcome them; yet that they might not be discouraged by their Defeats, he assures them that they should overcome at the last, which was fulfilled when in *Saul's* time and *David's* the *Moabites* and *Ammonites* were wholly subdued: See 1 Chr. v. 18, &c. Note, The Cause of God and his People, tho' it may seem for a time to be baffled and run down, yet it will be victorious at last, *Vincimus in praelio sed non in Bello*: Grace in the Soul is oft foiled in its Conflicts, Troops of Corruption overcome it, but the Cause is God's, and Grace will in the issue come off a Conqueror, yea more than a Conqueror, Rom. viii. 37.

5. Concerning *Asher*, v. 20. That it should be a very rich Tribe, replenished not only with Bread for necessity, but with Dainties, with Dainties, Royal Dainties (for the King himself is served of the Field, Eccl. v. 9.) and these exported, out of *Asher*, to other Tribes, perhaps to other Lands. Note, The God of Nature has provided for us not only Necessaries but Dainties, that we might

call him a bountiful Benefactor; yet whereas all Places are competently furnished with Necessaries, only some Places afford Dainties. Corn is more common than Spices: Were the Supports of Luxury as universal as the Supports of Life, the World would be worse than it is, and that needs not.

6. Concerning *Naphtali*, v. 21. a Tribe that carries struggles in its Name, it signifies wrestling, and the Blessing entailed upon it signifies prevailing, 'tis a Hind let loose. Tho' we find not this Prediction so fully answered in the Event as some of the rest, yet no doubt it proved true, that those of this Tribe were, 1. As the loving Hind, (for that's her Epithet, Pr. v. 10.) Friendly and Obliging to one another, and to other Tribes; their Converse remarkably kind and endearing. 2. As the loosed Hind, zealous for their Liberty. 3. As the swift Hind, Pf. xviii. 33. quick in Dispatch of Business, and perhaps, 4. As the trembling Hind, timorous in times of publick Danger. 'Tis rare that those that are most Amiable to their Friends are most Formidable to their Enemies. 5. That they should be affable and courteous, their Language refined, and they complaisant, giving goodly Words. Note, Among God's Israel there is to be found a great Variety of Dispositions, contrary to each other, yet all contributing to the Beauty and Strength of the Body; *Judah* like a Lion, *Issachar* like an *Ass*, *Dan* like a Serpent, *Naphtali* like a Hind. Let not those of different Tempers and Gifts censure one another, or envy one another, no more than those of different Statures and Complexions.

22 Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well: whose branches run over the wall. 23 The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him. 24 But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong, by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob: from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel. 25 Even by the God of thy father who shall help thee, and by the Almighty who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb. 26 The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors, unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills; they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren. 27 Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil.

He closes with the Blessings of his best beloved Sons, *Joseph* and *Benjamin*, with these he will breath his last.

1. The Blessing of *Joseph*, which is very large and full. He is compared, v. 22. to a fruitful Bough, or young Tree, for God had made him fruitful in the Land of his Affliction, he owned it, chap. xli. 52. His two Sons were as Branches of a Vine, or other spreading Plant running over the Wall. Note, God can make those fruitful, great Comforts to themselves and others, who have been look'd upon as dry and withered. More is recorded in the History concerning *Joseph* than concerning any other of *Jacob's* Sons, and therefore what *Jacob* saith of him is Historical as well as Prophetical. Observe,

(1.) The Providences of God concerning *Joseph*, v. 23, 24. These are mentioned to the Glory of God, and for the Encouragement of *Jacob's* Faith and Hope, that God had Blessings in Store for his Seed. Here's, (1.) *Joseph's* Straits and Troubles, v. 23. Tho' he now lived at Ease, and in Honour, *Jacob* minds him of the Difficulties he had formerly waded through. He had had many Enemies, here called *Archers*, being skilful to do Mischief, Masters of their Art of Persecution, they hated him, there Persecution begins: They shot their poisonous Darts at him, and thus they sorely grieved him. His Brethren in his Father's House were very spiteful towards him, mock'd him, stript him, threaten'd him, sold him, thought they had been the Death of him. His Mistress in the House of *Potiphar* sorely grieved him, and shot at him, when she impudently solicited his Chastity: Temptations are fiery Darts, Thorns in the Flesh, sorely grievous to gracious Souls: When she prevailed not in this, hated him, and shot at him by her False Accusations, Arrows which there's little Fence against, but the hold God has in the Consciences of the worst of Men. Doubtless he had Enemies in the Court of *Pharaoh* that envied his Preferment and sought to undermine him. (2.) *Joseph's* Strength and Support under all these Troubles, v. 24. His Bow abode in Strength, i. e. his Faith did not fail, but he kept his Ground, and came off a Conqueror. The Arms of his Hands were made strong, i. e. His other Graces did their part, his Wisdom, Courage, Patience, which are better than Weapons of War. In short, he maintained both his Integrity, and his Comfort through all his Trials: He bore all his Burthens with an invincible Resolution, and did not sink under them, nor do any thing unbecoming him. (3.) The Spring and Fountain of this Strength: 'Twas by the Hands of the Mighty God, who was therefore able to strengthen him, and the

God of Jacob, a God in Covenant with him, and therefore engaged to help him. All our Strength for the resisting of Temptations, and the bearing of Afflictions, comes from God: His Grace is sufficient, and his Strength perfected in our Weakness. (4.) The State of Honour and Usefulness he was advanced to after this, from thence from this strange Method of Providence he became the *Shepherd and Stone*, the Feeder and Supporter of God's Israel, Jacob and his Family. Herein Joseph was a Type, 1. Of Christ; he was *shot at and hated*, but born up under his Sufferings, *Isa. l. 7, 8, 9.* and was afterwards advanced to be the *Shepherd and Stone*. 2. Of the Church in general, and particular Believers; Hell shoots its Arrows against the Saints, but Heaven protects and strengthens them, and will crown them.

(2.) The Promises of God to Joseph: See how these are connected with the former, *v. 25. Even by the God of thy Father Jacob who shall help thee.* Note, Our Experiences of God's Power and Goodness in strengthening us hitherto, are our Encouragements still to hope for Help from him: He that *has* helped us will: We may build much upon our *Eben-exers*: See what Joseph may expect from the Almighty, even the God of his Father. 1. He shall help thee in Difficulties and Dangers which may yet be before thee, help thy Seed in their Wars. *Joshua* came from him, who commanded in Chief in the Wars of Canaan. 2. He shall bless thee; and he only *blesseth indeed*. Jacob prays for a Blessing upon Joseph, but the God of Jacob commands the Blessing. Observe, the Blessings confer'd on Joseph. 1. Various and abundant Blessings. Blessings of Heaven above, Rain in its Season, and Fair Weather in its Season, and the benign Influences of the Heavenly Bodies, Blessings of the Deep that lies under this Earth, which compared with the upper World is but a Great Deep, or with subterraneous Mines and Springs. Spiritual Blessings are Blessings of Heaven above, which we ought to desire and seek for in the first place, and to which we must give the Preference, whilst Temporal Blessings, those of this Earth, must lie under in our Account and Esteem. Blessings of the Womb and the Breasts are given when Children are safely born, and comfortably nursed. In the Word of God, by which we are born again, and nourished up, (*1 Per. i. 23—ii. 2.*) there are to the New Man Blessings both of the Womb and the Breasts. 2. Eminent and Transcendent Blessings which prevail above the Blessing of my Progenitors, *v. 16.* His Father Isaac had but one Blessing, and when he had given that to Jacob, he was at a loss for a Blessing to bestow upon Esau; but Jacob had a Blessing for each of his twelve Sons, and now at the latter End a copious one for Joseph. The great Blessing entailed upon that Family was Increase, which did not so immediately and so signally follow the Blessings which Abraham and Isaac gave to their Sons, as it followed that which Jacob gave to his, for soon after his Death they multiplied exceedingly. 3. Durable and extensive Blessings: unto the utmost bound of the Everlasting Hills, including all the Products of the most fruitful Hills, and lasting as long as they last, *Isa. liv. 10.* Note, The Blessings of the everlasting God include the Riches of the everlasting Hills, and much more. Well, of these Blessings it is here said they shall be, so 'tis a Promise, or let them be so, 'tis a Prayer, on the Head of Joseph, to which let them be as a Crown to adorn it, and a Helmet to protect it: Joseph was separated from his Brethren, (so we read it) for a time; yet (as others read it) he was a Nazarite among his Brethren, better, and more excellent than they. Note, It is no new thing for the best Men to meet with the worse usage; for Nazarites among their Brethren to be cast out and separated from their Brethren, but the Blessing of God will make it up to them.

2. The Blessing of Benjamin, *v. 27.* He shall *raven as a Wolf*: 'Tis plain by this that Jacob was guided in what he said by a Spirit of Prophecy, and not by natural Affection, else he would have spoken with more Tenderness of his beloved Son Benjamin, concerning whom he only foresees and foretells this, that his Posterity should be a warlike Tribe, strong and daring, and that they should enrich themselves with the Spoil of their Enemies; that they should be active and buisie in the World, and a Tribe as much feared by their Neighbours as any other; in the morning he shall devour the Prey which he seized and divided over night. Or in the first times of Israel they shall be noted for Activity, tho' many of them left-handed, *Jud. iii. 15—20.* 16. Ehud the second Judge, and Saul the first King, were of this Tribe. And so also in the last Times, Esther and Mordecai were of this Tribe, by whom the Enemies of the Jews were destroyed. The Benjamites ravened like Wolves when they deparately espoused the Cause of the Men of Gibeon, those Men of Belial, *Jud. xx. 14.* Blessed Paul was of this Tribe, *Rom. xi. 1. Phil. iii. 5.* and he did in the Morning of his Day devour the Prey as a Persecutor, but did in the Evening divide the Spoil as a Preacher. Note, God can serve his own Purposes by the different Tempers of Men, the Deceived and the Deceiver are his.

28 All these are the twelve tribes of Israel: and this is it that their father spake unto them, and blessed them; every one according to his blessing he blessed them. 29 And he charged them and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers, in the cave that is in the

field of Ephron the Hittite, 30 In the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite, for a possession of a burying-place. 31 (There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife, there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife, and there I buried Leah.) 32 The purchase of the field and of the cave that is therein, was from the children of Heth. 33 And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people.

Here's, 1. The summing up of the Blessings of Jacob's Sons, *v. 28.* Tho' Reuben, Simeon and Levi, were put under the Marks of their Father's Displeasure, yet he is said to bless them every one according to his blessing, for none of them were rejected as Esau was. Note, Whatever Rebukes of God's Word or Providence we are under at any time, yet as long as we have an Interest in God's Covenant, a Place and a Name among his People, and good Hopes of a Share in the heavenly Canaan, we must account our selves blessed.

2. The solemn Charge Jacob gave them concerning his Burial, which is a Repetition of that he had before given to Joseph: See how he speaks of Death, now he is dying, *v. 29. I am to be gathered unto my People.* Note, It is good to represent Death to our selves as desirable as may be, that the Terror of it may be taken off. Tho' it separate us from our Children, and our People in this World, it gathers us to our Fathers, and to our People in the other World. Perhaps Jacob useth this Expression concerning Death as a Reason why his Sons should bury him in Canaan, for (saith he) I am to be gathered unto my People, my Soul must be gone to the Spirits of just Men made perfect, and therefore bury me with my Fathers, Abraham and Isaac, and their Wives, *v. 31.* Observe,

1. His Heart was very much upon it, not so much from a natural Affection to his native Soil, as from a Principle of Faith in the Promise of God, that Canaan should be the Inheritance of his Seed in due time. Thus he would keep up in his Sons a Remembrance of the Promised Land, and not only would have their Acquaintance with it renewed by a Journey thither on that Occasion, but their Desire towards it and their Expectation of it preserved.

2. He is very particular in describing the Place both by the Situation of it, and by the purchase Abraham had made of it, for a Burying-Place, *v. 30, 32.* He was afraid lest his Sons after 17 Years sojourning in Egypt, had forgot Canaan, and even the Burying-Place of their Ancestors there, or lest the Canaanites should dispute his Title to it, and therefore he specifies it thus largely, and the Purchase of it, even when he lies a dying, not only to prevent Mistakes, but to shew how mindful he was of that Country. Note, It is and should be a great Pleasure to dying Saints to fix their Thoughts upon the Heavenly Canaan, and the Rest they hope for there after Death.

3. The Death of Jacob, *v. 33.* when he had finished both his Blessing and his Charge (both which are included in the commanding of his Sons) and so had finished his Testimony, he addressed himself to his dying Work. 1. He put himself into a Posture for dying; having sitten upon the Bed-side to bless his Sons, the Spirit of Prophecy bringing fresh Oyl to his expiring Lamp (*Dan. x. 19.*) when that work was done he gathered up his Feet into the Bed, that he might lie along, not only as one patiently submitting to the Stroke, but as one cheerfully composing himself to rest; now he was weary, I will lay me down and sleep. 2. He freely resigned his Spirit into the Hand of God, the Father of Spirits; he yielded up the Ghost. 3. His separated Soul went to the Assembly of the Souls of the Faithful, which after they are delivered from the burden of the Flesh are in Joy and Felicity; he was gathered to his People. Note, If God's People be our People, Death will gather us to them.

CHAP. L.

Here's, 1. The Preparation for Jacob's Funeral, *v. 1—6.* 2. The Funeral it self, *v. 7—14.* 3. The settling of a good understanding between Joseph and his Brethren after the Death of Jacob, *v. 15—21.* 4. The Age and Death of Joseph, *v. 22—26.* Thus the Book of Genesis which began with the Originals of Light and Life, ends with nothing but Death and Darkness, so sad a Change has Sin made.

1 AND Joseph fell upon his fathers face, and wept upon him, and kissed him. 2 And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father: and the physicians embalmed Israel. 3 And forty days were fulfilled for him (for so are fulfilled the days of those which are embalmed) and the Egyptians mourned for him threescore and ten

ten days. 4 And when the days of his mourning were past, Joseph spake unto the house of Pharaoh, saying, If now I have found grace in your eyes, speak, I pray you, in the ears of Pharaoh, saying, 5 My father made me swear, saying, Lo, I die: in my grave which I have digged for me, in the land of Canaan, there shalt thou bury me. Now therefore let me go up, I pray thee, and bury my father, and I will come again. 6 And Pharaoh said, Go up, and bury thy father, according as he made thee swear.

Joseph is here paying his last Respects to his deceased Father.

1. With Tears and Kisses, and all the Tender Expressions of a filial Affection he takes leave of the departed Body, v. 1. Tho' *Jacob* was old and decrepit, and *must needs dye* in a Course of Nature; tho' he was Poor comparatively, and a constant Charge to his Son *Joseph*, yet such an Affection he had for a loving Father, and so sensible was he of the Loss of a Prudent, Pious, Praying Father, that he could not part with him without Floods of Tears. *Note*, As it is an Honour to *dye lamented*, so it is the Duty of Survivors to lament the Death of those that have been useful in their day, tho' for some time they may have survived their Usefulness. The departed Soul is out of the Reach of our Tears and Kisses, but with them 'tis proper to shew our Respects to the poor Body, which we look for a glorious and joyful Resurrection of. Thus *Joseph* shewed his Faith in God, and Love to his Father, by kissing his pale and cold Lips, and so giving an affectionate Farewell. Probably the Rest of *Jacob's* Sons did the same, much mov'd, no doubt, with his dying Words.

2. He ordered the Body to be *embalmed*, v. 2. not only because he died in *Egypt*, and that was the manner of the *Egyptians*, but because he was to be carried to *Canaan*, which would be a Work of time, and therefore 'twas necessary the Body should be preserved as well as it might be from Putrefaction. See how vile our Bodies are, when the Soul has forsaken them, without a great deal of Art, and Pains, and Care, they will in a very little Time become noisom. If the Body have been *dead four days*, by that time it *stinketh*.

3. He observed the Ceremony of *solemn Mourning* for him, v. 3. 40 Days were taken upon in embalming the Body, which the *Egyptians* (they say) had an Art of doing so curiously, as to preserve the very Features of the Face unchanged: All this time, and 30 days more, 70 in all, they either confined themselves and sat solitary, or when they went out appeared in the Habit of close Mourners, according to the decent Custom of the Country. Even the *Egyptians*, many of them, out of the great Respect they had for *Joseph* (whose good Offices done for the King and Country were now fresh in Remembrance) put themselves into Mourning for his Father. As with us when the Court goes into Mourning, those of the best Quality do so too. About 10 Weeks the Court of *Egypt* was in Mourning for *Pharaoh*. *Note*, What they did in State we should do in Sincerity, weep with them that weep, and mourn with them that mourn, as being our selves also in the Body.

4. He asked and obtained leave of *Pharaoh* to go to *Canaan*, thither to attend the Funeral of his Father, v. 4, 5, 6. (1.) 'Twas a piece of necessary Respect to *Pharaoh*, that he would not go without leave: For we may suppose, tho' his Charge about the Corn was long since over, yet he continued a prime Minister of State, and therefore would not be so long absent from his Business without License. (2.) He observed a Decorum in employing some of the Royal Family, or some of the Officers of the Household to intercede for this License; either because it was not proper for him in the Days of his Mourning to come into the Presence Chamber, or because he would not presume too much upon his own Interest. *Note*, Modesty is a great Ornament to Dignity. (3.) He pleaded the Obligation his Father had laid upon him by an Oath to bury him in *Canaan*, v. 5. 'Twas not in Pride or Humour, but indispensable Duty that he desired it. All Nations reckon that Oaths must be performed, and the Will of the Dead must be observed. (4.) He promised to *return*, *I will come again*: When we return to our own Houses from burying the Bodies of our Relations we say, we have left them behind, but if their Souls be gone to our Heavenly Father's House, we may say with more Reason, they have left us behind. (5.) He obtained leave, v. 6. *Go, and bury thy Father*: *Pharaoh* is willing his Business should stand still so long, but the Service of Christ is more needful; and therefore he would not allow one that had Work to do for him to go first, and *bury his Father*, no, let the dead bury their dead, *Matt. viii. 22*.

7 And *Joseph* went to bury his father: and with him went up all the servants of *Pharaoh*, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of *Egypt*. 8 And all the house of *Joseph*, and his brethren, and his fathers house: only their little

ones, and their flocks, and their herds, they left in the land of *Goshen*. 9 And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen: and it was a very great company. 10 And they came to the threshing-floor of *Atad*, which is beyond *Jordan*, and there they mourned with a great and very fore lamentation: and he made a mourning for his father seven days. 11 And when the inhabitants of the land, the *Canaanites*, saw the mourning in the floor of *Atad*, they said, This is a grievous mourning to the *Egyptians*: wherefore the name of it was called *Abel-mizraim*, which is beyond *Jordan*. 12 And his sons did unto him according as he commanded them. 13 For his sons carried him into the land of *Canaan*, and buried him in the cave of the field of *Machpelah*; which *Abraham* bought with the field for a possession of a burying-place, of *Ephron the Hittite*, before *Mamre*. 14 And *Joseph* returned into *Egypt*, he and his brethren, and all that went up with him to bury his father, after he had buried his father.

We have here an Account of *Jacob's* Funeral. Of the Funerals of the Kings of *Judah*, usually no more is said but this, that they were buried with their Father's in the City of *David*, but the Funeral of the Patriarch *Jacob* is more largely and fully described. (1.) To shew how much better God was to him than he expected; he had spoken more than once of dying for Grief, and going to the Grave, bereaved of his Children, but behold he dies in Honour, and is followed to the Grave by all his Children. (2.) Because his Orders concerning his Burial were given and observed in Faith, and in expectation both of the Earthly and of the Heavenly *Canaan*.

Now, 1. It was a *stately* Funeral. He was attended to the Grave, not only by his own Family, but by the Courtiers, and all the great Men of the Kingdom, who, in token of their Gratitude to *Joseph*, shew'd this Respect to his Father, for his sake, and did him Honour at his Death: Tho' the *Egyptians* had an Antipathy to the *Hebrews*, and had looked upon them with Disdain, *Chap. xliii. 12*: yet now they were better acquainted with them they began to have a Respect for them. Good old *Jacob* had carried himself so well among them as to gain a universal Esteem. *Note*, Professors of Religion should endeavour by Wisdom and Love to remove the Prejudices which many have conceived against them, because they do not know them. There went abundance of Chariots and Horsemen, not only to attend them a little way, but to go through with them. *Note*, The decent Solemnities of Funerals, according as Men's Place is, are very commendable, and we must not say of them, *to what purpose is this waste?* See *Act. viii. 2. Luk. vii. 12*.

2. It was a *solemn* Funeral, v. 10, 11. Standers by took Notice of it as a *grievous Mourning*. *Note*, The Death of Good Men is a great Loss to any Place, and ought to be greatly lamented: *Stephen* dies a Martyr, and yet *devout Men* make great Lamentations for him. The solemn Mourning for *Jacob* gave a Name to the Place. *Abel Mizraim*, the Mourning of the *Egyptians*: Which served for a Testimony against the next Generation of the *Egyptians*, who oppressed the Posterity of this *Jacob* to whom their Ancestors shewed such Respect.

15 And when *Joseph's* brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, *Joseph* will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him. 16 And they sent messengers unto *Joseph*, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying, 17 So shall ye say unto *Joseph*, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil: and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And *Joseph* wept when they spake unto him. 18 And his brethren also went and fell down before his face: and they said, Behold, we be thy servants. 19 And *Joseph* said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God? 20 But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. 21 Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them.

We have here the settling of a good Correspondence between Joseph and his Brethren, now their Father was dead: Joseph was at Court in the Royal City, his Brethren were in Goshen, remote in the Country, yet the keeping up of a good Understanding and a good Affection between them would be both his Honour, and their Interest. Note, When Providence has removed the Parents by Death, the best Methods ought to be taken, not only for the preventing of Quarrels among the Children, which oft happen about the dividing of the Estate, but for the preserving of Acquaintance and Love, that Unity may continue even when that Centre of Unity is taken away.

1. Joseph's Brethren humbly make their Court to him for his Favour. (1.) They began to be jealous of Joseph; not that he had given them any cause to be so, but the Conscience of Guilt, and of their own Inability in such a Case to forgive and forget, made them suspicious of the Sincerity and Constancy of Joseph's Favour, v. 15. Joseph will peradventure hate us; while their Father lived they thought themselves safe under his shadow, but now he was dead, they feared the worst from Joseph. Note, A guilty Conscience exposeth Men to continual Frights, even where no Fear is, and makes them suspicious of every Body, as Cain, Gen. iv. 14. Those that would be fearless must keep themselves guiltless: If our Heart reproach us not, then have we Confidence both towards God and Man. (2.) They humbled themselves before him, confessed their Fault, and begged his Pardon: They did it by Proxy, v. 17. They did it in Person, v. 18. now the Sun and Moon were set, the eleven Stars did Obedience to Joseph, for the further Accomplishment of his Dream. They spake of their former Offence with fresh Regret, forgive the Trespases: They throw themselves at Joseph's Feet, and refer themselves to his Mercy, we be thy Servants. Thus we must bewail the Sins we committed long ago, even those which we hope thro' Grace are forgiven: And when we pray to God for pardon, we must promise to be his Servants. (3.) They pleaded their Relation to Jacob and Jacob's God. (1.) To Jacob, urging, that he directed them to make this Submission, rather because he questioned whether they would do their Duty in humbling themselves, than because he questioned whether Joseph would do his Duty in forgiving them; nor could he reasonably expect Joseph's kindness to them, unless they thus qualified themselves for it, v. 16. Thy Father did command. Thus in humbling our selves to Christ by Faith and Repentance, we may plead that 'tis the Command of his Father, and our Father, we should do so. (2.) To Jacob's God: They plead, v. 17. we are the Servants of the God of thy Fathers; not only Children of the same Jacob, but Worshipers of the same Jehovah. Note, Tho' we must be ready to forgive all that are any way injurious to us, yet we must especially take heed of bearing Malice towards any that are the Servants of the God of our Father: Those we should always treat with a peculiar Tenderness, for we and they have the same Master.

2. Joseph with a great deal of Compassion confirms his Reconciliation and Affection to them: His Compassion appears, v. 17. He wept when they spake to him. These were Tears of Sorrow for their Suspicion of him, and Tears of Tenderness upon their Submission: In his reply,

1. He directs them to look up to God in their Repentance, v. 19. Am I in the place of God? He in his great Humility thought they shewed him too much Respect, as if all their Happiness were bound up in his Favour, and faith to them in Effect as Peter to Cornelius, Stand up, I my self also am a Man. Make your Peace with God, and then you'll find it an easy Matter to make your Peace with me. Note, When we ask Forgiveness of those whom we have offended, we must take heed of putting them in the place of God, by dreading their Wrath, and soliciting their Favour more than God's. Am I in the place of God to whom alone Vengeance belongs? no, I'll leave you to his Mercy. Those that *avenge themselves* step into the place of God, Rom. xii. 19.

2. He extenuates their Fault from the Consideration of the great good which God wonderfully brought out of it, which tho' it should not make them the less sorry for their Sin, yet it might make him the more willing to forgive it, v. 20. ye thought Evil, to disappoint the Dreams, but God meant it unto Good, in order to the fulfilling of the Dreams, and the making of Joseph a greater Blessing to his Family than otherwise he could have been. Note, 1. When God makes Use of Mens Agency for the Performance of his Counsels, 'tis common for him to mean one thing, and then another, even the quite contrary, but God's Counsel shall stand: See Isa. x. 7. 2. God often brings Good out of Evil, and serves the Designs of his Providence, even by the Sins of Men; not that he is the Author of Sin, far be it from us to think so, but his Infinite Wisdom so over-rules Events, and directs the Chain of them, that in the issue that ends in his Praise, which in it's own Nature had a direct Tendency to his Dishonour. As the putting of Christ to Death, *Act. ii. 23.* This doth not make Sin the less sinful, nor Sinners the less punishable, but it redounds greatly to the Glory of God's Wisdom.

3. He assures them of the Continuance of his Kindness to them. Fear not, I will nourish you, v. 21. see what an excellent Spirit Joseph was of, and learn of him to render Good for Evil. He did

not tell them they were upon their good Behaviour, and he would be kind to them if he saw they carried themselves well; no, he would not thus hold them in Suspence, nor seem jealous of them, tho' they had been suspicious of him: He comforted them, and to banish all their Fears, he spake kindly to them. Note, Broken Spirits must be bound up, and encouraged. Those we love and forgive, we must not only do well for, but speak kindly to.

22 And Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he, and his fathers house: and Joseph lived an hundred and ten years. 23 And Joseph saw Ephraims children, of the third generation: the children also of Machir, the son of Manasseh, were brought up upon Joseph's knees. 24 And Joseph said unto his brethren, I dye: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land, unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. 25 And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence. 26 So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

Here's, 1. The prolonging of Joseph's Life in Egypt, he lived to be 110 years old, v. 22. Having honoured his Father, his days were long in the Land, which, for the present, God had given him, and it was a great Mercy to his Relations that God continued him so long a Support and Comfort to them.

2. The building up of Joseph's Family; he lived to see his great Grand-children, by both his Sons, v. 23. and probably he saw his two Sons solemnly owned as Heads of distinct Tribes, equal to any of his Brethren. It contributes much to the Comfort of aged Parents, if they see their Posterity in a flourishing Condition, especially if with it they see Peace upon Israel, Ps. cxxviii. 6.

3. The last Will and Testament of Joseph, published in the Presence of his Brethren, when he saw his Death approaching: Those that are properly his Brethren, perhaps were some of them dead before him, several of them were elder than he, but to those of them who yet survived, and to the Sons of those who were gone, that stood up in his Father's Stead, he said this.

1. He comforted them with the Assurance of their Return to Canaan in due time, v. 24. I die, but God will surely visit you. To this Purpose Jacob had spoken to him, Chap. xlviii. 21. Thus must we comfort others with the same Comforts wherewith we our selves have been comforted of God, and encourage them to rest on those Promises which have been our Support, Joseph was, under God, both the Protector and Benefactor of his Brethren, and what would become of them, now he was dying? Why, let this be their Comfort, God will surely visit you. Note, God's gracious Visits will serve to make up the Loss of our best Friends. They dye, but we may live, and live comfortably if we have the Favour and Presence of God with us. He bids them be confident, God will bring you out of this Land; and therefore, (1.) They must not hope to settle there, nor look upon it as their rest for ever, they must set their Hearts upon the Land of Promise, and call that their Home. (2.) They must not fear sinking, and being ruined there: Probably he foretold the ill Usage they would meet with there, after his Death, and therefore gives them this Word of Encouragement, God will bring you in Triumph out of this Land at last. Herein he had an Eye to the Promise, Gen. xv. 13, 14. and in God's Name assures them of the Performance of it.

2. For a Confession of his own Faith, and a Confirmation of theirs, he chargeth them to keep him unburied till that day, that glorious day should come, when they should be settled in the Land of Promise, v. 25. He makes them promise him with an Oath, that they would bury him in Canaan. In Egypt they buried their great Men very Honourably, and with abundance of Pomp, but Joseph prefers a Significant Burial in Canaan, and that deferred too almost two hundred Years, before a Magnificent one in Egypt. Thus Joseph, by Faith in the Doctrine of the Resurrection, and the Promise of Canaan gave Commandments concerning his Bones, Heb. xi. 22. He dies in Egypt, but lays his Bones at Stake, that God will surely visit Israel, and bring them to Canaan.

3. The Death of Joseph, and the Reservation of his Body for a Burial in Canaan, v. 26. He was put in a Coffin in Egypt, but not buried till his Children had received their Inheritance in Canaan, Josh. xxiv. 32. Note, (1.) If the separate Soul at Death do but return to its Rest with God, the Matter is not great, tho' the deserted Body find not at all, or not quickly its rest in the Grave. (2.) Yet Care ought to be taken of the dead Bodies of the Saints, in the Belief of their Resurrection, for there is a Covenant with the Dust which shall be remembered, and a Commandment given concerning the Bones.

And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die, but God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land, unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.

AN

An EXPOSITION, WITH PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS, Upon the Second Book of MOSES, called EXODUS.

Moses, (the Servant of the Lord in writing for him, as well as in acting for him, with the Pen of God as well as with the Rod of God in his Hand) having in the first Book of his History preserved and transmitted the Records of the Church while it existed in private Families, comes in this second Book to give us an Account of its Growth into a great Nation; And as the former furnisheth us with the best Oeconomics, so this with the best Politicks. The Beginning of the former Book shews us how God formed the World for himself, the beginning of this shews us how he formed Israel for himself, and both to shew forth his praise, Isa. xliii. 21. There we have the Creation of the World in History, here the Redemption of the World in Type. The Greek Translators called this Book Exodns, which signifies a Departure, or Going out, because it begins with the Story of the Going out of the Children of Israel from Egypt. Some allude to the Names of this and the foregoing Book, and observe, That immediately after Genesis, which signifies, the Beginning or Original, follows Exodus, which signifies, a Departure; for a Time to be born is immediately succeeded by a Time to dye: No sooner have we made our Entrance into the World, but we must think of making our Exit, and going out of the World. When we begin to live, we begin to dye. The forming of Israel into a People was a New Creation. As the Earth was in the Beginning first fetched from under Water, and then beautified and replenished: so Israel was first by an Almighty Power made to emerge out of Egyptian Slavery, and then enriched with God's Law and Tabernacle. This Book gives us, 1. The Accomplishment of the Promises made before to Abraham, to Chap. xix. And then, 2. The Establishment of the Ordinances which were afterwards observed by Israel: thence to the End. Moses in this Book begins, like Cæsar, to write his own Commentaries; nay, a greater, a far greater than Cæsar is here: But henceforward the Pen-man is himself the Hero, and gives us the History of those Things which he was himself an Eye and Ear-witness of, & quorum pars magna fuit. There are more Types of Christ in this Book, than perhaps in any other Book of the Old Testament; for Moses wrote of him, Joh. v. 46. And the Way of Man's Reconciliation to God, and coming into Covenant and Communion with him by a Mediator, is here variously represented; and 'tis of great Use to us for the Illustration of the New Testament, now we have that to assist us in the Explication of the Old.

CHAP. I.

We have here, 1. God's Kindness to Israel, in multiplying them exceedingly, v. 1--7. 2. The Egyptians Wickedness to them: 1. Oppressing and enslaving them, v. 8--14. 2. Murthering their Children, v. 15--22. Thus whom the Court of Heaven blessed, the Country of Egypt cursed, and for that Reason.

NOW these are the names of the children of Israel, which came into Egypt, every man and his household came with Jacob. 2 Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, 3 Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, 4 Dan, and Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. 5 And all the souls that came out of the loyns of Jacob, were seventy souls: for Joseph was in Egypt already. 6 And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation. 7 And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed ex-

ceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them.

In these Verses we have, 1. A Recital of the Names of the twelve Patriarchs, as they are called, *Act*. vii. 9. Their Names are oft repeated in Scripture; that they may not sound uncouth to us as other hard Names, but that by their occurring so frequently they may become familiar to us: And to shew how precious God's Spiritual Israel are to him, and how much he delighteth in them. 2. The Account which was kept of the Number of Jacob's Family when they went down into Egypt: they were in all Seventy Souls, v. 5. according to the Computation we had, *Gen*. xlii. 27. This was just the Number of the Nations by which the Earth was peopled, *Gen*. x. for when God separated the Sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the People according to the number of the Children of Israel, as Moses observes, *Deut*. xxxii. 1. Notice is taken of this here, that their Increase in Egypt might appear the more wonderful. Note, It is good for those whose latter end doth greatly increase, often to remember how small their beginning was, *Job* viii. 7. 3. The Death of Joseph, v. 6. all that Generation by Degrees wore off: Perhaps all Jacob's Sons died much about the same time, for there was not past seven Years difference in Age between the Eldest and the Youngest of them, except Benjamin: and when Death comes into a Family, sometimes it makes a full end in

in a little time; when Joseph, the Stay of the Family, died, the rest went off apace. Note, We must look upon our selves and our Brethren, and all we converse with as dying, and hastning out of the World. This Generation passeth away, as that did which went before.

4. The strange Increase of Israel in Egypt, v. 7. Here are four Words used to express it, *they were fruitful, and increased abundantly, like Fishes or Insects, so that they multiplied; and being generally healthful and strong, they waxed exceeding mighty, so that they began almost to out-number the Natives, for the Land was in all Places filled with them, at least Goshen, their own Allotment.* Observe, 1. Tho' no doubt they increased considerably before, yet it should seem 'twas not till after the Death of Joseph that it began to be taken Notice of as extraordinary. Thus when they lost the Benefit of his Protection, God made their Numbers their Defence, and they became better able than they had been to shift for themselves. If God continue our Friends and Relations to us while we most need them, and remove them, when they can be better spared, let us own he is Wise, and not complain that he is hard upon us. After the Death of Christ our Joseph, his Gospel Israel began most remarkably to increase, and his Death had an Influence upon it; 'twas like the sowing of a Corn of Wheat, which if it dye bringeth forth much Fruit, Joh. xii. 24. 2. This wonderful Increase was the Product of the Promise long before made unto the Fathers: From the Call of Abraham, when God first told him he would make of him a Great Nation, to the Deliverance of his Seed out of Egypt, was 430 years, during the first 215 of which, they were increased but to 70, but in the later half, those 70 multiplied to 600 thousand fighting Men. Note, 1. Sometimes God's Providences may seem for a great while to thwart his Promises, and to go counter to them, that his People's Faith may be tried, and his own Power the more magnified. 2. Tho' the Performance of God's Promises is sometimes slow, yet 'tis always sure, *at the end it shall speak, and shall not lie*, Hab. ii. 3.

8 Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. 9 And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we. 10 Come on, let us deal wisely with them: lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land. 11 Therefore they did set over them task-masters, to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure-cities, Pithom and Raamses. 12 But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel. 13 And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour. 14 And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service wherein they made them serve, was with rigour.

The Land of Egypt here at length becomes to Israel a House of Bondage, tho' hitherto it had been a happy Shelter and Settlement for them. Note, The Place of our Satisfaction may soon become the Place of our Affliction, and that may prove the greatest Cross to us, of which we said, *this same shall comfort us*. Those may prove our sworn Enemies whose Parents were our faithful Friends; nay the same Persons that loved us may possibly turn to hate us: Therefore cease from Man, and say not concerning any Place on this Side Heaven, *This is my rest for ever*. Observe here,

1. The Obligations they lay under to Israel upon Joseph's Account were forgotten, v. 8. There arose a new King (after several Successions in Joseph's time) which knew not Joseph. All that knew him loved him, and were kind to his Relations for his sake; but when he was dead he was soon forgotten, and the Remembrance of the good Offices he had done was either not retained, or not regarded, nor had it any Influence upon their Councils. Note, The best, and the most useful and acceptable Services done to Men are seldom remembered or recompensed to those that did them, either in their Memory, or in their Posterity, after their Death, Eccl. ix. 15. And therefore our great Care should be to serve God, and please him who is not unrighteous (whatever Men are) to forget our work and labour of Love, Heb. vi. 10. If we work for Men only, our Works at furthest will dye with us, if for God, they will follow us, Rev. xiv. 13. This King of Egypt knew not Joseph, and after him arose one that had the Impudence

to say, *I know not the Lord*, Chap. v. 2. Note, Those that are unmindful of their other Benefactors, 'tis to be feared will forget their great Benefactor, 1 Joh. iv. 20.

2. Reasons of State were suggested for their dealing hardly with Israel, v. 9, 10. (1.) They are represented as more and mightier than the Egyptians; certainly they were not so. But the King of Egypt, when he resolved to oppress them, would have them thought so, and looked on as a Formidable Body. (2.) Hence it is inferred, that if Care were not taken to keep them under, they would become dangerous to the Government, and in time of War would side with their Enemies, and revolt from their Allegiance to the Crown of Egypt. Note, it has been the Policy of Persecutors to represent God's Israel as a dangerous People, *hurling so Kings and Provinces*, not fit to be trusted, nay, not fit to be tolerated, that they may have some Pretence for the barbarous Treatment they designed them, Ezr. iv. 12. Etlb. iii. 8. Observe, the thing they feared was, lest they should get them up out of the Land, probably having heard them speak of the Promise made to their Fathers, that they should settle in Canaan. Note, The Policies of the Churches Enemies aim to defeat the Promises of the Churches God, but in vain, *God's Counsels will stand*. (3.) 'Tis therefore proposed that a Course be taken to prevent their Increase, *Come on, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply*. Note, (1.) The Growth of Israel is the Grief of Egypt, and that against which the Powers and Policies of Hell are levelled. (2.) When Men deal wickedly, 'tis common for them to imagine that they deal wisely, but the Folly of Sin will at last be manifested before all Men.

3. The Method they took to suppress them, and check their Growth, v. 11, 13, 14. The Israelites behaved themselves so peaceably and inoffensively, that they could not find any Occasion of making War upon them, and weakening them by that Means, and therefore, 1. They took Care to keep 'em poor by charging them with heavy Taxes, which some think is included in the Burthens, with which they afflicted them. 2. By this Means they took an effectual Course to make them Slaves; the Israelites it should seem were much more industrious laborious People than the Egyptians, and therefore Pharaoh took Care to find them with Work, both in his Building, they made him Treasure-Cities, and in his Husbandry, even all manner of Service in the Field: And this was exacted from them with the utmost Rigour and Severity: Here are many Expressions used to affect us with this: They had Task-Masters set over them, who were directed not only to burthen them, but as much as might be to afflict them with their Burthens, and contrive how to make them grievous. They not only made them serve, which was sufficient for Pharaoh's Profit, but they made them serve with Rigour, so that their Lives became bitter to them; intending hereby, (1.) To break their Spirits, and rob them of every thing in them that was ingenious and generous. (2.) To ruin their Health and shorten their Days, and so diminish their Numbers. (3.) To discourage them from marrying, since their Children would be born to Slavery. (4.) To oblige them to desert the Hebrews, and incorporate themselves with the Egyptians. Thus he hoped to cut off the Name of Israel that it might be no more in Remembrance. And 'tis to be feared the Oppression they were under had this ill Effect upon them; that it brought over many of them to join with the Egyptians in their idolatrous Worship, for we read, *Josh. xxiv. 14*, that they served other Gods in Egypt, and tho' it be not mentioned here in this History, yet we find, *Ezek. xx. 8*, that God had threatened to destroy them for it, even while they were in the Land of Egypt: However, they kept a distinct Body unmingled with the Egyptians, and by their other Customs separated from them, which was the Lord's doing, and marvellous.

4. The wonderful Increase of the Israelites, notwithstanding the Oppressions they groaned under, v. 12. The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied, solely to the Grief and Vexation of the Egyptians. Note, 1. Times of Affliction have oft been the Churches growing Times, *Sub pondere crescit*: Christianity spread most when it was persecuted: The Blood of the Martyrs was the Seed of the Church. 2. They that take Counsel against the Lord and his Israel, do but imagine a vain thing, Ps. ii. 1. and create so much the greater Vexation to themselves: Hell and Earth cannot diminish those whom Heaven will increase.

15 And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives (of which the name of one was Shiprah, and the name of the other Puah:) 16 And he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools, if it be a son, then ye shall kill him, but if it be a daughter, then she shall live. 17 But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men-children alive. 18 And the king of

of Egypt called for the midwives, and said unto them, Why have ye done this thing, and have saved the men-children alive? 19 And the midwives said unto Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women: for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them. 20 Therefore God dealt well with the midwives: and the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty. 21 And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that he made them houses. 22 And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive.

The Egyptians Indignation at Israel's Increase, notwithstanding the many Hardships they put upon them, drove them at length to the most Barbarous and Inhumane Methods of suppressing them, by the Murder of their Children. 'Twas strange they did not rather pick Quarrels with the grown Men, against whom they might find some Occasions perhaps, but to be thus bloody towards the Infants whom all must own to be Innocents, was a Sin which they had no cloak for. Note 1. There's more Cruelty in the corrupt Heart of Man than one would imagine, Rom. 3. 15, 16. The Enmity that is in the Seed of the Serpent against the Seed of the Woman divests Men of Humanity it self, and makes them forget all Pity. One would not think it possible that ever Men should be so Barbarous and Blood-thirsty, as the Persecutors of God's People have been, Rev. 17. 6. 2. Even confessed Innocency is no Defence against the old Enmity: What Blood so guiltless as that of the Child new-born? Yet that is prodigally shed like Water, and suck'd with Delight like Milk or Honey. Pharaoh and Herod sufficiently proved themselves Agents for that great Red Dragon who stood to devour the Man-child as soon as it was born, Rev. 12. 4. Pilate delivered Christ to be Crucified, after he had confessed that he found no Fault in him. 'Tis well for us that Man can but kill the Body, and that's all.

Two bloody Edicts are here signed for the Destruction of all the Male Children that were born to the Hebrews.

1. The Midwives were commanded to murder them.

Observe, 1. The Orders given them, v. 15, 16. It added much to the Barbarousness of the intended Executions, to make the Midwives the Executioners, for it was to make them not only bloody but Perfidious, and to oblige them to betray a Trust, and to destroy those whom they undertook to save and help. Could he think that their Sex would admit such Cruelty, and their Employment such base Treachery. Note, Those who are themselves barbarous, think to find or make others as barbarous.

Pharaoh's Project was secretly to engage the Midwives to stifle the Men-children as soon as they were born, and then to lay it upon the Difficulty of the Birth, or some Mischance common in that Case, Job 3. 11. The two Midwives he tampered with in order hereunto are here named, and perhaps at this Time, which was above 80 Years before their going out of Egypt, those two might suffice for all the Hebrew Women, at least for many of them as lay near the Court, as 'tis plain by chap. 2. 5, 6. many of them did, and of them he was most jealous. They are called Hebrew Midwives, probably not because they were themselves Hebrews, for sure Pharaoh could never expect they should be so barbarous to those of their own Nation, but because they were generally made use of by the Hebrews, and being Egyptians he hoped to prevail with them. 2. Their Pious Disobedience to this Impious Command, v. 17. They feared God, regarded his Law and dreaded his Wrath more than Pharaoh's, and therefore saved the Men-children alive. Note (1.) If Men's Commands be any way contrary to the Commands of God, we must obey God and not Man, Acts 4. 19.—5. 29. No Power on Earth can warrant us, much less oblige us to sin against God, our chief Lord. (2.) Where the Fear of God rules in the Heart, it will preserve it from that Snare which the inordinate Fear of Man brings. (3.) Their justifying of themselves in this Disobedience, when they were charged with it as a Crime, v. 18. they gave a Reason for it, which it seems God's gracious Providence had furnished them with, that they came too late to do it, for generally the Children were born before they came, v. 19. I see no Reason we have to doubt of the Truth of this; 'tis plain they were now under an extraordinary Blessing of Increase, which may well be supposed to have this Effect, that the Women had very quick and easie Labour, and the Mothers and Children being both lively, they seldom needed the Help of Midwives: This these Midwives took notice of, and concluding it to be the Finger of God, were thereby emboldened to disobey the King in Favour to those whom Heaven thus favoured, and with this justified themselves before Pharaoh, when he called them to an Account for it. Some of the ancient Jews expound it thus, Ere the Midwife comes at

them, they pray to their Father in Heaven, and he answereth them, and they do bring forth. Note, God is a readier Help to his People in Distress than any other Helpers are, and oft prevents them with the Blessings of his Goodness, such Deliverances are in a special manner obliging. (4.) The Recompence God gave them for their Tenderness towards his People, he dealt well with them, v. 20. Note, God will be behind-hand with none for any Kindness done to his People, taking it as done to himself. In particular, He made them Houses, v. 21. built them up into Families, blessed their Children, and prospered them in all they did. Note, The Services done for God's Israel are oft repaid in kind. The Midwives kept up the Israelite Houses, and in Recompence for it God made them Houses. Observe, The Recompence has Relation to the Principle upon which they went, because they feared God he made them Houses. Note, Religion and Piety is a good Friend to outward Prosperity: The Fear of God in a House will help to build it up, and establish it. Dr. Lightfoot's Notion of it is, That for their Piety they were married to Israelites, and Hebrew Families were built up by them.

2. When this Project did not take Effect of murdering them clandestinely, he gave publick Orders to all his People to drown all the Male-children of the Hebrews, v. 22. We may suppose it was made highly Penal for any to know of the Birth of a Son to an Israelite, and not to give Information to those who were appointed to throw them into the River. Note, The Enemies of the Church have been restless in their Endeavours to wear out the Saints of the most High, Dan. 7. 25. But he that sits in Heaven shall laugh at them. See Psal. 129. 1, 2.

CHAP. II.

This Chapter begins the Story of Moses, that Man of Renown, famed for his intimate Acquaintance with Heaven, and his eminent Usefulness on Earth; and the most remarkable Type of Christ as Prophet, Saviour, Law-giver and Mediator in all the Old Testament. The Jews have a Book among them, Of the Life of Moses, which tells a great many Stories concerning him, which we have Reason to think are meer Fictions, what he has recorded concerning himself, is what we may rely upon, for we know that his Record is true; and 'tis what we may be satisfied with, for 'tis what Infinite Wisdom thought fit to preserve and transmit to us. In this Chapter we have, 1. The Perils of his Birth and Infancy, v. 1—4. 2. His Preservation through those Perils, and the Preferment of his Childhood and Youth, v. 5—10. 3. The Pious Choice of his riper Years, which was to own the People of God. (1.) He offered them his Service at present, if they would have accepted it, v. 11—14. (2.) He retired, that he might reserve himself for further Service hereafter, v. 15—22. 4. The dawning of the Day of Israel's Deliverance, v. 23—25.

1 AND there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi. 2 And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. 3 And when she could no longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the rivers brink. 4 And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him.

Moses was a Levite both by Father and Mother. Jacob left Levi under Marks of Disgrace, Chap. 49. 5. and yet presently Moses appears a Descendant from him, that he might typify Christ who came in the Likeness of sinful Flesh, and was made a Curse for us. By the Birth of Moses this Tribe began to be distinguished from the rest, as afterwards it was remarkably in many Instances. Observe concerning this new born Infant, 1. How he was hid. It seems just at the Time of his Birth that cruel Law was made for the Murder of all the Male-children of the Hebrews, and many no doubt perished by the Execution of it. Moses's Parents had Miriam and Aaron, both Elder than he, born to them before that Edict came out, and had nursed them without that Peril; but those that begin the World in Peace know not what Troubles they may meet with before they have got through it. Probably Moses's Mother had little Joy of her being with Child of him, now this Edict was in Force, and was ready to say, Blessed are the Barren that bear not, Luke 23. 29. better so than bring forth Children to the Murderer, Hof. 9. 13. Yet this Child proves the Glory of his Father's House. Thus that which is most our Fear, oftentimes proves in the Issue most our Joy. Observe the Beauty of Providence:

Just at the time when Pharaoh's Cruelty rose to this Height, the Deliverer was born, though he did not appear of many Years after. Note, When Men are projecting the Church's Ruin, God is preparing for its Salvation. And Moses, who was afterwards to bring Israel out of this House of Bondage, had himself like to have fallen a Sacrifice to the Fury of the Oppressor, God so ordering it, that being afterwards told of this, he might be the more animated with a holy Zeal for the Deliverance of his Brethren out of the Hands of such bloody Men.

1. His Parents observed him to be a goodly Child, more than ordinary beautiful, he was fair to God, Acts 7. 20. they fancied he had a Lustre in his Countenance that was something more than Humane, and was a Specimen of the shining of his Face afterwards, Exod. 34. 29. Note, God sometimes gives early Earnests of his Gifts, and manifests himself betimes in those for whom and by whom he designs to do great Things. Thus he put an early Strength into Samson, Jude 13. 24. an early Forwardness into Samuel, 1 Sam. 2. 18. wrought an early Deliverance for David, 1 Sam. 17. 37. and began betimes with Timothy, 2 Tim. 4. 15.

2. Therefore they were the more solicitous for his Preservation; because they looked upon this as an Indication of some kind Purpose of God concerning him, and a happy Omen of something Great. Note, A lively active Faith can take Encouragement from the least Intimation of the Divine Favour; a merciful Hint of Providence will encourage those whose Spirits make diligent Search. Three Months they hid him in some private Apartment of their own House, though probably with the Hazard of their own Lives had he been discovered. Herein Moses was a Type of Christ, who in his Infancy was forced to abscond, and in Egypt too, Mat. 2. 13. and was wonderfully preserved when many Innocents were butchered. 'Tis said Heb. 11. 23. that Moses's Parents hid him by Faith, some think they had a special Revelation to them, that the Deliverer should spring from their Loins; however, they had the general Promise of Israel's Preservation, which they acted Faith upon, and in that Faith hid their Child, not being afraid of the Penalty annexed to the King's Commandment. Note 1. Faith in God's Promise is so far from superfluous, that it rather excites and quickens to the use of lawful Means for the obtaining of Mercy. Duty is Ours, Events are God's. 2. Faith in God will set us above the enslaving Fear of Man.

2. How He was exposed. At three Months End, probably when the Searchers came about to look for concealed Children, so that they could not hide him any longer, their Faith perhaps beginning now to fail, they put him in an Ark of Bulrushes by the Rivers side, v. 3. and set his little Sister at some Distance to watch what would become of him, and into whose Hands he would fall, v. 4. God put it into their Hearts to do this, to bring about his own Purposes; that Moses might by this Means be brought into the Hands of Pharaoh's Daughter, and that by his Deliverance from this imminent Danger, a Specimen might be given of the Deliverance of God's Church, which now lay thus exposed. Note, 1. God takes special Care of the Out-casts of Israel, Psal. 147. 2. they are his Out-casts, Isa. 56. 4. Moses seemed quite abandoned by his Friends, his own Mother durst not own him, but now the Lord took him up and protected him, Ps. 27. 10. 2. In times of extreme Difficulty 'tis good to venture upon the Providence of God. Thus to have exposed their Child while they might have preserved it, had been to tempt Providence, but when they could not, 'twas bravely to trust Providence. Nothing venture, nothing win, If I perish, I perish.

5 And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash her self at the river, and her maidens walked along by the rivers side: and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it. 6 And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews children. 7 Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, shall I go, and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? 8 And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother. 9 And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it. 10 And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water.

Here's, 1. Moses saved from perishing. Come see the Place where that great Man lay; when he was a little Child, he lay in a Bulrush-Basket by the River-side. Had he been left to lie there he must have perished in a little time with Hunger, if he had not been sooner washed into the River, or devoured by a Crocodile: Had he fallen into any other Hands than hers he did fall into, either they would not or durst not have done otherwise, but have thrown him straitway into the River; but Providence brings no less a Person thither, than Pharaoh's Daughter just at that juncture, guides her to the Place where this poor forlorn Infant lay, inclines her Heart to pity it, which she durst do, when none else durst. Never did poor Child cry so seasonably, so happily as this did, the Babe wept, which moved the Lady's Compassion, as no doubt his Beauty did, v. 3, 6. Note, (1.) Those are hard-hearted indeed that have not a tender Compassion for helpless Infants. God himself represents his Compassions by these, Ezek. 16. 5, 6. (2.) 'Tis very commendable in Persons of Quality to take Cognizance of the Distresses of the Meanest, and to be helpful and charitable to them. (3.) God's Care of us in our Infancy ought to be oft made mention of by us to his Praise. Tho' we were not thus exposed, that we were not, was God's Mercy, but many were the Perils we were surrounded with in our Infancy, out of which the Lord delivered us, Ps. 22. 9, 10. (4.) God often raises up Friends for his People even among their Enemies. Pharaoh cruelly seeks Israel's Destruction, but his own Daughter charitably compassionates a Hebrew Child, and not only so, but beyond her Intention preserves Israel's Deliverer. O Lord, how wonderful are thy Counsels!

2. Moses well provided with a good Nurse, no worse than his own dear Mother, v. 7, 8, 9. Pharaoh's Daughter thinks it convenient he should have a Hebrew Nurse, pity so fair a Child should suck the Breast of a Tawny-moore; and Moses's Sister with Art and good Management introduces the Mother into the Place of a Nurse, to the great Advantage of the Child, for Mothers are the best Nurses, and those who receive the Blessings of the Breasts with those of the Womb, are not just if they give 'em not to those for whose sake they received 'em: 'Twas also an unspeakable Satisfaction to the Mother, who received her Son as Life from the Dead, and now could enjoy him without Fear. The Transport of her Joy upon this happy Turn we may suppose sufficient to betray her to be the true Mother (had there been any Suspicion of it) to a less discerning Eye than that of Solomon, 1 Kings 3. 27.

3. Moses preferred to be the Son of Pharaoh's Daughter, v. 10. His Parents herein perhaps not only yielding to Necessity, having nursed him for her, but too much pleased with the Honour thereby done to their Son, for the Smiles of the World are stronger Temptations than its Frowns, and more hardly resisted. The Tradition of the Jews is, that Pharaoh's Daughter had no Child of her own, and that she was the only Child of her Father, so that when he was adopted for her Son, he stood fair for the Crown: However 'tis certain he stood fair for the best Preferments of the Court in due time, and in the mean time had the Advantage of the best Education and Improvements of the Court, with the Help of which having a great Genius, he became Master of all the lawful Learning of the Egyptians, Acts 7. 22. Note 1. Providence pleaseth it self sometimes in raising the Poor out of the Dust to set them among Princes, Ps. 113. 7, 8. Many who by their Birth seem marked for Obscurity and Poverty, by surprising Events of Providence, are brought to sit at the upper End of the World, to make Men know that the Heavens do rule. 2. Those whom God designs for great Services, he finds out Ways to qualify and prepare before-hand. Moses by having his Education in a Court, is the fitter to be a Prince, and King in Jeshurun; by having his Education in a learned Court, (for such the Egyptians then was) is the fitter to be an Historian: and by having his Education in the Court of Egypt, is the fitter to be employed as an Ambassador to that Court in God's Name.

4. Moses named. The Jews tell us that his Father at his Circumcision called him Joachim, but Pharaoh's Daughter called him Moses, Drawn out of the Water, so it signifies in the Egyptian Language. The calling of the Jewish Law-giver by an Egyptian Name is a happy Omen to the Gentile World, and gives Hopes of that Day when it should be said, Blessed be Egypt my People, Isa. 19. 25. And his Tuition at Court was an Earnest of the Performance of that Promise, Isa. 49. 23. Kings shall be thy nursing Fathers, and Queens thy nursing Mothers.

11 And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren. 12 And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand. 13 And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said

to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? 14 And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known. 15 Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well.

Moses had now passed the first Forty Years of his Life in the Court of Pharaoh, preparing himself for Business, and now 'twas time for him to enter upon Action, and

1. He boldly owns and espouses the Cause of God's People, when Moses was grown, he went out unto his Brethren, and looked on their Burdens, v. 11. The best Exposition of these Words we have from an inspired Pen, Heb. 11. 24, 25, 26. where we are told that this speaks, 1. His holy Contempt of the Honours and Pleasures of the Egyptian Court, he refused to be called the Son of Pharaoh's Daughter, for he went out. The Temptation was indeed very strong, he had a fair Opportunity (as we say) to make his Fortune, and to have been serviceable to Israel too, with his Interest at Court, He was obliged in Gratitude as well as Interest to Pharaoh's Daughter, and yet he obtained a glorious Victory by Faith over this Temptation. He reckoned it much more his Honour and Advantage to be a Son of Abraham, than to be the Son of Pharaoh's Daughter. 2. His tender Concern for his poor Brethren in Bondage, with whom (tho' he might easily have avoided it) he chose to suffer Affliction, he looked on their Burdens, as one that not only pitied them, but was resolved to venture with them, and if Occasion were, to venture for them.

2. He gives a Specimen of the great Things he was afterwards to do for God and his Israel, in two little Instances, related particularly by Stephen, Acts 7. 23, &c. with Design to shew how their Fathers had always resisted the Holy Ghost, (v. 51.) even in Moses himself when he first appeared as their Deliverer, wilfully shutting their Eyes against this Day-break of their Enlargement. He found himself (no doubt) under a divine Direction and Impulse in what he did, and that he was in an extraordinary manner called of God to it. Now observe,

1. Moses was afterwards to be employed in plaguing the Egyptians for the Wrongs they had done to God's Israel, and as a Specimen of that he killed the Egyptian who smote the Hebrew, v. 11, 12. probably 'twas one of the Egyptian Task-masters, whom he found abusing his Hebrew Slave, to smother a Relation of Moses, of the same Tribe. By special Warrant from Heaven (which makes not a Precedent in ordinary Cases) Moses slew the Egyptian, and rescued his oppressed Brother. The Jews Tradition is that he did not slay him with any Weapon, but as Peter slew Ananias and Sapphira, with the Word of his Mouth. His hiding him in the Sand signified that hereafter Pharaoh and all his Egyptians should under the controul of Moses's Rod be buried in the Sand of the Red-Sea. His taking Care to execute this Justice privately when no Man saw, was a piece of needful Prudence and Caution, it being but an Essay, and perhaps his Faith was as yet weak, and what he did was with some Hesitation. Those who come to be of great Faith, yet began with a little, and at first shake trembling.

2. Moses was afterwards to be employed in governing Israel, and as a Specimen of that we have him here trying to end a Controversy between two Hebrews, in which he is forced, (as he did afterwards for Forty Years) to suffer their Manners. Observe here,

1. The unhappy Quarrel which Moses observed between two Hebrews, v. 13. It doth not appear what was the Occasion, but whatever it was, it was certainly very unseasonable for Hebrews to strive with one another, when they were all oppressed and ruled with Rigour by the Egyptians. Had they not beating enough from the Egyptians, that they must beat one another? Note, 1. Even Sufferings in common do not always unite God's professing People to one another, so much as one might reasonably expect. 2. When God raiseth up Instruments of Salvation for the Church, they will find enough to do not only with oppressing Egyptians to restrain them, but with quarrelsome Israelites to reconcile them.

2. The way he took of dealing with them: He marked him that caused the Division, that did the Wrong, and mildly reasoned with him, wherefore smitest thou thy fellow. The injurious Egyptian was killed, the injurious Hebrew was only reprimanded; for what the former did was from a rooted Malice, what the latter did we may suppose was only upon a sudden Provocation. The wise God, and according to his Example all wise Governours make a Difference between one Offender and another, according to the several Qualities of the same Office. Moses endeavoured to make them Friends; a good Office: Thus we find Christ often reproving his Disciples Strifes, Luke 9. 46—23. 34. for he was a Prophet like unto Moses, a healing Prophet, a Peace-maker, who visited his Brethren with a Design to slay all Enmities. The Reproof Moses gave on this Occasion may still be of use, Wherefore smitest

thou thy fellow? Note, Smiting our Fellows is bad in any, especially in Hebrews; smiting with Tongue or Hand, either in a way of Persecution, or in a way of Strife and Contention. Consider the Person thou smitest, 'tis thy fellow, thy fellow-Creature, thy fellow-Christian; 'tis thy fellow-Servant, thy fellow-Sufferer: Consider the Cause; wherefore smitest? perhaps 'tis for no Cause at all, or no just Cause, or none worth speaking of.

3. The ill Success of his Attempt, v. 14. He said, who made thee a Prince? He that did the Wrong thus quarrelled with Moses; The injured Party it should seem was inclinable enough to Peace; but the Wrong-doer was thus touchy. Note, 'Tis a sign of Guilt to be impatient of Reproof: And it is many times easier to persuade the injured to bear the trouble of taking Wrong, than the injurious to bear the conviction of having done Wrong, 1 Cor. 6. 7, 8. 'Twas a very wise and mild Reproof which Moses gave to this quarrelsome Hebrew, but he cannot bear it, he kicks against the Pricks, Acts 9. 5. and crosseth Questions with his Reprover.

(1.) He challengeth his Authority, Who made thee a Prince? A Man needs no great Authority for the giving of a friendly Reproof, 'tis an Act of Kindness, yet this Man needs will interpret it an Act of Dominion, and represents his Reprover as imperious and assuming. Thus when People are sick of good Discourse, or a seasonable Admonition, they call it Preaching, as if a Man could not speak a Word for God, and against Sin, but he took too much upon him. Yet Moses was indeed a Prince, and a Judge, and knew it, and thought the Hebrews would have understood it, and struck in with him, but they stood in their own Light, and thrust him away, Acts 7. 25, 27.

(2.) He upbraids him with what he had done in killing the Egyptian, intendest thou to kill me? See what base Constructions Malice puts upon the best Words and Actions. Moses for reproving him is presently charged with a Design to kill him. An Attempt upon his Sin was interpreted an Attempt upon his Life, and 'tis thought sufficient to justify the Suspicion that he had killed the Egyptian, as if Moses made no difference between an Egyptian and an Hebrew. If Moses to right an injured Hebrew had put his Life in his Hand and slain an Egyptian, he ought therefore to have submitted to him, not only as a Friend to the Hebrews, but as a Friend that had more than ordinary Power and Zeal. But he throws that in his Teeth as a Crime, which was bravely done, and was intended as a Specimen of the promised Deliverance; If the Hebrews had taken the Hint and come into Moses as their Head and Captain, 'tis likely they had now been delivered, but despising their Deliverer, their Deliverance was justly deferred, and their Bondage prolonged Forty Years; as afterwards their despising Canaan, kept them out of it Forty Years more. I would, and ye would not. Note, Men know not what they do, nor what Enemies they are to their own Interest when they resist and despise faithful Reproofs, and Reprovers. When the Hebrews strove with Moses God sent him away into Midian, and they never heard of him of Forty Years; thus the Things that belonged to their Peace were hid from their Eyes, because they knew not the Day of their Visitation. As to Moses we may look on it as a great Damp and Discouragement to him. He was now choosing to suffer Affliction with the People of God, and embracing the Reproach of Christ, and now at his first setting out to meet with this Affliction and Reproach from them was a very fore Trial of his Resolution. He might have said, If this be the Spirit of the Hebrews, I'll go to Court again and be the Son of Pharaoh's Daughter. Note, 1. We must take heed of being prejudiced against the Ways and People of God by the Follies and Peevishness of some particular Persons that profess Religion. 2. It is no new thing for the Churches best Friends to meet with a great deal of Opposition and Discouragement in their healing saving Attempts, even from their own Mothers Children. Christ himself was set at naught by the Builders, and is still rejected by those he would save.

4. Moses's Flight to Midian hereupon. The Affront given him thus far proved a Kindness to him, it gave him to understand that his killing of the Egyptian was discovered, and so he had time to make his escape, otherwise the Wrath of Pharaoh might have surprized him, and taken him off. Note, God can over-rule even the Strife of Tongues so as one way or other to bring good to his People out of it. Information was brought to Pharaoh, (and it's well if it were not brought by the Hebrew himself whom Moses reproved) of his killing the Egyptian; Warrants are presently out for the apprehending of Moses; which obliged him to shift for his own Safety by flying into the Land of Midian, v. 15. (1.) Moses did this out of a prudent Care of his own Life. If this be his forsaking of Egypt which the Apostle refers to, as done by Faith, Heb. 11. 27. it teaches us, That when we are at any time in Trouble and Danger for doing our Duty, the Grace of Faith will be of good Use to us in taking proper Methods for our own Preservation. Yet there 'tis said he feared not the Wrath of his King, here 'tis said, he feared, v. 14. He did not fear with a Fear of Diffidence and Amazement, which weakens and has Torments, but with a Fear of Diligence, which quickens him to take that way that Providence opened to him, for his own Preservation. (2.) God ordered it for Wise and Holy Ends. Things were not yet ripe for Israel's Deliverance. The Measure of Egypt's Iniquity was

not yet full; the Hebrews were not sufficiently humbled, nor were they yet increased to such a Multitude as God designed; Moses is to be farther fitted for the Service, and therefore is directed to withdraw for the present, *'till the time to favour Israel, even the set Time come.* God guided Moses to Midian, because the Midianites were of the Seed of Abraham, and retained the Worship of the true God among them, so that he might have not only a safe but a comfortable Settlement among them. And through this Country he was afterwards to lead Israel; which that he might do the better, he now had Opportunity of acquainting himself with it. Hither he came, and *sate down by a Well,* tired and thoughtful, at a loss, and waiting to see which way Providence would direct him. 'Twas a great Change with him, since he was but t'other Day at ease in Pharaoh's Court: Thus God tried his Faith, and it was found to Praise and Honour.

16 Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters: and they came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their fathers flock. 17 And the shepherds came and drove them away: but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock. 18 And when they came to Reuel their father, he said, *How is it that you are come so soon to day?* 19 And they said, An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds, and also drew water enough for us, and watered the flock. 20 And he said unto his daughters, And where is he? why is it that ye have left the man? Call him, that he may eat bread. 21 And Moses was content to dwell with the man: and he gave Moses Zipporah his daughter. 22 And she bare him a son, and he called his name Gershom: for he said, I have been a stranger in a strange land.

Moses here gains a Settlement in Midian just as his Father Jacob had gained one in Syria, Gen. 29. 2. And both these Instances should encourage us to trust Providence, and to follow it. Events that seem inconsiderable and purely accidental, afterwards appear to have been designed by the Wisdom of God for very good Purposes, and of great Consequence to his People. A casual transient Occurrence has sometimes occasioned the greatest and happiest Turns of a Man's Life.

Observe 1. Concerning the seven Daughters of Reuel the Priest or Prince of Midian. (1.) They were humble, and very industrious, according as the Employment of the Country was, they drew Water for their Father's Flock, v. 16. If their Father was a Prince, it teaches us, that even those who are honourably born, and are of Quality and Distinction in their Country, yet should apply themselves to some useful Business, and *what their Hand finds to do, do it with all their Might.* Idleness can be no ones Honour. If their Father was a Priest, it teaches us, That Ministers Children should in a special manner be Examples of Humility and Industry. (2.) They were Modest, and would not ask this strange Egyptian to come Home with them, (though handsome, and a great Courtier) 'till their Father sent for him. Modesty is the Ornament of that Sex.

2. Concerning Moses; He was taken for an Egyptian, (v. 19.) and Strangers must be content to be mistaken, but 'tis observable, 1. How ready he was to help Reuel's Daughters to water their Flocks. Tho' bred in Learning and at a Court, yet he knew how to turn his Hand to such an Office as this, when there was occasion; nor had he learned of the Egyptians to despise Shepherds. Note, Those that have had a liberal Education yet should not be strangers to servile Work, because they know not what Necessity Providence may put them in of working for themselves, or what Opportunity Providence may give them of being serviceable to others. These young Women it seems met with some Opposition in their Employment, more than they and their Servants could conquer; The Shepherds of some neighbouring Prince, as some think, or some idle Fellows that called themselves Shepherds, drove away their Flocks; but Moses, though Melancholy, and in Distress, stood up and helped them not only to get clear of the Shepherds, but when that was done, to water the Flocks. This he did not only in Complaisance to the Ladies, tho' that also did very well become him, but because where-ever he was as Occasion offered it self, (1.) He loved to be doing Justice, and appearing in the Defence of such as he saw injured, which every Man ought to do as far as it is in the Power of his Hand to do it. (2.) He loved to be doing Good. Where-ever the Providence of God casts us we should desire and endeavour to be useful; and when we cannot do the Good we would, we must be ready to do the Good we can. And he that is faithful in a little shall be intrusted with more. 2. How well he was paid for his Serviceableness. When the young Women acquainted their Father with the Kindnesses

they had received from this Stranger, he sent to invite him to his House, and made much of him, v. 20. Thus God will recompence the Kindnesses which are at any time shewn to his Children: They shall in no wise lose their Reward. Moses soon recommended himself to the Esteem and good Affection of this Prince of Midian, who took him into his House, and in process of Time married one of his Daughters to him, v. 21. By whom he had a Son, whom he called Gershom. A Stranger there, (v. 22.) that if ever God should give him a Home of his own, he might keep in Remembrance the Land in which he had been a Stranger. Now this Settlement of Moses in Midian was designed by Providence, (1.) To shelter him for the present; God will find hiding Places for his People in the Day of their Distress; nay, he will himself be to them a little Sanctuary, and will secure them either under Heaven, or in Heaven. But, (2.) 'twas also designed to prepare him for the great Services he was further designed to. His manner of Life in Midian, where he kept the Flock of his Father-in-law, (having none of his own to keep) would be of use to him, (1.) To enure him to Hardship, and Poverty, that he might learn how to want, as well as how to abound. God humbles those first whom he intends to exalt. (2.) To enure him to Contemplation, and Devotion. Egypt accomplished him for a Scholar, a Gentleman, a Statesman, a Soldier, all which Accomplishments would be afterwards of use to him, but yet lacketh he one Thing, in which the Court of Egypt could not befriend him: He that was to do all by Divine Revelation must know by a long Experience what it was to live a Life of Communion with God, and in this he would be greatly furthered by the Solitude and Retirement of a Shepherd's Life in Midian. By the former he was prepared to rule in Jeshurun, but by the latter he was prepared to converse with God in Mount Horeb, near which Mount he had spent much of his Time. Those that know what it is to be alone with God, in holy Exercises, are acquainted with better Delights than ever Moses tasted in the Court of Pharaoh.

23 And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died, and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried; and their cry came up unto God, by reason of the bondage. 24 And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. 25 And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them.

Here's, 1. The Continuance of the Israelites Bondage in Egypt, v. 23. Probably the murdering of their Infants did not continue, that part of their Affliction only attended the Birth of Moses, to signalize that. And now they were content with their increase, finding that Egypt was enriched by their Labour; so they might have them for their Slaves, they cared not how many they were. On this therefore they were intent, to keep them all at work, and make the best hand they could of their Labour. When one Pharaoh died another rose up in his Place, that was governed by the same Maxims, and was as cruel to Israel as his Predecessors. If there was sometimes a little Relaxation, yet it presently revived again with as much Rigour as ever; and probably as the more Israel was oppressed the more they multiplied, so the more they multiplied, the more they were oppressed. Note, Sometimes God suffers the Rod of the Wicked to lie very long and very heavy on the Lot of the Righteous. If Moses in Midian at any time began to think how much better his Condition might have been had he staid among the Courtiers, he must of himself think this also, how much worse it would have been if he had had his Lot with his Brethren; 'twas a great Degrading to him to be keeping Sheep in Midian, but better so than making Brick in Egypt. The Consideration of our Brethrens Afflictions would help to reconcile us to our own.

2. The Preface to their Deliverance at last.

1. They cried, v. 23. Now at last they began to think of God under their Troubles, and to return to him from the Idols they had served, Ezek. 20. 8. Hitherto they had fretted at the Instruments of their Trouble, but God was not in all their Thoughts. Thus Hypocrites in Heart heap up Wrath, they cry not when he binds them, Job 36. 13. But before God unbound them, he put it into their Hearts to cry unto him, as 'tis explained, Num. 20. 16. Note, 'Tis a good Sign God is coming towards us with Deliverance, when he inclines and enables us to cry to him for it.

2. God heard, v. 24, 25. To four different Expressions of a kind Intention towards them, the Name of God is here emphatically prefixed. (1.) God heard their groaning, i. e. he made it to appear that he took notice of their Complaints. The Groans of the Oppressed cry aloud in the Ears of the Righteous God to whom Vengeance belongs, especially the Groans of God's Spiritual Israel, he knows the Burthens they groan under, and the Blessings they groan after, and that the Blessed Spirit by these Groanings, makes Intercession in them. (2.) God remem-

bered

bred his Covenant, which he seemed to have forgotten, but really is ever mindful of. This God had an Eye to, and not to any Merit of theirs in what he did for them. See *Lev. 26. 43.* (3.) God looked upon the Children of Israel. Moses looked upon them and pitied them. *v. 11.* but now God looked upon them and helped them. (4.) God had respect unto them, a favourable Respect to them as his own. The frequent Repetition of the Name of God here intimates that now we are to expect something great, *Opus Deo dignum.* His Eyes which run to and fro thro' the Earth are now fixed upon Israel to shew himself strong, to shew himself a God in their behalf.

CHAP. III.

As Prophecy had ceased for many Ages before the coming of Christ, that the Revival and Perfection of it in that great Prophet might be the more remarkable, so Vision had ceased (for ought appears) among the Patriarchs for some Ages before the coming of Moses, that God's Appearances to him for Israel's Salvation might be the more welcome, and in this Chapter we have God's first Appearance to him in the Bush, and the Conference between God and Moses in that Vision. Here's, 1. The Discovery God was pleased to make of his Glory to Moses, at the Bush, which Moses was forbidden to approach too near to, *v. 1—5.* 2. A general Declaration of God's Grace and Good Will to his People, who were beloved for the Father's sakes, *v. 6.* 3. A particular Notification of God's Purpose concerning the Deliverance of Israel out of Egypt. 1. He assures Moses it should now be done, *v. 7—9.* 2. He gives him a Commission to act in it, as his Ambassador both to Pharaoh, *v. 10* and to Israel, *v. 16.* 3. He answers the Objection Moses made of his own unworthiness, *v. 11, 12.* 4. He gives him full Instructions what to say, both to Pharaoh and to Israel, *v. 13—18.* 5. He tells him before-hand what the Issue would be, *v. 14—22.*

NOW Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the back-side of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. 2 And the Angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. 3 And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. 4 And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. 5 And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. 6 Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face: for he was afraid to look upon God.

The Years of Moses's Life are remarkably divided into three Forties, the first Forty he spent as a Prince in Pharaoh's Court, the Second, a Shepherd in Midian, the Third, a King in Jerusalem, so changeable is the Life of Men, especially the Life of Good Men. He had now finished his second Forty when he received his Commission to bring Israel out of Egypt. Note, Sometimes 'tis long before God calls his Servants out to that Work which of old he designed them for, and has been graciously preparing them for. Moses was born to be Israel's Deliverer, and yet not a Word is said of it to him 'till he is Eighty Years of Age. Now observe,

1. How this Appearance of God to him found him employed. He was keeping the Flock, that is, tending Sheep near Mount Horeb, *v. 1.* This was a poor Employment for a Man of his Parts and Education, yet he rests satisfied with it, and thus learns Meekness and Contentment to a high Degree, for which he is more celebrated in sacred Writ than for all his other Learning: Note, (1.) The Calling to which we are called we should therein abide, and not be given to change. (2.) Even those that are qualified for great Employments and Services, must not think it strange if they be confined to Obscurity; 'twas the Lot of Moses before them, who foresaw nothing to the contrary but that he should die, as he had lived a great while, a poor despicable Shepherd. Let those that think themselves buried alive be content to shine like Lamps in Sepulchres, and wait 'till God's Time comes for setting them in a Candlestick. Thus employed Moses was, when he was honoured with this Vision.

Note, 1. God will encourage Industry. The Shepherds were keeping their Flocks when they received the Tidings of our Saviour's Birth, *Luk. 2. 8.* Satan loves to find us idle, God is well-pleased when he finds us employed. 2. Retirement is a good Friend to our Communion with God. When we are alone the Father is with us. Moses saw more of God in the back-side of a Desert than ever he had seen in Pharaoh's Court.

2. What the Appearance was: To his great surprize he saw a Bush burning, when he perceived no Fire either from Earth or Heaven to kindle it, and which was more strange, it did not consume, *v. 2.* 'Twas an Angel of the Lord that appeared to him, some think a created Angel, who speaks in the Language of him that sent him; Others, the second Person, the Angel of the Covenant, who is himself Jehovah. 'Twas an extraordinary Manifestation of the Divine Presence and Glory; what was visible was produced by the Ministry of an Angel, but he heard God in it speaking to him.

(1.) He saw a Flame of Fire, for our God is a consuming Fire. When Israel's Deliverance out of Egypt was promised to Abraham, he saw a burning Lamp, which signified the Light of Joy that Deliverance should cause, *Gen. 15. 17.* but now it shines brighter, as a Flame of Fire, for God in that Deliverance brought Terror and Destruction to his Enemies, Light and Heat to his People, and displayed his Glory before all. See *Isa. 10. 17.*

(2.) This Fire was not in a tall and stately Cedar; but in a Bush, a thorny Bush, so the Word signifies; For God chuseth the Weak and despised Things of the World, such as Moses, now a poor Shepherd, with them to confound the Wise; He delights to Beautify and Crown the Humble.

(3.) The Bush burned, and yet was not consumed, an Emblem of the Church now in Bondage in Egypt, burning in the Brick-Kilns, yet not consumed, perplexed, but not in Despair, cast down, but not destroyed.

3. The Curiosity Moses had to enquire into this extraordinary Sight, *v. 3.* I will turn aside and see. He speaks as one inquisitive, and bold in his Enquiry, whatever it was, he would if possible know the Meaning of it. Note, Things revealed belong to us, and we ought diligently to enquire into them.

4. The Invitation he had to draw near, yet with a Caution, not to come too near, nor rashly. (1.) God gave him a gracious Call, to which he returned a ready Answer, *v. 4.* When God saw that he took notice of the burning Bush, and turned aside to see it, and left his Business to attend it, then God called to him. If he had carelessly neglected it as an *Ignis Fatuus*, a Thing not worth taking notice of, 'tis likely God had departed and said nothing to him, but when he turned aside, God called to him. Note, Those that would have Communion with God must attend upon him, and approach to him in those Ordinances wherein he is pleased to manifest himself, and his Power and Glory, tho' it be in a Bush; come to the Treasure, tho' in an Earthen Vessel. Those that seek God diligently shall find him, and find him their bountiful Rewarder. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. God called him by Name, Moses, Moses. This which he heard could not but surprize him much more than what he saw. The Word of the Lord always went along with the Glory of the Lord, for every Divine Vision was designed for Divine Revelation, *Job 4. 16—33. 14, 15.* Divine Calls are then effectual, (1.) When the Spirit of God makes them particular, and calls us by Name. The Word calls, *Ho, every one,* the Spirit by the Application of that calls, *Ho, such a one:* I knew thee by Name, *Exod. 33. 12,* and (2.) They are then effectual when we return an obedient Answer to them, as Moses here, *Here am I.* What saith my Lord unto his Servant? *Here am I,* not only to hear what is said, but to do what I am bidden. (2.) God gave him a needful Caution against Rashness and Irreverence in his Approach. 1. He must keep his Distance: Draw near, but not too near; so near as to hear, but not so near as to pry. His Conscience must be satisfied, but not his Curiosity; And Care must be taken that Familiarity do not breed Contempt. Note, In all our Approaches to God we ought to be deeply affected with that infinite Distance that is between us and God, *Ecc. 5. 2.* Or, this may be taken as proper to the Old-Testament Dispensation, which was a Dispensation of Darkness, Bondage and Terror, which the Gospel happily frees us from, giving us Boldness to enter into the Holiest, and inviting us to draw near. 2. He must express his Reverence, and his Readiness to obey. Put off thy Shoes from off thy Feet, as a Servant; the putting off the Shoe was then what the putting off of the Hat is now, a Token of Respect, and Submission. The Ground for the present is Holy Ground, made so by this special Manifestation of the Divine Presence there, and during the Continuance of that, therefore tread not on that Ground with dirty Shoes. Keep thy Foot, *Ecc. 5. 1.* Note, We ought to approach to God with a solemn Pause and Preparation; and tho' Bodily Exercise alone profits a little, yet we ought to glorify God with our Bodies, and to express our inward Reverence, by a grave and reverent Behaviour in the Worship of God, carefully avoiding every thing that looks light, and rude and unbecoming the awfulness of the Service.

5. The solemn Declaration God made of his Name, by which he would be known to *Moses*, v. 6. *I am the God of thy Father.*

1. He lets him know, 'tis God that speaks to him, to engage his Reverence and Attention, his Faith and Obedience, for that's enough to command all these, *I am the Lord.* Let us always hear the Word, *as the Word of God*, 1 *Thess.* 2. 13.

2. He will be known as the God of his Father, his Pious Father *Amram*, and the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob his Ancestors, and the Ancestors of all Israel, for whom God was now about to appear. By this God design'd, (1.) To instruct *Moses* in the Knowledge of another World, and strengthen his Belief of a Future State. Thus 'tis interpreted by our Lord Jesus, the best Expounder of Scripture, who from hence proves *that the Dead are raised*, against the Sadducees, *Moses*, saith he, *shewed it at the Bush*, Luk. 20. 37. i. e. God there shewed it to him, and in him to us, *Matth.* 22. 31. Abraham was dead, and yet God is the God of Abraham, therefore Abraham's Soul lives, to which God stands in Relation, and to make his Soul completely Happy, his Body must live again in due time. This Promise made unto the Fathers that God would be their God, must include a Future Happiness, for he never did any thing for them in this World sufficient to answer the vast Extent and Compass of that great Word, but *having prepared for them a City*, he is not ashamed to be called their God, Heb. 11. 16. and see, *Act.* 26. 6, 7—24. 15. (2.) To assure *Moses* of the Performance of all those particular Promises made to the Fathers; He may confidently expect that, for by these Words it appears God remembered his Covenant, Ch. 2. 24. Note, 1. God's Covenant Relation to us, as our God, is the best Support in the worst of Times, and a great Encouragement to our Faith in particular Promises. 2. When we are conscious to our selves of our own great Unworthiness, we may take comfort from God's Relation to our Fathers, 2 *Chr.* 20. 6.

6. The mighty Impression this made upon *Moses*, he hid his Face, as one both ashamed and afraid to look upon God. Now he knew it was a Divine Light, his Eyes were dazzled with it; He was not afraid of a burning Bush, 'till he perceived that God was in it. Yea, tho' God called himself the God of his Father, and a God in Covenant with him, yet he was afraid. Note 1. The more we see of God, the more Cause we shall see to worship him with Reverence and Godly Fear. 2. Even the Manifestations of God's Grace and Covenant Love should increaseth our humble Reverence of him.

7 And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry, by reason of their task-masters: for I know their sorrows. 8 And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land, unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites. 9 Now therefore behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. 10 Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.

Now *Moses* had put off his Shoes (for no doubt he had observed the Orders given him, v. 5.) and covered his Face, God enters upon the particular Business that was now to be concerted, which was the bringing of Israel out of Egypt. Now after forty Years of Israel's Bondage, and *Moses*'s Banishment, when we may suppose both he and they began to despair, they of being delivered, and he of delivering them; at length the Time is come, even the Year of the Redeemed. Note, God oft comes for the Salvation of his People then, when they have done looking for him, *shall he find Faith*, Luk. 18. 8.

Here's, 1. The Notice God takes of the Afflictions of Israel, v. 7. 9. *seeing I have seen*, not only I have surely seen, but I have strictly observed and considered the Matter: Three Things God took cognizance of, (1.) Their Sorrows, v. 7. 'tis likely they were not permitted to make a Remonstrance of their Grievances to Pharaoh, nor to seek Relief against their Task-masters in any of his Courts, nor scarce durst complain to one another, but God observed their Tears. Note, Even the secret Sorrows of God's People are known to him. (2.) their Cry, *I have heard their Cry*, v. 7. 'tis come unto me, v. 9. Note, God is not deaf to the Cries of his Afflicted People. (3.) The Tyranny of their Persecutors; *I have seen the Oppression*, v. 9. Note, As the poorest of the Oppressed are not below God's Cognizance, so

the highest and greatest of their Oppressors are not above his Check, but he will surely visit for these Things.

2. The Promise God makes of their speedy Deliverance and Enlargement, v. 8. *I am come down to deliver them.* (1.) It notes his Resolution to deliver them, and that his Heart was upon it, so that it should be done speedily and effectually, and in Methods out of the common Road of Providence, when God doth something very extraordinary he is said to come down to do it, as *Isa.* 64. 1. (2.) This Deliverance was typical of our Redemption by Christ, and in that the eternal Word did indeed come down from Heaven to deliver us. 'Twas his Errand into the World. He promises also their Happy Settlement in the Land of Canaan, that they should exchange Bondage for Liberty, Poverty for Plenty, Labour for Rest, and the precarious Condition of Tenants at Will, for the Ease and Honour of Lords Proprietors. Note, Whom God, by his Grace, delivers out of a Spiritual Egypt, he will bring to a Heavenly Canaan.

3. The Commission he gives to *Moses* in order hereunto, v. 10. He is not only sent as a Prophet to Israel to assure them that they should speedily be delivered, even that had been a great favour, to have one to tell them, *How long*; but he is sent as an Ambassador to Pharaoh to treat with him, or rather as a Herald at Arms to demand their Discharge, and to denounce War in case of a Refusal; and, as a Prince to Israel, to Conduct and Command them: Thus is he taken from following the *Ewes great with Young* to a Pastoral Office much more Noble, as *David*, Ps. 78. 71. Note, God is the Fountain of Power, and the Powers that be are ordained of him as he pleaseth. The same Hand that now fetched a Shepherd out of a Desert to be the Planter of a Jewish Church, afterwards fetched Fisher-men from their Ships to be the Planters of the Christian Church, that the Excellency of the Power might be of God.

11 And *Moses* said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? 12 And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain. 13 And *Moses* said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you, and they shall say to me, What is his name? What shall I say unto them? 14 And God said unto *Moses*, I AM THAT I AM: And he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. 15 And God said moreover unto *Moses*, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.

God having spoken to *Moses* allows him also a liberty of Speech, which he here improves: And,

1. He objects his own Insufficiency for the Service he was called to, v. 11. *Who am I?* He thinks himself unworthy of the Honour, and unable for the Work, not *par negotio*. He thinks he wants Courage, and therefore cannot go to Pharaoh to make a Demand which might cost the Demandant his Head: He thinks he wants Conduct, and therefore cannot bring forth the Children of Israel out of Egypt, they are unarm'd, undisciplin'd, quite dispirited, utterly unable to help themselves, 'tis morally impossible to bring them out. (1.) *Moses* was incomparably the fittest of any Man living for this Work, eminent for Learning, Wisdom, Experience, Valour, Faith, Holiness, and yet *who am I?* Note, The more fit any Person is for Service, commonly the less Opinion he has of himself: See *Jud.* 9. 8, &c. (2.) The Difficulties of the Work were indeed very great, enough to startle the Courage and stagger the Faith of *Moses* himself. Note, Even Wise and Faithful Instruments may be much discouraged at the Difficulties that lie in the way of the Churches Salvation. (3.) *Moses* had formerly been very courageous when he slew the Egyptian, but now his Heart failed him, for good Men are not always alike Bold and Zealous. (4.) Yet *Moses* is the Man that doth it at last, for God gives Grace to the Lowly, Modest Beginnings are very good Prefaces.

God answers this Objection, v. 12. (1.) He promiseth him his Presence, *Certainly I will be with thee*, and that's enough, *Note*, Those that are weak in themselves yet may do Wonders being strong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might: And those that are most diffident of themselves may be most confident in God. God's Presence puts an Honour upon the Worthless, Wisdom and Strength into the Weak and Foolish, makes the greatest Difficulties dwindle to nothing, and is enough to answer all Objections. (2.) He assures him of Success, by the same Token that they should serve God upon this Mountain. *Note*, 1. Those Deliverances are most valuable which open to us a Door of Liberty to serve God. 2. If God gives us Opportunity and a Heart to serve him, it is a happy and encouraging Earnest of further Favours designed us.

2. He begs Instructions for the executing of his Commission, and has them, *thoroughly to furnish him*.

(1.) He desires to know by what Name God would at this time make himself known, v. 13. 1. He supposeth the Children of Israel would ask him, *What is his Name?* This they would ask, either (1.) To pose Moses: He foresaw Difficulty, not only in dealing with Pharaoh to make him willing to part with them, but in dealing with them to make them willing to move. They would be scrupulous and apt to Cavil, would bid him produce his Commission, and probably this would be the Trial, Did he know the Name of God? Had he the Watch-word? Once he was asked, *Who made thee a Judge?* Then he had not his Answer ready, and he would not be baulked so again, but would be able to tell in whose Name he came. (2.) They would ask this Question for their own Information, 'Tis to be feared they were grown very Ignorant in Egypt, by reason of their hard Bondage, want of Teachers, and lots of the Sabbath, so that they needed to be told the first Principles of the Oracles of God; Or, this Question, *What is his Name?* amounted to an enquiry into the Nature of the Dispensation they were now to expect: How will God in it be known to us, and what may we depend upon from him? 2. He desires Instructions what Answer to give them, *What shall I say to them?* What Name shall I vouch to them for the Proof of my Authority? I must have something Great and Extraordinary to say to them, what must it be? If I must go, let me have full Instructions that I may not run in vain. *Note*, 1. It highly concerns those who speak to People in the Name of God to be well prepared before-hand. 2. Those that would know what to say must go to God, to the Word of his Grace, and to the Throne of his Grace for Instructions, *Ezek. 2. 7. 3—4. 10. 17.* 3. Whenever we have any thing to do with God, it is desirable to know, and our Duty to consider, *what is his Name*.

2. God readily gives him full Instructions in this Matter: Two Names God would now be known by.

1. A Name that speaks what he is in himself, v. 14. *I am that I am*: This explains his Name *Jehovah*, and signifies, 1. That he is self-existent: He has his Being of himself, and has no dependence upon any other: The Greatest and best Man in the World must say, *By the Grace of God I am that I am*, but God saith it absolutely, and 'tis more than any Creature, Man or Angel, can say, *I am that I am*: Being self-existent he cannot but be self-sufficient, and therefore all-sufficient, and the inexhaustible Fountain of Being and Bliss. 2. That he is Eternal and Unchangeable, and always the Same, *Yesterday, to Day, and for ever*: He will be what he will be, and what he is: See *Rev. 1. 10.* 3. That we cannot by searching find him out: This is such a Name as checks all bold and curious Enquiries concerning God, and in effect saith, *Ask not after my Name seeing it is wonderful*, *Jud. 13. 18.* *Prov. 30. 4.* Do we ask what is God, let it suffice us to know, That he is what he is, what he ever was and ever will be, *How little a Portion is heard of him!* *Job. 26. 14.* 4. That he is faithful and true to all his Promises, unchangeable in his Word as well as in his Nature, and not a Man that he should lie, let Israel know this, *I am hath sent me unto you*.

2. A Name that speaks what he is to his People: Left that Name *I am* should amuse and puzzle them, he is further directed to make use of another Name of God more familiar and intelligible, v. 15. *The Lord God of your Fathers hath sent me unto you*. Thus God had made himself known to him, v. 6. and thus he must make him known to them. 1. That he might revive among them the Religion of their Fathers, which is to be feared was much decayed, and almost lost. This was necessary to prepare them for Deliverance, *Ps. 80. 19.* 2. That he might raise their Expectations of the speedy Performance of the Promises made unto their Fathers: *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob* are particularly named, because with *Abraham* the Covenant was first made, and with *Isaac* and *Jacob* oft expressly renewed, and these three were distinguished from their Brethren, and chosen to be the Trustees of the Covenant when their Brethren were rejected. This God will have to be his Name for ever, and it has been, is, and will be, his Name, by which his Worshipers know him, and distinguish him from all false Gods: See *1. Kin. 18. 36.* *Note*, God's Covenant Relation to his People is what he will be ever mindful of, what he glories in, and what he will have us never to forget, but give him the glory of: If he will have this to be his Memorial unto all Generations, we have all the Reason in the World to make it so with us, for it is a precious Memorial.

16 Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt. 17 And I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt, unto the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, unto a land flowing with milk and honey. 18 And they shall hearken to thy voice: and thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt, and you shall say unto him, The LORD God of the Hebrews hath met with us; and now let us go (we beseech thee) three days journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God. 19 And I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand. 20 And I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof: and after that he will let you go. 21 And I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians: and it shall come to pass, that when ye go, ye shall not go empty: 22 But every woman shall borrow of her neighbour, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye shall put them upon your sons, and upon your daughters; and ye shall spoil the Egyptians.

Moses is here more particularly instructed in his Work, and informed before-hand of his Success.

1. He must deal with the Elders of Israel, and raise their Expectations of a speedy remove to Canaan, v. 16, 17. He must repeat to them what God had said to him, as a faithful Ambassador. *Note*, That which Ministers have received of the Lord they must deliver to his People, and keep back nothing that is profitable: Lay an Emphasis on that, v. 17. *I have said, I will bring you up*; that's enough to satisfy them, *I have said it: And hath he spoken, and will he not make it good?* With us saying and doing are two things, but they are not so with God, for he is in one Mind, and who can then him, *I have said it, and all the World cannot gain-say it, his Counsel shall stand*.

His Success with the Elders of Israel would be good, so he is told, v. 18. *they shall hearken to thy voice*, and not thrust thee away as they did forty Years ago: He, who by his Grace, inclineth the Heart, and opens the Ear, could say before-hand, *they shall hearken to thy voice*: having determined to make them willing in this Day of Power.

2. He must deal with the King of Egypt, v. 18. (1.) They must not begin with a Demand, but with a humble Petition; that gentle and submissive Method must be first tried, even with one who 'twas certain would not be wrought upon by it, *We beseech thee let us go*. (2.) They must only beg leave of Pharaoh to go as far as Mount Sinai to worship God, and say nothing to him of going quite away to Canaan; that would have been immediately rejected, but this was a very modest and reasonable Request; and his denying of it was utterly inexcusable, and justified them in the total deserting of his Kingdom. If he would not give them leave to go sacrifice at Sinai, justly did they go without leave to settle in Canaan. *Note*, the Calls and Commands God sends to Sinners are so highly reasonable in themselves, and delivered to them in such a gentle winning way, as that the Mouth of the Disobedient must needs be for ever stop.

As to his Success with Pharaoh, he is here told, (1.) That Petitions and Persuasions, and humble Remonstrances would not prevail with him, no, nor a mighty Hand stretched out in Signs and Wonders, v. 19. *I am sure he will not let you go*. *Note*, God sends his Messengers to those whose Hardness and Obstinacy he certainly knows and foresees, that it may appear he would have them Turn and Live. (2.) That Plagues should compel him to it, v. 20. *I will smite Egypt*, and then he will let you go. *Note*, Those will certainly be broken by the Power of God's Hand, that will not bow to the Power of his Word; we may be sure that when God judgeth he will overcome. (3.) That his People should be more kind to them, and furnish them at their Departure with abundance of Plate and Jewels, to their great enriching, v. 21, 22. *I will give this People favour in the sight of the Egyptians*. *Note*, (1.) God sometimes makes the Enemies of his People not only to be at Peace with them, but to be kind to them. (2.) God has many ways of balancing Accounts between the Injured and the Injurious, of righting the Oppressed, and compelling those that have done wrong to make Restitution, for he sits in the Throne judging right.

C H A P. IV.

This Chapter (1.) continues and concludes God's Discourse with Moses at the Bush, concerning this Great Affair of bringing Israel out of Egypt. 1. Moses objects the People's Unbelief, v. 1. and God answers that Objection by giving him a Power to work Miracles. (1.) To turn his Rod into a Serpent, and then into a Rod again, v. 2—5. (2.) To make his Hand leprous and then whole again, v. 6—8. (3.) To turn the Water into Blood, v. 9. 2. Moses objects his own slowness of Speech, v. 10. and begs to be excused, v. 13. But God answers this Objection, 1. By promising him his Presence, v. 11, 12. 2. By joining Aaron in Commission with him, v. 14—16. 3. By putting an Honour upon the very Staff in his Hand, v. 17. (1.) It begins Moses's execution of his Commission. 1. He obtains leave of his Father-in-law to return into Egypt, v. 18. 2. He receives further Instructions and Encouragements from God, v. 19, 21—23. 3. He hastens his Departure, and takes his Family with him, v. 20. 4. He meets with some Difficulty in the way about the Circumcising his Son, v. 24—26. 5. He has the Satisfaction of meeting his Brother Aaron v. 27, 28. 6. He produceth his Commission before the Elders of Israel, to their great Joy, v. 29—31. And thus the Wheels were set a going towards that great Deliverance.

1 AND Moses answered, and said, But behold they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The LORD hath not appeared unto thee. 2 And the LORD said unto him, What is that in thine hand. And he said, A rod. 3 And he said, Cast it on the ground; and he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent: and Moses fled from before it. 4 And the LORD said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand. 5. That they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee. 6 And the LORD said furthermore unto him, Put now thine hand into thy bosom; and he put his hand into his bosom: and when he took it out, behold his hand was leprous as snow. 7 And he said, Put thine hand into thy bosom again: And he put his hand into his bosom again, and plucked it out of his bosom, and behold it was turned again as his other flesh. 8 And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign. 9 And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe also these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land: and the water which thou takest out of the river, shall become blood upon the dry land.

It was a very great Honour that Moses was called to when God Commissioned him to bring Israel out of Egypt, yet he is hardly persuaded to accept the Commission, and doth it at last with great reluctancy, which we should rather impute to an humble Diffidence he had of himself and his own Sufficiency, than to any unbelieving distrust of God and his Word and Power. Note, Those whom God designs for Preferment he clothes with Humility: The most fit for Service are the least forward.

1. Moses objects, that in all probability the People would not hearken to his Voice, v. 1. i. e. they would not take his bare Word, unless he shewed them some sign, which he had not been yet instructed to do. This Objection cannot be justified because it contradicts what God had said, chap. 3. 18. they shall hearken to thy Voice. If God saith they will, doth it become Moses to say they will not? Surely he means, perhaps they will not at first, or, some of them will not? If there should be some Gainayers among them, that would question his Commission, how should he deal with them? And what Course should he take to convince them? He remembered how they had once rejected him, and feared it would be so again. Note, 1. Present Discouragements oft arise from former Disappointments. 2. Wise and Good Men have sometimes a worse Opinion of People than they deserve: Moses said, v. 1. they will not believe me, and yet he was happily

mistaken, for 'tis said, v. 31. the People believed; but then the Signs which God appointed in Answer to this Objection were first wrought in their sight.

2. God empowers him to work Miracles, directs him to three particularly, two of which were now immediately wrought for his own Satisfaction. Note, True Miracles are the most convincing external Proofs of a Divine Mission attested by them. Therefore our Saviour oft appealed to his Works, as Job. 5. 36. and Nicodemus owns himself convinced by them, Job. 3. 2. And here Moses having a special Commission given him as a Judge and Law-giver to Israel has this Seal affixed to his Commission, and comes supported with these Credentials.

1. The Rod in his Hand is made the Subject of a Miracle, a double Miracle, 'tis but thrown out of his Hand, and it becomes a Serpent, he resumes it, and it becomes a Rod again, v. 2, 3, 4. Now, 1. Here was a Divine Power manifested in the Change itself, that a dry Stick should be turned into a living Serpent, a lively one, so formidable a one that Moses himself, on whom it should seem it turned in some threatening manner, fled from before it; tho' we may suppose in that Desert, Serpents were no strange Things to him: But what was produced miraculously was always the best and strongest of the Kind, as the Water turned to Wine, and then that this living Serpent should be turned into a dry Stick again, this was the Lord's doing. 2. Here was an Honour put upon Moses that this Change was wrought upon his throwing it down and taking it up, without any Spell or Charm or Incantation: His being Empowered thus to act under God out of the common Course of Nature and Providence was a Demonstration of his Authority under God to settle a new Dispensation of the Kingdom of Grace. We cannot imagine that the God of Truth would delegate such a Power as this to an Impostor. 3. There was a Significance in the Miracle itself, Pharaoh had turned the Rod of Israel into a Serpent, representing them as dangerous, chap. 7. 10. causing their Belly to cleave to the Dust, and seeking their Ruin, but now they should be turned into a Rod again: Or thus Pharaoh had turned the Rod of Government into the Serpent of Oppression, from which Moses had himself fled into Midian, but by the Agency of Moses the Scene was altered again. 4. There was a direct Tendency in it to convince the Children of Israel that Moses was indeed sent of God to do what he did, v. 5. Miracles were for Signs to them that believed not, 1 Cor. 14. 22.

2. His Hand itself is next made the Subject of a Miracle; he puts it once into his Bosom, and takes it out leprous; he puts it again into the same Place, and takes it out well, v. 6, 7. This signified, 1. That Moses, by the Power of God, should bring sore Diseases upon Egypt, and that at his Prayer they should be removed. 2. That whereas the Israelites in Egypt were become leprous, polluted by Sin, and almost consumed by Oppression (a Leper is as one dead, Num. 12. 12.) by being taken into the Bosom of Moses they should be cleansed and cured, and all their Grievances redressed. 3. That Moses was not to work Miracles by his own Power, nor for his own Praise, but by the Power of God, and for his Glory; the leprous Hand of Moses doth for ever exclude Boasting. Now 'tis supposed if the former Sign did not convince, this latter would. Note, God is willing more abundantly to shew the Truth of his Word, and is not sparing in his Proofs; the Multitude and Variety of the Miracles corroborates the Evidence.

3. He is directed when he should come to Egypt to turn some of the Water of the River into Blood, v. 9. This was done at first as a Sign, but, not gaining due Credit with Pharaoh, the whole River was afterwards turned into Blood, and then it became a Plague. He is ordered to work this Miracle in case they would not be convinced by the other two. Note, Unbelief shall be left inexcusable, and convicted of a wilful Obstinacy. As to the People of Israel God had said, chap. 3. 18. they shall hearken, yet he appoints these Miracles to be wrought for their Conviction, for he that has ordained the End, has ordained the Means.

10 And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. 11 And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD? 12 Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say. 13. And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send. 14. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and he said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he

feeth thee, he will be glad in his heart. 15 And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what you shall do. 16 And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, *even* he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God. 17 And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs.

Moses still continues backward to the Service God had designed him for, even to a Fault, for now we can no longer impute it to his Humility and Modesty, but must own that there was too much of Cowardise, Slothfulness and Unbelief in it. Observe here,

1. How Moses endeavours to excuse himself from the Work.

(1.) He pleads, that he was no good Spokesman, v. 10. *O my Lord, I am not Eloquent*: He was a great Philosopher, Statesman and Divine, and yet no Orator; a Man of a clear Head, great Thought and solid Judgment, but had not a *voluble Tongue*, or ready Utterance, and therefore he thought himself unfit to speak before Great Men, about Great Affairs, and in danger of being run down by the Egyptians. Observe, 1. We must not judge of Men by the readiness and fluency of their Discourse; *Moses was mighty in Word*, Act. 7. 21. and yet not *Eloquent*: What he said was strong and nervous, and to the purpose, and distilled as the Dew, Deut. 32. 2. tho' he did not deliver himself with that readiness, ease and fineness that some do, who have not the tenth part of his Sense; St. Paul's Speech was *Contemprible*, 2 Cor. 10. 10. A great deal of Wisdom and true Worth is concealed by a *slow Tongue*. 2. God is pleased sometimes to make choice of those as his Messengers, who have least of the Advantages of Art or Nature, that his Grace in them may appear the more glorious; Christ's Disciples were no Orators till the Spirit made 'em so.

(2.) When that Plea was over-ruled, and all his excuses were answered, he begged that God would send some one else on this Errand, and leave him to keep Sheep in Midian, v. 13. *send by any Hand* but mine; thou canst certainly find one much more fit. *Note*, An unwilling Mind will take up with a sorry excuse rather than none, and is willing to devolve those Services upon others that have any thing of difficulty or danger in them.

2. How God condescends to answer all his excuses: *Tho' the Anger of the Lord was kindled against him*, v. 14. yet he continued to reason with him till he had overcome him. *Note*, 1. Even *self-diffidence* when it grows into an extreme; when it either hinders us from Duty, or clogs us in Duty, or discourageth our Dependence upon the Grace of God, is very displeasing to him: God justly relents our backwardness to serve him, and has reason to take it ill, for he is such a *Benefactor* as is *before-hand* with us, and such a *Rewarder* as will not be *behind-hand* with us. 2. God is justly displeased with those whom yet he doth not reject: He vouchsafes to *reason* the case even with his *forward Children*, and overcomes them, as he did Moses here, with Grace and Kindness.

1. To balance the Weakness of Moses, he here minds him of his own Power, v. 11. (1.) His Power in that concerning which Moses made the Objection, *Who has made Man's Mouth?* Have not I the Lord? Moses knew that God made Man, but he must be minded now, that God made Man's Mouth: An Eye to God as Creator would help us over a great many of the difficulties which lie in the way of our Duty, Ps. 124. 8. God, as the Author of Nature, has given us the Power and Faculty of Speaking, and as the Fountain of Gifts and Graces, from him comes the Faculty of Speaking well, the *Mouth and Wisdom*, Luk. 21. 15. *the Tongue of the Learned*, Isa. 50. 4. he *pours Grace into the Lips*, Psal. 45. 2. (2.) His Power in general over the other Faculties, *who but he makes the Dumb and the Deaf, the Seeing and the Blind*: 1. The Perfections of our Faculties are his Work, he makes the seeing; he formed the Eye, Ps. 94. 7. he opens the Understanding, the Eye of the Mind, Luk. 24. 45. 2. Their Imperfections are from him too; he makes the Dumb, and Deaf, and Blind. Is there any Evil of this kind, and the Lord has not done it? No doubt he has, and always in Wisdom and Righteousness, and for his own Glory, Job. 9. 3. Pharaoh and the Egyptians were made Deaf and Blind spiritually, as Isa. 6. 9, 10. But God knew how to manage 'em, and get himself Honour upon 'em.

2. To encourage him in this great Undertaking he repeats the Promise of his Presence, not only in general, *I will be with thee*, chap. 3. 12. but in particular, *I will be with thy Mouth*; so that the Imperfection in thy Speech shall be no Prejudice to thy Message. It doth not appear that God did presently remove the Infirmary, whatever it was, but he did that which was equivalent, he taught him *what* to say, and then let the matter recommend it self: If others spoke more Gracefully, none spoke more powerfully. *Note*, Those whom God employs

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to speak for him, ought to depend upon him for Instructions, and it shall be given them what they shall speak, Mat. 10. 19.

3. He joyns Aaron in Commission with him: He promiseth that Aaron should meet him opportunely, and that he would be glad to see him, they having not seen one another ('tis likely) of many years, v. 14. He directs him to make use of Aaron as his *Spokesman*, v. 16. God might have laid Moses wholly aside for his backwardness to be employ'd, but he considered his Frame, and ordered him an Assistant. Observe, 1. That two are better than one, Eccl. 4. 9. God will have his *two Witnesses*, Rev. 11. 3. that out of their Mouth every Word may be established. 2. Aaron was the Brother of Moses, Divine Wisdom so ordering it, that their Natural Affection one to another might strengthen their Union in the joint Execution of their Commission. Christ sent his Disciples two and two, and some of the Couples were Brothers. 3. Aaron was the elder Brother, and yet he was willing to be employ'd under Moses in this Affair, because God would have it so. 4. Aaron could speak well, and yet was far inferior to Moses in Wisdom: God dispenseth his Gifts variously to the Children of Men, that we may see our need one of another, and each may contribute something to the good of the Body, 1 Cor. 12. 21. The Tongue of Aaron with the Head and Heart of Moses would make one compleatly fit for this Embassy. 5. God promiseth, *I will be with thy Mouth, and with his Mouth*. Even Aaron that could speak well, yet could not speak to purpose, unless God were with his Mouth; without the constant Aids of Divine Grace the best Gifts will fail.

4. He bids him take the Rod with him in his Hand, v. 17. to intimate, that he must bring about his Undertaking, rather by acting than by speaking; the Signs he should work with this Rod might abundantly supply the want of Eloquence; one Miracle would do him better Service than all the Rhetorick in the World. Take this Rod, the Rod he carried as a Shepherd, that he might not be ashamed of that mean Condition out of which God called him. This Rod must be his Staff of Authority, and must be to him instead both of Sword and Sceptre.

18 And Moses went and returned to Jethro his father in law, and said unto him, Let me go, I pray thee, and return unto my brethren, which are in Egypt, and see whether they be yet alive. And Jethro said to Moses, Go in peace. 19 And the LORD said unto Moses in Midian, Go, return into Egypt: for all the men are dead which sought thy life. 20 And Moses took his wife, and his sons, and set them upon an ass, and he returned to the land of Egypt. And Moses took the rod of God in his hand. 21 And the LORD said unto Moses, When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh which I have put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go. 22 And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, *even* my first-born. 23 And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, *even* thy first-born.

Here, 1. Moses obtains leave of his Father-in-law to return into Egypt, v. 18. His Father-in-law had been kind to him when he was a Stranger, and therefore he would not be so uncivil as to leave his Family, nor so unjust as to leave his Service without giving him notice. *Note*, The Honour of being admitted into Communion with God, and employ'd for him, doth not discharge us from the Duties of our Relations and Callings in this World. Moses said nothing to his Father-in-law (for ought appears) of the glorious appearance of God to him; such Favours we are to be thankful for to God, but not to boast of before Men.

2. He receives from God further Encouragements and Directions in his Work: After God had appeared to him in the Bush to settle a Correspondence, it should seem he often spake to him as there was occasion, with less of Solemnity: And,

1. He assures Moses that the *Coasts were clear*: Whatever new Enemies he might make by this Undertaking, his old Enemies were all dead, *all that sought his Life*, v. 19. Perhaps some secret fear of falling into their Hands was at the bottom of Moses's backwardness to go to Egypt, tho' he was not willing to own it, but pleaded Unworthiness, Insufficiency, want of Eloquence, &c. *Note*, God knows all the Temptations his People lie under, and how to arm them against their secret Fears, Ps. 142. 3.

2. He orders him to do the Miracles, not only before the Elders of Israel, but before Pharaoh, v. 21. There were some alive

alive perhaps in the Court of Pharaoh, who remember'd Moses when he was the Son of Pharaoh's Daughter, and had many a Time called him a Fool for deserting the Honours of that Relation; but he is now sent back to Court clad with greater Powers than Pharaoh's Daughter could have advanced him to, so that it might appear he was no Loser by his Choice: This wonder-working Rod did more adorn the Hand of Moses than the Sceptre of Egypt could have done. *Note*, Those that look with Contempt upon Worldly Honours shall be recompensed with the Honour that cometh from God, which is the true Honour.

3. That Pharaoh's Obstinacy might be no Surprize or Discouragement to him, God tells him before that he would *harden his Heart*. Pharaoh had hardened his own Heart against the Groans and Cries of the oppressed Israelites, and shut up the Bowels of his Compassion from them, and now God, in a Way of righteous Judgment, hardens his Heart against the Conviction of the Miracles, and the Terror of the Plagues. *Note*, Ministers must expect with many to labour in vain: We must not think it strange if we meet with those who will not be wrought upon by the strongest Arguments, and fairest Reasonings, yet *our Judgment is with the Lord*.

4. Words are put into his Mouth wherewith to address to Pharaoh, v. 22, 23. God had promised him, v. 12. *I will teach thee what thou shalt say*, and here he doth teach him. (1.) He must deliver his Message in the Name of the great Jehovah, *Thus saith the Lord*; this is the first time that Preface is used by any Man, which afterwards is us'd so frequently by all the Prophets: Whether Pharaoh will hear, or whether he will forbear, Moses must tell him, *Thus saith the Lord*. (2.) He must let Pharaoh know Israel's Relation to God, and God's Concern for Israel. *Is Israel a Servant, is he a home-born Slave?* Jer. 2. 14. *No, Israel is my Son, my first-born; precious in my Sight, honourable, and dear to me, not to be thus insulted and abused*. (3.) He must demand a Discharge for them, *Let my Son go*, not only my Servant whom thou hast no Right to detain, but my Son whose Liberty and Honour I am very jealous for. 'Tis my Son, my Son that serves me, and therefore must be spared, must be pleaded for, Mal. 3. 17. (4.) He must threaten Pharaoh with the Death of the first-born of Egypt, in Case of a Refusal, *I will slay thy Son, even thy first-born*. As Men deal with God's People, let them expect so to be themselves dealt with, *with the froward he will wrestle*.

3. Moses addresseth himself to this Expedition; when God had assured him, v. 19. that the Men were *dead which sought his Life*, immediately it follows, v. 20. *he took his Wife, and his Sons, and set out for Egypt*. *Note*, Tho' Corruption may object much against the Services God calls us to, yet Grace will get the upper Hand, and will be obedient to the Heavenly Vision.

24 And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the LORD met him, and fought to kill him, 25 Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the fore-skin of her son, and cast it at his feet, and said, Surely a bloody husband art thou to me. 26 So he let him go: then she said, A bloody husband thou art, because of the circumcision. 27 And the LORD said to Aaron, Go into the wilderness to meet Moses. And he went and met him in the mount of God, and kissed him. 28 And Moses told Aaron all the words of the LORD, who had sent him, and all the signs which he had commanded him. 29 And Moses and Aaron went, and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel. 30 And Aaron spake all the words which the LORD had spoke unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. 31 And the people believed: and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped.

Moses is here going to Egypt, and we are told,

1. How God met him in Anger, v. 24, 25, 26. This is a very difficult Passage of Story; much has been written, and excellently well to make it intelligible, we will try to make it improbable. Here's, 1. The Sin of Moses, which was neglecting to circumcise his Son, which perhaps was the Effect of his being unequally yoked with a Midianite, who was too indulgent of her Child, and Moses so of her. *Note*, (1.) We have need to watch carefully over our own Hearts lest Fondness of any Relation prevail above our Love to God, and take us off from our Duty to him. 'Tis charged upon Eli, that he honoured his Sons more than God, 1 Sam. 2. 29. and see Mar. 10. 37. (2.)

Even Good Men are apt to cool in their Zeal for God and Duty, when they have long been depriv'd of the Society of the Faithful: Solitude has its Advantages, but they seldom balance the Loss of Christian Communion. 2. God's Displeasure against him: He met him, and probably by a Sword in an Angel's Hand sought to kill him. This was a great Change; very lately God was conversing with him, and lodging a Trust in him as a Friend, and now coming forth against him as an Enemy. *Note*,

(1.) Omissions are Sins, and must come into Judgment; and particularly the Contempt and Neglect of the Seals of the Covenant; for 'tis a Sign we undervalue the Promises of the Covenant, and are displeas'd with the Conditions of it. He that has made a Bargain, and is not willing to seal and ratify it, one may justly suspect he neither likes it, nor designs to stand to it. (2.) God takes notice of and is much displeas'd with the Sins of his own People; if they neglect their Duty, let them expect to hear of it by their Consciences, and perhaps to feel from it by cross Providences; for this Cause many are Sick and Weak, and some think Moses was here. 3. The speedy Performance of the Duty, for the Neglect of which God had now a Controversie with him. His Son must be circumcis'd, he is disabled to do it, therefore in this Case of Necessity Zipporah doth it, whether with passionate Words expressing her Dislike of the Ordinance it self, or at least the Administration of it to so young a Child, and in a Journey (as to me it seems) or with proper Words solemnly expressing the *espousal of the Child to God* by the Covenant of Circumcision, as some read it, or her Thankfulness to God for sparing her Husband, giving him a new Life, and thereby giving her, as it were, a new Marriage to him, upon her circumcising her Son, as others read it, I cannot determine: But we learn, 1. That when God discovers to us what is amiss in our Lives, we must give all Diligence to amend it speedily, and particularly return to the Duties we have neglected. 2. The putting away of our Sins is indispensably necessary to the Removal of God's Judgments: This is the voice of every Rod, it calls us to return to him that smiteth us. 4. The Release of Moses thereupon, so belet him go: The Distemper went off, the destroying Angel withdrew, and all was well; only Zipporah cannot forget the fright she was in, but will unreasonably call Moses a Bloody Husband, because he obliged her to circumcise the Child; and upon this Occasion ('tis probable) he sent them back to his Father-in-law; that they might not create him any farther Uneasiness. *Note*, 1. When we return to God in a Way of Duty, he will return to us in a Way of Mercy; take away the Cause, and the Effect will cease. 2. We must resolve to bear it patiently if our Zeal for God and his Institutions be misinterpreted and discourag'd by some that should understand themselves, and us, and their Duty better, as David's by Michal: But if this be to be vile, If this be to be bloody, we must be yet more so. 3. When we have any special Service to do for God, we should remove that as far from us as we can, which is likely to be our Hindrance, *let the dead bury their dead, but follow thou me*.

2. How Aaron met him in love, v. 27, 28. (1.) God sent Aaron to meet him, and directed him where to find him, in the Wilderness that lay towards Midian. *Note*, The Providence of God is to be acknowledged in the comfortable Meeting of Relations and Friends. (2.) Aaron made so much haste, in Obedience to his God, and in Love to his Brother, that he met him in the Mount of God, the Place where God had met with him. (3.) They embraced one another with mutual Endearments; the more they saw of God's immediate Direction in bringing them together, the more pleasant their Interview was: They kiss'd, not only in Token of brotherly Affection, and in Remembrance of ancient Acquaintance, but as a Pledge of their hearty Concurrence in the Work they were jointly call'd to. (4.) Moses informed his Brother of the Commission he had received, with all the Instructions and Credentials affix'd to it, v. 28. *Note*, What we know of God we should communicate for the Benefit of others; and those that are fellow Servants to God, in the same Work, should use a mutual Freedom, and endeavour, rightly and fully, to understand one another.

3. How the Elders of Israel met him in Faith and Obedience: When Moses and Aaron first open'd their Commission in Egypt, said what they were ordered to say, and, to confirm that, did what they were order'd to do: they met with better Acceptance than they promised themselves, v. 29, 30, 31. (1.) The Israelites gave Credit to them, the People believed, as God had foretold, chap. 3. 18. knowing that no Man could do these Works that they did, unless God were with him. (2.) They gave Glory to God, they bowed their Heads and worshipped, therein expressing not only their humble Thankfulness to God, who had raised them up and sent them a Deliverer, but also their cheerful Readiness to observe Orders, and pursue the Methods of their Deliverance.

CHAP. V.

Moses and Aaron are here dealing with Pharaoh, to get leave of him to go to worship in the Wilderness.

1. They demand leave in the Name of God, v. 1. and he answers their Demand with a Defiance of God, v. 2.
2. They beg leave in the Name of Israel, v. 3. and he answers their Request with further Orders to oppress Israel, v. 4—9. These cruel Orders were, 1. executed by the Task-masters, v. 10—14.
2. Complained of to Pharaoh, but in vain, v. 15—19.
3. Complained of by the People to Moses, v. 20, 21. and by him to God, v. 22, 23.

1 AND afterwards Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness. 2 And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.

Moses and Aaron having delivered their Message to the Elders of Israel, with whom they found good Acceptance, are now to deal with Pharaoh, to whom they come in Peril of their Lives; Moses particularly, who perhaps was out-law'd for killing the Egyptian forty Years before, and if any of the old Courtiers should happen to remember that against him now, that might have cost him his Head; however the Message it self was displeasing, and touch'd Pharaoh both in his Honour and in his Profit, two tender Points; yet these Faithful Embassadors boldly deliver their Errand, whether he will hear, or whether he will forbear.

1. Their Demand is piously Bold, v. 1. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, let my People go: Moses, in treating with the Elders of Israel, is directed to call God the God of their Fathers; but in treating with Pharaoh they call him the God of Israel, and it is the first Time we find him called so in Scripture: He is called the God of Israel, the Person, Gen. 33. 20. but here 'tis Israel the People. They are just beginning to be formed into a People when God is called their God. Moses 'tis likely was directed to call him so, at least it might be infer'd from Chap. 4. 22. Israel is my Son. In this great Name they deliver their Message, Let my People go. (1.) They were God's People; and therefore Pharaoh ought not to detain them in Bondage. Note, God will own his own People, tho' never so poor and despicable, and will find a Time to plead their Cause: The Israelites are Slaves in Egypt, but they are my People saith God, and I will not suffer them to be always trampled upon: See Isa. 52. 4. 5. (2.) He expected Services and Sacrifices from them, and therefore they must have leave to go where they could freely exercise their Religion, without giving Offence to or receiving Offence from the Egyptians. Note, God delivers his People out of the Hand of their Enemies that they may serve him, and serve him cheerfully; that they may hold a Feast to him; which they may do while they have his Favour and Presence, even in a Wilderness, a dry and barren Land.

2. Pharaoh's Answer is impiously Bold, v. 2. Who is the Lord, that I should obey his Voice? Being summoned to surrender, he thus hangs out the Flag of Defiance, hectors Moses and the God that sends him, and peremptorily refuseth to let Israel go, he will not treat about it, nor so much as bear the mention of it.

Observe, 1. How scornfully he speaks of the God of Israel, who is Jehovah? I neither know him nor care for him; neither value him nor fear him; it's a hard Name that he never heard of before, but he resolves it shall be no Bugbear to him. Israel was now a despised oppressed People, look'd on as the Tail of the Nation, and by the Character they bore he makes his Estimate of their God, and concludes that he made no better a Figure among the Gods than his People did among the Nations. Note, (1.) Harden'd Persecutors are more malicious against God himself than they are against his People: See Isa. 37. 23. (2.) Ignorance and Contempt of God are at the Bottom of all the Wickedness that is in the World. Men know not the Lord, or have very low and mean Thoughts of him, and therefore they obey not his Voice, nor will let any thing go for him.

2. How proudly he speaks of himself, that I should obey his Voice; I the King of Egypt, a great People, obey the God of Israel a poor enslaved People? Shall I that rule the Israel of God obey the God of Israel? No, it's below me, I scorn to answer his Summons. Note, They are the Children of Pride, that are the Children of Disobedience, Job 41. 34. Eph. 5. 6. Proud Men think themselves too good to stoop even to God himself, and would not be under Controll, Jer. 43. 2. Here's the Core of the Controversie, God must rule, but Man will not be rul'd: I'll have my Will done, saith God, but I'll do my own Will, saith the Sinner.

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3. How resolutely he denies the Demand, neither will I let Israel go. Note, Of all Sinners none are so obstinate, nor so hardly perswaded to leave their Sin as Persecutors are.

3 And they said, the God of The Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the LORD our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword. 4 And the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works? get you unto your burdens. 5 And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land now are many, and you make them rest from their burdens. 6 And Pharaoh commanded the same day the task-masters of the people, and their officers, saying, 7 Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves. 8 And the tale of the bricks which they did make heretofore, you shall lay upon them; you shall not diminish ought thereof: for they be idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God. 9 Let there more work be laid upon the men, that they may labour therein: and let them not regard vain words.

Finding that Pharaoh had no Veneration at all for God, next they try whether he had any Compassion for Israel, and become humble Suitors to him for Leave to go sacrifice, but in vain.

1. The Request is very humble and modest, v. 3. They make no Complaint of the Rigor they were rul'd with; they plead that this Journey design'd was not a Project form'd among themselves, but their God had met with them, and called them to it; they beg with all Submission; we pray thee; the Poor useth Intreaties: Tho' God may summon Princes that oppress, it becomes us to beseech, and make Supplication to them. What they ask is very reasonable, only for a short Vacation, while they went three days Journey into the Desert, and that on a good Errand, and unexceptionable, we will sacrifice to the Lord our God, as other People do to theirs; and (lastly) they give a very good Reason, lest if we quite cast off his Worship he fall upon us with one Judgment or other, and then Pharaoh will lose his Vassals.

2. Pharaoh's Denial of their Request is very barbarous and unreasonable, v. 4—9. (1.) His Suggestions were very unreasonable; 1. That the People were idle, and that therefore they talk'd of going to Sacrifice. The Cities they built for Pharaoh, and other the Fruit of their Labours were Witnesses for them that they were not idle; yet he thus basely misrepresents them that he might have a Pretence to increase their Burdens. 2. That Moses and Aaron made them idle with vain Words; v. 9. God's Words are here called vain Words; and those that called them to the best and most needful Business are accused as making them idle. Note, The Malice of Satan has oft represented the Service and Worship of God, as fit Employment for those only that have nothing else to do, and the Business only of the idle, whereas indeed it is the indispensable Duty of those that are most busie in the World. (2.) His Resolutions hereupon were most barbarous: 1. Moses and Aaron themselves must get to their Burdens, v. 4. they are Israelites, and however God had distinguished them from the rest, Pharaoh makes no Difference, they must share in the common Slavery of their Nation, Persecutors have always taken a particular Pleasure in putting Contempt and Hardship upon the Ministers of the Churches. 2. The usual tale of Bricks must be exacted, without the usual Allowance of Straw, to mix with the Clay, or to burn them with; that thus more Work might be laid upon the Men, which if they perform'd they would be broken with Labour, and if not they would be expos'd to Punishment.

10 And the task-masters of the people went out, and their officers, and they spake to the people, saying, Thus saith Pharaoh, I will not give you straw. 11 Go ye, get you straw where you can find it: yet not ought of your work shall be diminished. 12 So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt, to gather stubble instead of straw. 13 And the task-masters hasten'd them, saying, Fulfil your works, your daily tasks, as when there was straw. 14 And the officers of the children of Israel, which Pharaoh's task-masters had set over them, were beaten,

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beaten,

beaten, and demanded, Wherefore have ye not fulfilled your task in making brick, both yesterday and to day, as heretofore?

Pharaoh's Orders are here put in Execution; Straw is denied, and yet the Work not diminished. 1. The Egyptian Task-masters were very severe. Pharaoh having decreed unrighteous Decrees, the Task-masters were ready to write the Grievances that he had prescribed, Isa. 10. 1. Cruel Princes will never want cruel Instruments to be employ'd under them, who will justify them in that which is most unreasonable. These Task-masters insisted upon the daily Tasks, as when there was Straw, v. 13. See what need we have to pray that we may be delivered from Wicked and Unreasonable Men, 2 Thes. 3. 2. The Enmity of the Serpent's Seed against the Seed of the Woman is such as breaks thro' all the Laws of Reason Honour, Humanity, and Common Justice. 2. The People hereby were dispersed throughout all the Land of Egypt, to gather Stubble, v. 12. By this Means Pharaoh's unjust and barbarous Usage of them came to be known to all the Kingdom, and perhaps caused them to be pitied by their Neighbours, and made Pharaoh's Government less acceptable even to his own Subjects: Good-Will is never got by Persecution. 3. The Israelite Officers were especially abus'd, v. 14. They that were the Fathers of the Houses of Israel paid dear for their Honour, for from them immediately the Service was exacted, and they were beaten when it was not performed. See here, 1. What a miserable thing Slavery is, and what Reason we have to be thankful to God for it that we are a free People, and not oppressed: Liberty and Property are valuable Jewels in the Eyes of those whose Services and Possessions lie purely at the Mercy of an Arbitrary Power. 2. What Disappointments we often meet with after the raising of our Expectations. The Israelites were now lately encouraged to hope for Enlargement; But behold greater Distresses: This teaches us always to rejoice with trembling. 3. What strange Steps God sometimes takes in delivering his People: He often brings them to the utmost Straits when he is just ready to appear for them. The lowest Ebbs go before the highest Tides; and very cloudy Mornings commonly introduce the fairest Days, Deut. 32, 36. God's time to help is when Things are at the worst, and Providence verifies the Paradox, *The worse the better.*

15 Then the officers of the children of Israel came and cried unto Pharaoh, saying, Wherefore dealest thou thus with thy servants? 16 There is no straw given unto thy servants, and they say to us, Make brick: and behold, thy servants are beaten; but the fault is in thine own people. 17 But he said, Ye are idle, ye are idle: therefore ye say, Let us go, and do sacrifice to the LORD. 18 Go therefore now and work: for there shall no straw be given you, yet shall ye deliver the tale of bricks. 19 And the officers of the children of Israel did see that they were in evil case, after it was said, Ye shall not minish ought from your bricks of your daily task. 20 And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh. 21 And they said unto them, The LORD look upon you, and judge; because you have made our favour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hands to slay us. 22 And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, LORD, wherefore hast thou so evil intreated this people? why is it that thou hast sent me? 23 For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all.

'Twas a great Strait that the Head-Workmen were in when they must either abuse those that were under them, or be abus'd by those that were over them, yet it should seem rather than they would tyrannize, they would be tyranniz'd over; and they were so. In this evil Case, v. 19. Observe,

2. How justly they complained to Pharaoh; they came and cried unto Pharaoh (v. 15.) whether else should they go with a Remonstrance of their Grievances but to the Supreme Power which is ordain'd for the Protection of the injur'd: As bad as Pharaoh was, his oppressed Subjects had Liberty to complain to him: There was no Law against Petitioning: 'Twas

a very modest but moving Representation they made of their Condition, v. 16. *Thy Servants are beaten* (severely enough, no doubt, when things were in such a ferment) and yet, *the Fault is in thine own People*, the Task-masters, who deny us what is necessary for carrying on our Work. Note, 'Tis common for those to be most vigorous in blaming others who are most blameworthy themselves.

But what did they get by this Complaint? It did but make ill worse; (1.) Pharaoh taunted them, v. 17. when they were almost killed with working, he told them they were idle: they underwent the Fatigue of Industry, and yet lay under the Imputation of Slothfulness, and yet nothing appeared but this to ground the Charge upon, they said, *Let us go and do sacrifice*. Note, 'Tis common for the best Actions to be put under the worst Characters; Holy Diligence in the best Business is censured by many as culpable Carelessness in the Business of the World. 'Tis well for us that Men are not to be our Judges, but a God who knows what the Principles are we go upon. Those that are diligent in doing Sacrifice to the Lord, will with God escape the Doom of the slothful Servant, tho' with Men they do not. (2.) He bound on their Burthens, *Go now and work*, v. 18. Note, *Wickedness proceedeth from the Wicked*; what can be expected from unrighteous Men, but more Unrighteousness.

2. How unjustly they complain'd of Moses and Aaron, v. 21. The Lord look upon you and judge: This was not fair; Moses and Aaron had given sufficient Evidence of their hearty good Will to the Liberties of Israel, and yet because Things succeed not presently so as they are hoped, they are reproached as Accessaries to their Slavery. They should have humbled themselves before God, and taken to themselves the Shame of their Sin, which turned away good things from them; but instead of that they fly in the Face of their best Friends, and quarrel with the Instruments of their Deliverance, because of some little Difficulties and Obstructions they meet with in it. Note, Those that are called out to publick Service for God and their Generation, must expect to be tried not only by the malicious Threats of proud Enemies, but by the unjust and unkind Censures of unthinking Friends, who judge only by outward Appearance, and look but a little Way before 'em.

Now what did Moses do in this Strait? It grieved him to the Heart that the Event did not answer but rather contradict his Expectation; and their Upbraidings were very cutting and like a Sword in his Bones; But,

1. He returned to the Lord, (v. 22.) to acquaint him with it, and to represent the Case to him: He knew that what he had said and done was by Divine Direction, and therefore what blame is laid upon him for it he looks upon as reflecting upon God, and like Hezekiah spreads it before him as interested in the Cause, and appeals to him: Compare this with Jer. 20. 7, 8, 9. Note, When we find our selves at any Time perplexed and embarrassed in the Way of our Duty, we ought to have recourse to God, and lay open our Case before him, by faithful and fervent Prayer: If we retreat, retreat to him, and no further.

2. He expostulated with him, v. 22, 23. He knew not how to reconcile the Providence with the Promise, and the Commission he had received. Is this God's coming down to deliver Israel? Must I, who hoped to be a Blessing to them, become a Scourge to them? By this Attempt to get them out of the Pit, they are but sunk the further into it. Now he asks, 1. *Wherefore hast thou so evil intreated this People?* Note, (1.) Even then when God is coming towards his People in Ways of Mercy, yet sometimes he takes such Methods as that they may think themselves but ill treated. The Instruments of Deliverance when they aim to help prove to hinder, and that becomes a Trap which 'twas hoped would have been for their Welfare, God suffering it to be so, that we may learn to *clasp from Man*, and may come off from a Dependence upon second Causes. 2. When the People of God think themselves ill treated, they should go to God by Prayer, and plead with him, and that's the Way to have better Treatment in God's good Time.

2. *Why is it that thou hast sent me?*

Thus, 1. He complains of his ill Success; Pharaoh has done Evil to this People, and not one Step seems to be taken towards their Deliverance. Note, It cannot but sit very heavy upon the Spirits of those whom God employs for him, to see that their Labour doth no good, and much more to see that it doth hurt, eventually tho' not designedly. 'Tis uncomfortable to a good Minister to perceive that his Endeavours for Men's Conviction and Conversion do but exasperate their Corruptions, confirm their Prejudices, harden their Hearts, and seal them up under Unbelief. This makes them go in the Bitterness of their Souls, as the Prophet, Ezek. 3. 14.

Or, 2. He enquires what was further to be done, *why hast thou sent me?* i. e. What other Method shall I take in Pursuance of my Commission? Note, Disappointments in our Work must not drive us from our God, but still we must consider why we are sent.

C H A P. VI.

Much ado there was to bring Moses to his Work, and when the Ice was broke, but some Difficulty occurred in carrying it on, there was no less ado to put him forward in it. Witness this Chapter, in which, 1. God satisfies Moses himself in an Answer to his Complaints in the Close of the foregoing Chapter, v. 1. 2. He gives him fuller Instructions than had yet been given him what to say to the Children of Israel, for their Satisfaction, v. 2—8, but to little Purpose, v. 9. 3. He sends him again to Pharaoh, v. 10, 11. But Moses objects against that, v. 12. Upon which a very strict Charge is given to him and his Brother, to execute their Commission with Vigour, v. 13. 4. Here's an Abstract of the Genealogy of the Tribes of Reuben and Simeon, to introduce that of Levi, that the Pedigree of Moses and Aaron might be cleared, v. 14—27. and so the Chapter concludes with a Repetition of so much of the preceding Story as was necessary to make Way for the following Chapter.

THEN the LORD said unto Moses, Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh: for with a strong hand shall he let them go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land. 2 And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the LORD: 3 And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them. 4 And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers. 5 And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage: and I have remembered my covenant. 6 Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage: and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments. 7 And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. 8 And I will bring you in unto the land concerning the which I did swear to give it, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am the LORD. 9 And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel: but they hearkened not unto Moses, for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage.

Here, 1. God silenceth Moses's Complaints with the Assurance of Success in this Negotiation, repeating the Promise made him, Chap. 3. 20. after that, he will let you go. Then when Moses was at his Wits End, wishing he had staid in Midian, rather than have come to Egypt to make ill worse, when he was quite at a Loss what to do, Then the Lord said unto Moses, for the quieting of his Mind, Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh, v. 1. Now the Affair is come to a Crisis, things are as bad as they can be, Pharaoh is in the Height of Pride, and Israel in the Depth of Misery. Now is my Time to appear. See Psal. 12. 6. Now will I arise. Note, Man's Extremity is God's Opportunity of helping, and saving. Moses had been expecting what God would do, but now he shall see what he will do, shall see his day at length, Job 24. 1. Moses had been trying what he could do, and could effect nothing, well, faith God, now thou shalt see what I will do, let me alone to deal with this proud Man, Job 40. 12, 13. Note, Then the Deliverance of God's Church will be accomplished when God takes the Work into his own Hands. With a strong Hand, i. e. being forced to it by a strong hand, he shall let them go. Note, As some are brought to their Duty by the strong Hand of God's Grace, who are made willing in the Day of his Power, so others by the strong Hand of his Justice, breaking those that would not bend.

2. He gives him further Instructions, for his Encouragement, and the Encouragement of the People of Israel to hope for a glorious Issue of this Affair. Take Comfort,

1. From God's Name *Jehovah*, v. 2, 3. He begins with this, I am *Jehovah*, the same with I am that I am, the Fountain of Being and Blessedness, and infinite Perfection. The Patriarchs

knew this Name, but they did not know him in this Matter by that which this Name signifies. God would now be known by his Name *Jehovah*, i. e. (1.) A God performing what he had promised, and so giving Being to his Promises. (2.) A God perfecting what he had began, and finishing his own Work. In the History of the Creation God is never called *Jehovah*, till the Heavens and the Earth were finished, Gen. 2. 4. When the Salvation of the Saints is completed in Eternal Life, then he will be known by his Name *Jehovah*, Rev. 22. 13. in the mean time they shall find him for their Strength and Support, *El-shaddai*, a God All-sufficient, a God that is enough, and will be so, Mic. 7. 20.

2. From his Covenant, v. 4. I have established my Covenant. Note, The Covenants God makes he establisheth, they are made as firm as the Power and Truth of God can make them. We may venture our all upon this Bottom.

3. From his Compassions, v. 5. I have heard the groaning of the Children of Israel, He means their groaning on Occasion of the late Hardships put upon them. Note, God takes Notice of the Increase of his People's Calamities, and observes how their Enemies grow upon them.

4. From his present Resolutions, v. 6, 7, 8. Here's Line upon Line to assure them that they should be brought triumphantly out of Egypt, v. 6. and should be put in Possession of the Land of Canaan, v. 8. I will bring you out. I will rid you. I will redeem you. I will bring you into the Land of Canaan, and I will give it you. Let Man take the Shame of his Unbelief which needs such Repetitions, and let God have the Glory of his condescending Grace, which gives us such repeated Assurances for our Satisfaction.

5. From his gracious Intentions in all these, which were great, and becoming him, v. 7. 1. He intended their Happiness, I will take you to me for a People, a peculiar People, and I will be to you a God; and more than this we need not ask, we cannot have to make us happy. 2. He intended his own Glory, ye shall know that I am the Lord. God will attain his own Ends, nor shall we come short of them if we make them our chief End too. Now one would think these good Words, and comfortable Words should have revived the drooping Israelites, and made them to forget their Misery; but on the contrary, their Miseries made them regardless of God's Promises, v. 9. they hearkened not to Moses for Anguish of Spirit. That is, 1. They were so taken up with their Troubles that they did not heed him. 2. They were so cast down with their late Disappointment that they did not believe him. And, 3. They had such a Dread of Pharaoh's Power and Wrath that they durst not themselves move in the least towards their Deliverance. Note, 1. Disconsolate Spirits oft put from them the Comforts they are entitled to, and stand in their own Light. See Isa. 28. 12. 2. Strong Passions oppose strong Consolations. By indulging our selves in Discontent and Fretfulness, we deprive our selves of the Comfort we might have both from God's Word and Providence, and must thank our selves if we go comfortless.

10 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 11 Go in, speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, that he let the children of Israel go out of his land. 12 And Moses spake before the LORD, saying, Behold, the children of Israel have not hearkened unto me; how then shall Pharaoh hear me, who am of uncircumcised lips? 13 And the LORD spake unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and gave them a charge unto the children of Israel, and unto Pharaoh king of Egypt; to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

Here, 1. God sends Moses the second time to Pharaoh, v. 11, upon the same Errand as before, to command him at his Peril, that he let the Children of Israel go. Note, God repeats his Precepts, before he begins his Punishments. Those that have oft been called in vain to leave their Sins, yet must be called again, and again, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, Ezek. 3. 11. God is said to hew Sinners by his Prophets, Hos. 6. 5. which notes the Repetition of the Strokes; How oft would I have gathered you?

2. Moses makes Objections, as one discouraged, and willing to give up the Cause, v. 12. He pleads, (1.) The Unlikelihood of Pharaoh's Hearing. Behold, the Children of Israel have not hearkened to me, they give no Heed, no Credit to what I have said, how then can I expect that Pharaoh should hear me. If the Anguish of their Spirit makes them deaf to that which would compose and comfort 'em, much more will the Anger of his Spirit, his Pride and Intolerance make him deaf to that which will but exasperate and provoke him. If God's professing People hear not his Messengers, how can it be thought his professed Enemy should? Note, The Frowardness and Intractableness of those that are called Christians is a very great

great Discouragement to Ministers, and makes them ready to despair of Success in dealing with those that are Atheistical and Profane. We would be instrumental to unite Israelites, to refine and purify them, to comfort and pacify them, but if they hearken not to us, how shall we prevail with those in whom we cannot pretend to such an Interest? But *with God, all things are possible.* (2.) He pleads the Unreadiness and Infirmary of his own Speaking. *I am of uncircumcised Lips;* 'tis repeated, v. 30. He was conscious to himself that he had not the Gift of Utterance, had no Command of Language; His Talent did not lie that way. This Objection God had given a sufficient Answer to before, and therefore he ought not to have insisted upon it, for the Sufficiency of Grace can supply the Defects of Nature at any Time. Note, Tho' our Infirmities ought to humble us, yet they ought not to discourage us from doing our best in any Service we have to do for God. His Strength is made perfect in our Weakness.

3. God again joyns Aaron in Commission with Moses, and puts an End to the Dispute by interposing his own Authority, and giving them both a solemn Charge upon their Allegiance to their Great Lord to execute it with all possible Expedition and Fidelity. When Moses repeats his baffled Arguments he shall be argued with no longer, but God gives him a Charge, and Aaron with him, both to the Children of Israel, and to Pharaoh, v. 13. Note, God's Authority is sufficient to answer all Objections, and binds us to Obedience without murmuring or disputing, Phil. 2. 14. Moses himself has need to be charged, and so has Timothy, 1 Tim. 6. 13. 2 Tim. 4. 1.

14 These be the heads of their fathers houses: The sons of Reuben the first-born of Israel; Hanoth, and Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi: these be the families of Reuben. 15 And the sons of Simeon; Jemuel, and Jamin, and Ohad, and Jachin, and Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanitish woman: these are the families of Simeon. 16 And these are the names of the sons of Levi, according to their generations; Gershon, and Kohath, and Merari: And the years of the life of Levi were an hundred thirty and seven years. 17 The sons of Gershon; Libni, and Shimi, according to their families. 18 And the sons of Kohath; Amram, and Izhar, and Hebron, and Uzziel: And the years of the life of Kohath were an hundred thirty and three years. 19 And the sons of Merari; Mahali and Mushi: these are the families of Levi, according to their generations. 20 And Amram took him Jochebed his fathers sister to wife; and she bare him Aaron and Moses: And the years of the life of Amram were an hundred and thirty and seven years. 21 And the sons of Izhar; Korah, and Nepheg, and Zichri. 22 And the sons of Uzziel; Misael, and Elzaphan, and Zithri. 23 And Aaron took him Elisheba daughter of Aminadab, sister of Naashon, to wife; and she bare him Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. 24 And the sons of Korah; Assir, and Elkanah, and Abiasaph: these are the families of the Korhites. 25 And Eleazar Aarons son took him one of the daughters of Putiel to wife; and she bare him Phineas: these are the heads of the fathers of the Levites, according to their families. 26 These are that Aaron and Moses, to whom the LORD said, Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt, according to their armies. 27 These are they which spake to Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring out the children of Israel from Egypt: these are that Moses and Aaron. 28 And it came to pass on the day when the LORD spake unto Moses in the land of Egypt, 29 That the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, I am the LORD: speak thou unto Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I say unto thee. 30 And Moses said before the LORD, Behold, I am of uncircumcised lips, and how shall Pharaoh hearken unto me?

We have here a Genealogy, not an endless one, such as the Apostle condemns, 1 Tim. 1. 4. for it ends in those two great

Patriots, Moses and Aaron, and comes in here to shew that they were Israelites, Bone of their Bone, and Flesh of their Flesh, whom they were sent to deliver, raised up unto them of their Brethren, as Christ also should be, who was to be the Prophet and Priest, the Redeemer and Lawgiver of the Gospel of Israel, and whose Genealogy also like this was to be carefully preserved.

The Heads of the Houses of three of the Tribes are here named, agreeing with the Accounts we had, Gen. 46. Dr. Lightfoot thinks that Reuben, Simeon, and Levi are thus dignified here by themselves for this Reason; Because they three were left under Marks of Infamy by their dying Father, Reuben for his Incest, and Simeon and Levi for their Murder of the Shechemites, and therefore Moses would put this particular Honour upon them, to magnifie God's Mercy in their Repentance and Remission, as a Pattern to them that should afterwards believe; The two first rather seem to be mentioned only for the sake of the third, which was Levi, from whom Moses and Aaron descended, and all the Priests of the Jewish Church. Thus was the Tribe of Levi distinguished betimes. Observe here,

1. That Kohath, from whom Moses and Aaron, and all the Priests derived their Pedigree, was a younger Son of Levi, v. 16. Note, The Grants of God's Favours do not go by Seniority of Age, and Priority of Birth, but the Divine Sovereignty often prefers the Younger before the Elder, so crossing Hands.

2. That the Age of Levi, Kohath, and Amram, the Father, Grandfather, and great Grandfather of Moses is here recorded, and they all lived to a great Age, Levi to One hundred thirty seven, Kohath to One hundred thirty three, and Amram to One hundred thirty seven, Moses himself came much short of them, and fixt seventy or eighty for the ordinary stretch of Humane Life; Ps. 90. 10. for now God's Israel was multiplied and become a great Nation, and Divine Revelation was by the Hand of Moses committed to writing, and no longer trusted to Tradition, the two great Reasons for the long Lives of the Patriarchs were ceased, and therefore from henceforward fewer Years must serve Men.

3. That Aaron married Elisheba (the same Name with that of the Wife of Zacharias, Elisabeth, as Miriam the same with Mary) Daughter of Aminadab, one of the chief of the Fathers of the Tribe of Judah, for the Tribes of Levi and Judah oft intermarried, v. 23.

4. It must not be omitted that Moses has recorded the Marriage of his Father Amram, with Jochebed his own Aunt, v. 20. and it appears by Num. 26. 59. that it must be taken strictly, for his Father's own Sister, at least by the Half blood: This Marriage was afterwards forbidden, as incestuous, Lev. 18. 12. which might be looked upon as a Blot upon his Family, tho' before that Law; yet Moses doth not conceal it, for he sought not his own Praise, but wrote with a sincere Regard to Truth, whether it smiled or frowned upon him.

5. He concludes it with a particular Mark of Honour on the Persons he is writing of, tho' himself was one of them, v. 26. 27. These are that Moses and Aaron, whom God pitched upon to be his Plenipotentiaries in this Treaty. These were they whom God spake to, v. 26. and who spake to Pharaoh on Israel's Behalf, v. 27. Note, Communion with God and Serviceableness to his Church are Things that above any other put true Honour upon Men. Those are great indeed whom God converseth with, and whom he employs for him. Such were that Moses and Aaron, and something of this Honour have all his Saints, who are made to our God Kings and Priests.

In the Close of the Chapter, he returns to his Narrative, which he had broken off from somewhat abruptly, v. 13. and repeats, (1.) The Charge God had given him to deliver his Message to Pharaoh, v. 24. speak all that I say unto thee, as a faithful Embassador. Note, Those that go on God's Errand must not shun to declare the whole Counsel of God. (2.) His Objection against it, v. 30. Note, Those that have at any Time spoke unadvisedly with their Lips ought oft to reflect upon it with Regret, as Moses seems to do here.

CHAP. VII.

In this Chapter, 1. The Dispute between God and Moses finishes, and Moses applies himself to the Execution of his Commission, in Obedience to God's Command, v. 1--7. 2. The Dispute between Moses and Pharaoh begins, and a famous Trial of skill it was: Moses in God's Name demands Israel's Release, Pharaoh denies it. The Contest is between the Power of the Great God, and the Power of a proud Prince, and it will be found in the Issue that when God judgeth he will overcome. 1. Moses confirms the Demand he made to Pharaoh, by a Miracle, turning his Rod into a Serpent, but Pharaoh hardens his Heart against this Conviction, v. 8--13. 2. He chastiseth his Disobedience, by a Plague, the first of the ten, turning the Waters into Blood; but Pharaoh hardens his Heart against this Correction, v. 14. ad fin.

1 AND the LORD said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron

Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet. 2 Thou shalt speak all that I command thee: and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he send the children of Israel out of his land. 3 And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt. 4 But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that I may lay my hand upon Egypt, and bring forth mine armies, and my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt, by great judgments. 5 And the Egyptians shall know, that I am the LORD, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them. 6 And Moses and Aaron did as the LORD commanded them, so did they. 7 And Moses was fourscore years old, and Aaron fourscore and three years old, when they spake unto Pharaoh.

Here, 1. God encourageth Moses to go to Pharaoh, and at last silenceth all his Discouragements. 1. He clothes him with great Power and Authority, v. 1. *I have made thee a God to Pharaoh, i. e. my Representative in this Affair, as Magistrates are called Gods, because they are God's Vicegerents. He was authorized to speak and act in God's Name and Stead, and under the divine Direction was endued with a divine Power to do that which is above the ordinary Power of Nature, and invested with a divine Authority, to demand Obedience from a Sovereign Prince, and punish Disobedience. Moses was a God, but he was only a made God, not essentially one, by Nature he was no God, but by Commission. He was a God, but he was only a God to Pharaoh; the living and true God is God to all the World. It is an Instance of God's Condescension, and an Evidence that his Thoughts towards us are Thoughts of Peace, that when he treats with Men, he treats by Men, whose Terror shall not make us afraid.* 2. He again nominates him an Assistant, his Brother Aaron who was not a Man of uncircumcised Lips, but a notable Spokesman; He shall be thy Prophet, i. e. he shall speak from thee to Pharaoh, as Prophets do from God to the Children of Men. Thou shalt as a God inflict and remove the Plagues, and Aaron as a Prophet shall denounce them, and threaten Pharaoh with them. 3. He tells him the worst of it, that Pharaoh would not hearken to him, and yet the Work should be done at last, Israel should be delivered, and God therein should be Glorified, v. 4, 5. The Egyptians who would not know the Lord should be made to know him. Note, It is and ought to be Satisfaction enough to God's Messengers, that whatever Contradiction and Opposition may be given them thus far, they shall gain their Point, that God will be glorified in the Success of their Embassy, and all his chosen Israel will be saved, and then they have no Reason to say, that they have laboured in vain. See here, (1.) How God glorifies himself, He makes People know that he is Jehovah: Israel is made to know by the Performance of his Promises to them, Chap. 6. 3. And the Egyptians are made to know it by the pouring out of his Wrath upon them; Thus God's Name is exalted both in them that are saved and in them that perish. (2.) What Method he takes to do this, He humbles the Proud, and exalts the Poor, Luke 1. 51, 52. If God stretch out his Hand to Sinners in vain, he will at last stretch out his hand upon them, and who can bear the Weight of it?

2. Moses and Aaron apply themselves to their Work without further Objection, they did as the Lord commanded them, v. 6. Their Obedience, all Things considered, was well worthy to be celebrated, as it is by the Psalmist, Ps. 105. 28. *They rebelled not against his Word, viz. Moses and Aaron, whom he mentions, v. 26. Thus Jonah, tho' at first he was very averse, at length went to Nineveh. Notice is taken of the Age of Moses and Aaron, when they undertook this glorious Service: Aaron the Elder (and yet in the inferior Office) was Eighty three, Moses was Eighty, both of them Men of great Gravity and Experience, whose Age was venerable, and whose Years might teach Wisdom, v. 7. Joseph who was to be only a Servant to Pharaoh, was preferred at Thirty Years old, but Moses who was to be a God to Pharaoh, was not so dignified till he was Eighty Years old. 'Twas fit he should long wait for such an Honour, and be long in preparing for such a Service.*

8 And the LORD spake unto Moses, and unto Aaron, saying, 9 When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, Shew a miracle for you: then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod and cast it before Pharaoh, and it shall become a serpent. 10

And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the Lord had commanded: And Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent. 11 Then Pharaoh also called the wise-men, and the soothsayers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. 12 For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods. 13 And he hardened Pharaoh's heart that he hearkened not unto them; as the Lord had said.

The first Time that Moses made his Application to Pharaoh he produced his Instructions only, now he is directed to produce his Credentials, and doth accordingly.

1. It is taken for granted that Pharaoh would challenge those Demandants to work a Miracle, that by a Performance evidently above the Power of Nature, they might prove their Commission from the God of Nature. Pharaoh will say, *show a Miracle*, not with any Desire to be convinced, but in Hopes none will be wrought, and then he would have some Colour for his Infidelity.

2. Orders are therefore given to turn the Rod into a Serpent, according to the Instructions, Chap. 4. 2. The same Rod that was to give the Signal of the other Miracles is now it self the Subject of a Miracle, to put a Reputation upon it. Aaron cast his Rod to the Ground, and instantly it became a Serpent, v. 10. This was proper not only to affect Pharaoh with Wonder, but to strike a Terror upon him; Serpents are hurtful, dreadful Animals, the very Sight of one thus miraculously produced might have softened his Heart into a Fear of that God by whose Power it was produced. This first Miracle, tho' it was not a Plague, yet amounted to the Threatning of a Plague. If it made not Pharaoh feel, it made him fear, and this is God's Method of dealing with Sinners, he comes upon them gradually.

3. This Miracle, tho' too plain to be denied, is enervated, and the Conviction of it taken off by the Magicians Imitation of it, v. 11, 12. Moses had been originally instructed in the Learning of the Egyptians, and was suspected to have improved himself in Magical Arts, in his long Retirement, the Magicians are therefore sent for to vie with him. And some think those of that Profession had a particular Spite at the Hebrews, ever since Joseph put them all to Shame by interpreting a Dream which they could make nothing of, in Remembrance of which Slur put on their Predecessors, these Magicians withstood Moses, as it is explained, 2 Tim. 3. 8. Their Rods became Serpents, real Serpents, some think by the Power of God, beyond their Intention or Expectation, for the hardning of Pharaoh's Heart. Others think by the Power of Evil Angels, artfully substituting Serpents in the Room of the Rods, God permitting the Delusion to be wrought for Wise and Holy Ends, that they might believe a Lie, who received not the Truth, and herein the Lord was Righteous. Yet this might have helped to frighten Pharaoh into a Compliance with Moses's Demands, that he might be freed from these dreadful unaccountable Phenomena, with which he saw himself on all Sides surrounded. But to the Seed of the Serpents, these Serpents were no Amusement. Note, God suffers the lying Spirit to do strange Things, that the Faith of some may be tried and manifested, Deut. 13. 3. 1 Cor. 11. 19. and the Infidelity of others may be confirmed, and that he which is filthy may be filthy still, 2 Cor. 4. 4.

4. Yet in this Contest Moses plainly gains the Victory, the Serpent which Aaron's Rod was turned into, swallowed up the other, which was sufficient to have convinced Pharaoh on which side the Right lay. Note, Great is the Truth, and will prevail. The Cause of God will undoubtedly triumph at last over all Competition and Contradiction, and will reign alone, Dan. 2. 45. But Pharaoh was not wrought upon by this; The Magicians having produced Serpents, he had this to say, that the Case between them and Moses was disputable, and the very Appearance of an Opposition to Truth, and the least Head made against it, serves those for a Justification of their Infidelity, who are prejudiced against the Light and Love of it.

14 And the LORD said unto Moses, Pharaoh's heart is hardened, he refuseth to let the people go. 15 Get thee unto Pharaoh in the morning, lo, he goeth out unto the water, and thou shalt stand by the rivers brink, against he come: and the rod which was turned to a serpent shalt thou take in thine hand. 16 And thou shalt say unto him, The LORD God of the Hebrews hath sent me unto thee, saying, let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness: and behold, hitherto thou wouldst

est

est not hear. 17 Thus saith the LORD, In this thou shalt know that I am the LORD: behold, I will smite with the rod that is in mine hand, upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood. 18 And the fish that is in the river shall die, and the river shall stink; and the Egyptians shall lothe to drink of the water of the river. 19 And the LORD spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, take thy rod, and stretch out thine hand upon the waters of Egypt, upon their streams, upon their rivers, and upon their ponds, and upon all their pools of water, that they may become blood; and that there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood, and in vessels of stone. 20 And Moses and Aaron did so, as the LORD commanded: and he lift up the rod and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants: and all the waters that were in the river, were turned to blood. 21 And the fish that was in the river, died: and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river: and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt. 22 And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, neither did he hearken unto them; as the LORD had said. 23 And Pharaoh turned and went into his house, neither did he set his heart to this also. 24 And all the Egyptians digged round about the river for water to drink: for they could not drink of the water of the river. 25 And seven days were fulfilled, after that the LORD had smitten the river.

Here's the first of the ten Plagues, *The turning of the Water into Blood*, which was, (1.) A dreadful Plague, and very grievous; The very sight of such vast rolling Streams of Blood, pure Blood no doubt, florid, and high-coloured, could not but strike a Horror upon People: Much more afflictive were the Consequences of it. Nothing more common than Water, so wisely has Providence ordered it, and so kindly, that that which is so needful, and serviceable to the Comfort of Humane Life should be cheap, and almost every where to be had; But now the Egyptians must either drink Blood or die for Thirst. Fish was much of their Food, Num. 11. 5. but the changing of the Waters was the death of the Fish. 'Twas as a Pestilence in that Element, v. 21. the Fish died. In the general Deluge they escaped, because perhaps they had not been then so serviceable to the Luxury of Men as they have been since, but in this particular Judgment they perished, Ps. 105. 29. he slew their Fish; and when another Destruction of Egypt long after is threatened, the Disappointment of those that make Sluces and Ponds for Fish is intimated in, Isa. 19. 10. Egypt was a pleasant Land, but the noisom stench of dead Fish, and Blood which by Degrees would grow putrid now rendered it very unpleasant. (2.) It was a righteous Plague, and justly inflicted upon the Egyptians. For, 1. Nilus, the River of Egypt, was their Idol, they and their Land had so much Benefit by that Creature, that they served and worshipped it more than the Creator. The Fountain of Nile being (in this sense) unknown to them, they paid all their Devotions to its Streams: Here therefore God punished them, and turned that into Blood which they had turned into a God. Note, That Creature which we Idolize, God justly removes from us, or embitters to us. He makes that a Scourge to us which we make a Competitor with him. 2. They had stained the River with the Blood of the Hebrews Children, and now God made that River all bloody; Thus he gave them Blood to drink, for they were worthy, Rev. 16. 6. Note, Never any thirsted after Blood, but sooner or later they had enough of it. (3.) It was a significant Plague; Egypt had a great Dependence upon their River, Zach. 14. 18. so that in smiting the River they were warned of the Destruction of all their Products, till it came at last to their First-born. And this Red River proved a direful Omen of the Ruine of Pharaoh and all his Forces in the Red Sea. This Plague of Egypt is alluded to in the Prediction of the Ruin of the Enemies of the New Testament Church, Rev. 16. 3, 4. But there the Sea as well as the Rivers and Fountains of Water are turned into Blood, for Spiritual Judgments reach further, and strike deeper than temporal Judgments do. And lastly, let me observe

in general concerning this Plague, That one of the first Miracles Moses wrought was turning Water into Blood, but one of the first Miracles our Lord Jesus wrought was turning Water into Wine, for the Law was given by Moses, and it was a Dispensation of Death and Terror, but Grace and Truth, which like Wine makes glad the Heart, came by Jesus Christ.

Now, 1. Moses is directed to give Pharaoh warning of this Plague, Pharaoh's Heart is hardened, v. 14. therefore go try what this will do to soften it, v. 15. Moses perhaps may not be admitted into Pharaoh's Presence Chamber, or the Room of State where he used to give audience to Embassadors, and therefore he is directed to meet him by the River's side, whither God foresaw he would come in the Morning, either for the Pleasure of a Morning's Walk, or to pay his Morning Devotions to the River, for thus all People will walk, every one in the Name of his God, they will not fail to worship their God every Morning; There Moses must be ready to give him new Summons to surrender, and in case of a Refusal, to tell him of the Judgment that was coming upon that very River they were now standing on the Banks of. Notice is thus given him of it beforehand, that they might have no Colour to say, *It was a chance*, or to attribute it to any other Cause, but that it might appear to be done by the Power of the God of the Hebrews, and as a punishment upon him for his Obstinacy. Moses is expressly ordered to take the Rod with him, that Pharaoh might be alarmed at the sight of that Rod which had so lately triumphed over the Rods of the Magicians. Now learn hence, (1.) That the Judgments of God are all known to himself beforehand. He knows what he will do in Wrath as well as Mercy. Every Consumption is a Consumption determined, Isa. 10. 23. (2.) That Men cannot over-run the Alarms of God's Wrath, because they cannot go out of the hearing of their own Consciences: He that made their Hearts can make his Sword to approach to them. (3.) That God warns before he wounds, for he is Long-suffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to Repentance.

2. Aaron (who carried the Mace) is directed to summon the Plague by smiting the River with his Rod, v. 19, 20. 'Twas done in the sight of Pharaoh, and his Attendants, for God's true Miracles were not performed as Satan's lying Wonders were by them that peeped and muttered; Truth seeks no Corners. An amazing Change was immediately wrought, all the Waters, not only in the River, but in all their Ponds, were turned into Blood. 1. See here the Almighty Power of God. Every Creature is that to us which he makes it to be, Water or Blood. 2. See the Mutability of all things under the Sun, and what Changes we may meet with in them. That which is Water to day may be Blood to morrow, what's always vain may soon become vexatious. A River at the best is transient, but Divine Justice can quickly make it malignant. 3. See what mischievous Work Sin makes. If the things that have been our Comforts prove our Crosses, we must thank our selves: 'Tis Sin that turns our Waters into Blood.

3. Pharaoh endeavours to confront the Miracle, because he resolves not to humble himself under the Plague. He sends for the Magicians, and by God's Permission they ape the Miracle with their Enchantments, v. 22. and this served Pharaoh for an Excuse not to set his Heart to this also, (v. 23.) and a pitiful Excuse it was. Could they have turned the River of Blood into Water again, it had been something, then they had proved their Power, and Pharaoh had been obliged to them as his Benefactors. But for them when there was such Scarcity of Water to turn more of it into Blood, only to shew their Art, plainly intimates that the Design of the Devil is only to delude his Devotees and amuse them; not to do them any real Kindness, but to keep them from doing real Kindness to themselves by repenting, and returning to their God.

4. The Egyptians in the mean time are seeking for Relief against the Plague, digging round about the River, for Water to drink, v. 24. Probably they found some, with much ado, God remembering Mercy in the midst of Wrath, for he is full of Compassion, and would not let the Subjects smart too much for the Obstinacy of their Prince.

5. The Plague continued seven days, v. 25. And in all that time Pharaoh's proud Heart would not let him so much as desire Moses to intercede for the Removal of it. Thus the Hypocrites in Hearts heap up Wrath, they cry not when he binds them, Job 36. 13, and then no wonder that his Anger is not turned away, but his Hand is stretched out still.

CHAP. VIII.

Three more of the Plagues of Egypt are related in this Chapter,

- (1.) That of the Frogs, which is, 1. Threatned, v. 1-4.
2. Inflicted, v. 5, 6. 3. Mimicked by the Magicians, v. 7.
4. Removed, at the humble Request of Pharaoh, v. 8-14. who yet hardens his Heart, and notwithstanding his Promise while the Plague was upon him, v. 8. refus'd to let Israel go, v. 15. (2.) The Plague of Lice, v. 16, 17. By which, 1. The Magicians were baffled, v. 18, 19. and yet, 2. Pharaoh

was harden'd, v. 19. (3.) That of Flies: 1. Pharaoh is warn'd of it before, v. 20, 21. and told, that the Land of Goshen should be exempt from this Plague, v. 22, 23. 2. The Plague is brought, v. 24. 3. Pharaoh treats with Moses, about the Release of Israel, and humbles himself, v. 25—29. 4. The Plague is thereupon removed, v. 31. and Pharaoh's Heart harden'd, v. 32.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, Go unto Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may serve me. 2 And if thou refuse to let them go, behold, I will smite all thy borders with frogs. 3 And the rivers shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into thine house, and into thy bed-chamber, and upon thy bed, and into the house of thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thine ovens, and into thy kneading-troughs. 4 And the frogs shall come up both on thee, and upon thy people, and upon all thy servants. 5 And the LORD spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch forth thine hand with thy rod over the streams, over the rivers, and over the ponds, and cause frogs to come up upon the land of Egypt. 6 And Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt. 7 And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs from the land of Egypt. 8 Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Intreat the LORD, that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people: and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the LORD. 9 And Moses said unto Pharaoh, Glory over me: when shall I intreat for thee, and for thy servants, and for thy people, to destroy the frogs from thee, and thy houses, that they may remain in the river only? 10 And he said, To morrow. And he said, Be it according to thy word: that thou mayest know, that there is none like unto the LORD our God. 11 And the frogs shall depart from thee, and from thy houses, and from thy servants, and from thy people; they shall remain in the river only. 12 And Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh: and Moses cried unto the LORD, because of the frogs which he had brought against Pharaoh. 13 And the LORD did according to the word of Moses: and the frogs died out of the houses, out of the villages, and out of the fields. 14 And they gathered them together upon heaps: and the land stank. 15 But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkned not unto them; as the LORD had said.

Pharaoh is here threatened first, and then plagued with Frogs, as afterwards in this Chapter with Lice and Flies, little despicable inconsiderable Animals, and yet by their vast Numbers, made sore Plagues to the Egyptians. God would have plagued them with Lions or Bears, or Wolves, or with Vultures, or Birds of Prey, but he chose to do it by these contemptible Instruments. 1. That he might magnify his own Power, he is Lord of the Hosts of the whole Creation, has them all at his Beck, and makes what use he pleaseth of them. Some have thought the Power of God is shewed as much in the making of an Ant, as in the making of an Elephant; so is his Providence in serving his own Purposes by the least Creatures as effectually as by the strongest, that the Excellency of the Power in Judgment as well as Mercy may be of God, and not of the Creature. See what reason we have to stand in awe of this God, who when he pleaseth can arm the smallest Parts of the Creation against us. If God be our Enemy all the Creatures are at War with us. 2. That he might humble Pharaoh's Pride, and chastise his Insolence. What a Mortification must it needs be to this haughty Monarch to see himself brought to his Knees, and forced to submit by such despicable Means. Every Child is ordinarily able to deal with those Invaders, and can triumph

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over them, yet now so numerous are their Troops, and so vigorous their Assaults, that Pharaoh with all his Chariots and Horsemen could make no head against them. Thus he poureth contempt upon Princes that offer Contempt to him and his Sovereignty, and makes those who will not own him above 'em, to know that when he pleases he can make the meanest Creature to insult them; and trample upon them.

As to the Plague of Frogs we may observe,

1. How it was threatened. Moses no doubt attended the Divine Majesty daily for fresh Instructions, and (perhaps while the River was yet Blood) he is directed to give notice to Pharaoh of another Judgment coming upon him in case he continue obstinate: if thou refuse to let them go it is at thy peril, v. 1, 2. Note, God doth not punish Men for Sin unless they persist in it; if he turn not, he will whet his Sword, Ps. 7. 12, which implies Favour, if he turn. So here, if thou refuse, I will smite thy Borders, intimating, if thou comply, the Controversy shall immediately be dropt. Observe how Moses represents the Plague that was coming, as formidable in the Extent of it; The Frogs should make such an Inroad upon them, as should make them uneasy in their Houses, in their Beds, at their Tables, they should neither Eat, nor Drink, nor sleep in quietness, but where-ever they were should be infested by them; v. 3, 4. Note, 1. God's curse upon a Man will dog him where-ever he goes, and lie heavy upon him whatever he doth. See Deut. 28. 16, &c. 2. There's no avoiding Divine Judgments when they invade upon the Commission.

2. How it was inflicted, Pharaoh not regarding the Alarm; nor at all inclined to yield to the Summons, Aaron is ordered to draw out the Forces, and with his outstretched Arm and Rod to give the Signal of Battle. Dictum Factum, no sooner said than done; The Host is mustered, and under the Conduct and Command of an invisible Power, Sholes of Frogs invade the Land, and the Egyptians with all their Art, and all their Might cannot check their Progress, or so much as give them a Diversion. Compare this with that Prophecy of an Army of Locusts and Caterpillars, Joel 2. 2. &c. and see, Isa. 34. 16, 17. Frogs came up at the Divine Call, and covered the Land. Note, God has many ways of disquieting those that live at ease.

3. How the Magicians were permitted to imitate it, v. 7. They also brought up Frogs, but could not remove those that God sent. The unclean Spirits which come out of the mouth of the Dragon are said to be like Frogs, which go forth to the Kings of the Earth to deceive them, Rev. 16. 13. which probably alludes to these Frogs, for it follows upon the turning of the Waters into Blood. The Dragon like the Magicians intended by them to deceive, but God intended by them to destroy those that would be deceived.

4. How Pharaoh began to relent, under this Plague, and it was the first time he did so, v. 8. He begs of Moses to intercede for the removal of the Frogs, and promiseth fair that he will let the People go. He that a while ago had spoke with the utmost Disdain both of God and Moses, now is glad to be beholden to the Mercy of God, and the Prayers of Moses. Note, Those that bid Defiance to God and Prayer, in a Day of Extremity, first or last will be made to see their need of both, and will cry, Lord, Lord, Mat. 7. 22. Those that had bantered Prayer have been brought to beg it; And the Rich Man that had scorned Lazarus courted him for a drop of Water.

5. How Moses fixes the Time with Pharaoh, and then prevails with God by Prayer for the Removal of the Frogs. Moses to shew that his Performances had no dependance upon the Conjunctions or Oppositions of the Planets, or the luckiness of any one Hour more than another, bids Pharaoh name his time. Nullum tempus occurrit Regi, v. 9. Have thou this honour over me; tell me against when I shall intreat for thee. This was designed for Pharaoh's Conviction, that if his Eyes were not opened by the Plague, they might by the Removal of it. So various are the Methods God takes to bring Men to Repentance.

Pharaoh sets the time for to morrow, v. 10. And why not immediately? Was he so fond of his Guests that he would have them stay another Night with him? No, but probably, he hoped that this Night they would go away of themselves, and then he should get clear of the Plague without being obliged either to God, or Moses. However Moses joyns issue with him upon it, Be it according to thy Word; it shall be done just when thou wouldst have it done, that thou mayest know that whatever the Magicians pretend to, there is none like unto the Lord our God. None has such a Command as he has over all the Creatures, nor any so ready to forgive those that humble themselves before him. Note, The Great Design both of Judgments and Mercies, is to convince us that there is none like the Lord our God, none so Wise, so Mighty, so Good, no Enemy so formidable, no Friend so desirable, so valuable.

Moses hereupon applies himself to God, prays earnestly to him to remand the Frogs, v. 12. Note, We must pray for our Enemies and Persecutors, even the worst, as Christ did. Presently the Frogs that came up one Day, perished the next, or the next but one. They all died, v. 14. and that it might appear they were real Frogs, their dead Bodies were left to be raked together in Heaps, so that the smell of them became

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Offensive,

Offensive, v. 13, 14. *Note*, The great Sovereign of the World makes what use he pleaseth of the Lives and Deaths of his Creatures; and he that gives a Being to serve one purpose, may without Wrong to his Justice call for it again, presently, to serve another purpose.

6. What was the Issue of this Plague, v. 15. *When Pharaoh saw that there was respite*, without considering either what he had lately felt, or what he had reason to fear, he *hardned his Heart*. *Note*, 1. Till the Heart is renewed by the Grace of God, the Impressions made by the force of Affliction do not abide: The Convictions wear off, and the Promises that were extorted are forgotten. Till the disposition of the Air is changed, what thaws in the Sun, will freeze again in the Shade. 2. God's Patience is shamefully abused by impenitent Sinners. The *respite* he gives them, to lead them to Repentance, they are hardened by, and while he graciously allows them a Truce in order to the making of their Peace, they take that Opportunity to rally again the baffled Forces of an obstinate Infidelity. See *Ecc. 8. 11. Psal. 78. 34. &c.*

16 And the LORD said unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch out thy rod, and smite the dust of the land, that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt. 17 And they did so; for Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and it became lice, in man and in beast: all the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt. 18 And the magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not: so there were lice upon man, and upon beast. 19 Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.

Here's a short account of the Plague of Lice. It doth not appear that any warning was given of it before. Pharaoh's abuse of the Respite granted him, might have been a sufficient warning to him to expect another Plague: For if the Removal of an Affliction harden us, and so lose us the Benefit of it, we may conclude it goes away with a purpose to return, or to make room for a worse.

Observe, 1. How this Plague of Lice was inflicted on the Egyptians, v. 16, 17. The Frogs were produced out of the Waters, but these Lice out of the Dust of the Earth, for out of any part of the Creation God can fetch a Scourge wherewith to correct those that rebel against him. He hath many Arrows in his Quiver. Even the Dust of the Earth obeys him. *Fear not then thou Worm Jacob*, for God can use thee as a threshing Instrument, if he pleases, *Isa. 41. 14, 15*. These Lice no doubt were extremely vexatious as well as scandalous to the Egyptians. Tho' they had *respite*, they had *respite* but a while, *Rev. 11. 14*. The second *woe* was past, but behold the third *woe* came very quickly.

2. How the Magicians were baffled by it, v. 18. They attempted to imitate it, but they could not; when they failed in that, it should seem they attempted to remove it, for it follows, *so there were Lice upon Man and Beast*, in spite of them. This forced them to confess themselves over-powered, *This is the Finger of God*, v. 19. i. e. This Check and Restraint put upon us, must needs be from a Divine Power. *Note*, 1. God has the Devil in a Chain, and limits him both as a Deceiver, and as a Destroyer; *Hitherto he shall come, but no further*. The Devil's Agents when God permitted them could do great things, but when he laid an Embargo upon them, tho' but with his Finger, they could do nothing. The Magicians inability in this lesser Instance, shewed whence they had their Ability in the former Instances which seemed greater, and that they had no Power against Moses, but what was given them from above. 2. Sooner or later God will extort even from his Enemies an Acknowledgment of his own Sovereignty and over-ruling Power. 'Tis certain they must all (as we say) knock under at last, as Julian the Apostate did, when his dying Lips confessed, *Thou hast overcome me, O thou Galilean*. God will not only be too hard for all Opposers, but will force them to own it.

3. How Pharaoh notwithstanding this was made more and more obstinate, v. 19. even those that had deceived him now, said enough to undeceive him, and yet he grew more and more obstinate. Even the Miracles and the Judgments were to him a Savour of death unto death. *Note*, Those that are not made better by God's Word and Providences, are commonly made worse by them.

20 And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, (lo, he cometh forth to the water) and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Let my people go,

that they may serve me. 21 Else if thou wilt not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies upon thee, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thy houses: and the houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms of flies, and also the ground whereon they are. 22 And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there; to the end thou mayest know, that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth. 23 And I will put a division between my people, and thy people: to morrow shall this sign be. 24 And the LORD did so: and there came a grievous swarm of flies into the house of Pharaoh, and into his servants houses, and into all the land of Egypt: the land was corrupted by reason of the swarm of flies. 25 And Pharaoh called for Moses, and for Aaron, and said, Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land. 26 And Moses said, It is not meet so to do; for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the LORD our God: Lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us? 27 We will go three days journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to the LORD our God, as he shall command us. 28 And Pharaoh said, I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the LORD your God, in the wilderness; only you shall not go very far away: intreat for me. 29 And Moses said, Behold, I go out from thee, and I will intreat the LORD, that the swarms of flies may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people, to morrow: but let not Pharaoh deal deceitfully any more, in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the LORD. 30 And Moses went out from Pharaoh, and intreated the LORD. 31 And the LORD did according to the word of Moses; and he removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people: there remained not one. 32 And Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also, neither would he let the people go.

Here's the Story of the Plague of Flies, in which we are told,

1. How it was threatened, like that of Frogs, before it was inflicted. Moses is directed, v. 20. to rise early in the Morning to meet Pharaoh, when he came forth to the Water, and there to repeat his Demands. *Note*, (1.) Those that would bring great things to pass for God and their Generation must rise early, and redeem time in the Morning. Pharaoh was early up at his superstitious Devotions to the River, and shall we be for more Sleep, and more Slumber, when any Service is to be done, which would pass well in our Account in the Great Day. (2.) Those that would approve themselves God's faithful Servants must not be afraid of the Face of Man. Moses must stand before Pharaoh as proud as he was, and tell him that which was in the highest Degree humbling, must challenge him (if he refused to release his Captives) to engage with an Army of Flies, which would obey God's Orders, if Pharaoh would not. See a like Threatning, *Isa. 7. 18*. The Lord will hiss, (or whistle) for the Fly, and the Bee, to come and serve his purposes.

2. How the Egyptians and the Hebrews were to be remarkably distinguished in this Plague, v. 22, 23. 'Tis probable this Distinction had not been so manifest and observable in any of the foregoing Plagues, as it was to be in this. Thus as the Plague of Lice was made more convincing than any before it by the running of the Magicians aground, so was this by the Distinction made between the Egyptians, and the Hebrews. Pharaoh must be made to know that God is the Lord in the midst of the Earth, and by this it will be known beyond Dispute. 1. Swarms of Flies which seem to us to fly at random, shall be manifestly under the Conduct of an intelligent Mind, while they are above the Direction of any Man. *Hither they shall go, saith Moses*, and thither they shall not come; and the Performance is punctually according to his Appointment, and both compared, amount to a Demonstration that he that said it, and he that did it was the same, even a Being of Infinite Power and Wisdom. 2. The Servants and Worshipers of the Great Jehovah shall be preserved from sharing in the common Calamities of the Place they

they live in, so that the Plague which annoys all their Neighbours shall not approach them, and this shall be an uncontested Proof, that God is the Lord in the midst of the Earth. Put both these together, and it appears that the Eyes of the Lord run to and fro through the Earth, and through the Air too, to direct that which to us seems most casual to serve some great and designed End, that he may show himself strong on the behalf of those whose Hearts are upright with him, 2 Chron. 16. 9.

Observe how 'tis repeated, v. 23. *I will put a Division between my People and thy People.* Note, The Lord knows them that are his, and will make it to appear, perhaps in this World, however in t'other, that he hath set them apart for himself. A Day will come when ye shall return and discern between the Righteous and the Wicked, Mal. 3. 18. the Sheep and the Goats, Mat. 25. 32. Ezek. 34. 17. tho' now intermixed.

3. How it was inflicted, the Day after 'twas threatened, there came a grievous swarm of Flies, v. 24. Flies of divers sorts, and such as devoured them, Ps. 78. 45. The Prince of the Power of the Air has gloried in being *Biel-zabub*, the God of Flies; but here 'tis proved that even in that he is a Pretender, and a Usurper, for even with swarms of Flies God Fights against his Kingdom and prevails.

4. How Pharaoh upon this Attack sounded a Parley, and entered into a Treaty with Moses and Aaron, about a surrender of his Captives: But observe with what reluctance he yields.

1. He is content they should sacrifice to their God, provided they would do it in the land of Egypt, v. 25. Note, God can extort a Toleration of his Worship even from those that are really Enemies to it. Pharaoh under the smart of the Rod is content they should do Sacrifice, and will allow Liberty of Conscience to God's Israel, even in his own Land.

But Moses will not accept his Concession, he cannot do it, v. 26. 'Twould be an Abomination to God, should they offer the Egyptian Sacrifices: And an Abomination to the Egyptians, should they offer to God their own Sacrifices, as they ought, so that they could not Sacrifice in the Land but they must unavoidably incur the Displeasure, either of their God, or of their Task-masters; Therefore he insists upon it, v. 27. *We will go three days Journey into the Wilderness.* Note, Those that would offer acceptable Sacrifice to God must, (1.) Separate themselves from the Wicked and Profane, for we cannot have Fellowship both with the Father of Lights, and with the Works of Darkness, both with Christ and with Belial, 2 Cor. 6. 17. Ps. 26. 4, 6. (2.) They must retire from the Distractions of the World, and get as far as may be from the noise of it. Israel cannot keep the Feast of the Lord, either among the Brick-kilns, or among the Flesh-pots of Egypt; no, *We will go into the Wilderness*, Hos. 2. 14. Cant. 7. 11. (3.) They must observe the Divine Appointment; we will Sacrifice as he shall command us, and not otherwise. Tho' they were in the utmost Degree of Slavery to Pharaoh, yet in the Worship of God they must observe his Commands, and not Pharaoh's.

2. When this Proposal would not be accepted, he consents they shall go into the Wilderness, provided they do not go very far away, not so far but that he might fetch them back again, v. 28. 'Tis likely he had heard of their Design upon Canaan, and suspected that if once they left Egypt they would never come back again, and therefore when he is forced to consent that they shall go, the swarms of Flies buzzing that in his Ears, yet he is not willing they should go out of his reach. Thus some Sinners who in a pang of Conviction part with their Sins, yet are loth they should go very far away, for when the Fright's over they'll return to them again. A mighty struggle here was between Pharaoh's Convictions and his Corruptions; His Convictions said, Let them go, his Corruptions said, yet not very far away; But he sided with his Corruptions against his Convictions, and it was his Ruine.

This Proposal Moses so far accepted, as that he promised the Removal of this Plague upon it, v. 29. See here.

1. How ready God is to accept Sinners Submissions. Pharaoh doth but say, *Intreat for me* (tho' 'tis with regret that he truckles so far) and Moses promises immediately, *I will intreat the Lord for thee*; That he might see what the Design of the Plague was, not to bring him to Ruine, but to bring him to Repentance. With what Pleasure did God say it, 1 Kin. 21. 29. *Seest thou how Ahab humbles himself?*

2. What need we have to be admonished that we be sincere in our Submissions, but let not Pharaoh deal deceitfully any more. Those that deal deceitfully are justly suspected, and must be cautioned not to return again to Folly, after God has once more spoken Peace. Be not deceived, God is not mocked; if we think to put a cheat upon God by a counterfeit Repentance, and a fraudulent Surrender of our selves to him, we shall prove in the End to have put a damning Cheat upon our own Souls.

Lastly, The Issue of all was, That God graciously removed the Plague, v. 30, 31. But Pharaoh perfidiously returned to his Hardness, and would not let the People go, v. 32. His Pride would not let him part with such a Flower of his Crown as his Dominion over Israel was, nor his Covetousness, with such

a Branch of his Revenue as their Labours were. Note, Reigning Lusts break through the strongest Bonds, and make Men impudently presumptuous, and scandalously perfidious. Let not Sin therefore reign, for if it do, it will betray and hurry us to the greatest Absurdities.

C H A P. IX.

In this Chapter we have an Account of three more of the Plagues of Egypt. 1. Murrain among the Cattle, which was fatal to them, v. 1—7. 2. Boils upon Man and Beast, v. 8—12. 3. Hail, with Thunder and Lightning. 1. Warning is given of this Plague, v. 13—21. 2. It is inflicted to their great Terror, v. 22—26. 3. Pharaoh in a fright renews his Treaty with Moses, but instantly breaks his Word, v. 27—35.

THEN the LORD said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh, and tell him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me. 2 For if thou refuse to let them go, and wilt hold them still. 3 Behold, the hand of the LORD is upon thy cattle which is in the field, upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, upon the oxen, and upon the sheep: there shall be a very grievous murrain. 4 And the LORD shall sever between the cattle of Israel, and the cattle of Egypt: and there shall nothing die of all that is the childrens of Israel. 5 And the LORD appointed a set time, saying, To morrow the LORD shall do this thing in the land. 6 And the LORD did that thing on the morrow, and all the cattle of Egypt died: but of the cattle of the children of Israel died not one. 7 And Pharaoh sent, and behold, there was not one of the cattle of the Israelites dead. And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go.

Here's, 1. Warning given of another Plague, viz. The Murrain of Beasts. When Pharaoh's Heart was hardened after he had seemed to relent under the former Plague, then Moses is sent to tell him there's another coming, to try what that would do towards the reviving of the Impressions of the former Plagues. Thus is the Wrath of God revealed from Heaven, both in his Word, and in his Works, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of Men. (1.) Moses puts Pharaoh in a very fair way to prevent it, *Let my People go*, v. 1. This was still the Demand, God will have Israel released, Pharaoh opposeth it, and the Trial is whose word shall stand. See how jealous God is for his People; when the Year of his redeemed is come, he will give Egypt for their Ransom, that Kingdom shall be ruined rather than Israel shall not be delivered. See how reasonable God's Demands are, whatever he calls for 'tis but his own, they are my People, therefore let them go. (2.) He describes the Plague that should come if he refused, v. 2, 3. The Hand of the Lord immediately, without the stretching out of Aaron's Hand, is upon the Cattle, many of which, some of all kinds should die by a sort of Pestilence. This was greatly to the loss of the Owners: They had made Israel Poor, and now God would make them Poor. Note, The Hand of God is to be acknowledged even in the Sickness and Death of Cattle, or other Damage sustained in them, for a Sparrow falls not to the Ground without our Father. (3.) As an Evidence of the special Hand of God in it, and of his particular Favour to his own People, he foretells that none of their Cattle should die, tho' they breathed in the same Air, and drank of the same Water with the Egyptians Cattle, v. 4. *I will sever.* Note, When God's Judgments are abroad, tho' they may light both on the Righteous and the Wicked, yet God makes such a Distinction, that they are not the same to the one that they are to the other. See Isaiah 27. 7. The Providence of God is to be acknowledged with thankfulness in the Life of the Cattle, for he preserveth Man and Beast, Ps. 36. 6. (4.) To make the Warning the more remarkable, the time is fixt, v. 5. to morrow it shall be done, we know not what any Day will bring forth, and therefore cannot say what we will do to morrow, but God can.

2. The Plague it self inflicted, The Cattle died, v. 6. Note, The Creature is made subject to vanity by the Sin of Man, being liable according to its Capacity, both to serve his Wickedness, and to share in his Punishment, as in the universal Deluge, Rom. 8. 20, 22. Pharaoh and the Egyptians sinned, but the Sheep what had they done, yet they are plagued. See Jer. 12. 4. For the wickedness of the land, the Beasts are consumed. The Egyptians

Egyptians afterwards, and some think now worshipped their Cattle, 'twas among them that the Israelites learnt to make a God of a Calf; in that therefore this Plague meets with them. *Note*, What we make an Idol of, its just with God to remove from us, or embitter to us. See *Isa.* 19. 1.

3. The Distinction put between the Cattle of the Egyptians and the Israelites Cattle, according to the Word of God, not one of the Cattle of the Israelites died, v. 6, 7. Doth God take care for Oxen? Yes, he doth, his Providence extends it self to the meanest of his Creatures. But it is written also for our sakes, that trusting in God, and making him our Refuge, we may not be afraid of the Pestilence that walketh in darkness, no not tho' thousands fall at our side, *Pf.* 91. 6, 7. Pharaoh sent to see if the Cattle of the Israelites were infected, not to satisfy his Conscience, but only to gratify his Curiosity, or with design by way of Repraisal to repair his own Losses, out of their Stocks. And having no good Design in the Enquiry, the report brought him, made no impression upon him, but on the contrary his Heart was hardened. *Note*, To those that are wilfully blind, even those Methods of Conviction, which are ordained to Life prove a favour of Death unto Death.

8 And the LORD said unto Moses, and unto Aaron, Take to you handfuls of ashes of the furnace, and let Moses sprinkle it towards the heaven in the sight of Pharaoh. 9 And it shall become small dust in all the land of Egypt, and shall be a boyl breaking forth with blains, upon man, and upon beast, throughout all the land of Egypt. 10 And they took ashes of the furnace, and stood before Pharaoh, and Moses sprinkled it up toward heaven: and it became a boyl breaking forth with blains, upon man, and upon beast. 11 And the magicians could not stand before Moses, because of the boyl: for the boyl was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians. 12 And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkned not unto them; as the LORD had spoken unto Moses.

Observe here concerning the Plague of Boils and Blains.

1. That when they were not wrought upon by the Death of their Cattle, God sent a Plague that seized their own Bodies, and touched them to the quick. If lesser Judgments do not do their Work, God will send greater. Let us therefore humble our selves under the mighty Hand of God, and go forth to meet him in the way of his Judgments, that his Anger may be turned away from us.

2. The signal given by which this Plague was summoned, was the sprinkling of warm Ashes, from the Furnace, towards Heaven (v. 8, 10.) which was to signify the heating of the Air with such an Infection as should produce in the Bodies of the Egyptians sore Boils, which would be both noisome and painful. Immediately upon the scattering of the Ashes, a scalding Dew came down out of the Air which blistered where-ever it light. *Note*, Sometimes God shews Men their Sin in their Punishment: They had oppressed Israel in the Furnaces, and now the Ashes of the Furnace are made as much a Terror to them as ever their Task-masters had been to the Israelites.

3. The Plague it self was very grievous; Even an Itch and Scab would be so, especially to the Nice and Delicate, but these Eruptions were Inflammations, like *Jeb's*. This is afterwards called the Botch of Egypt, *Deut.* 28. 17. as if it were some new Disease, never heard of before, and known ever after by that Name. *Note*, Sores in the Body are to be looked upon as the Punishments of Sin, and to be hearkned to as Calls to Repentance.

4. The Magicians themselves were struck with these Boils, v. 11. 1. Thus they were punished, both, (1.) for helping to harden Pharaoh's Heart, as *Elymas* for seeking to pervert the right ways of the Lord; God will severely reckon with those that strengthen the Hands of the Wicked in their Wickedness. As also, (2.) for pretending to imitate the former Plagues, and making themselves and Pharaoh sport with them. They that would produce Lice, shall against their Wills produce Boils. *Note*, It's ill jesting with God's Judgments, and more dangerous than playing with Fire. Be ye not mockers, lest your Bands be made strong. 2. Thus they were shamed in the presence of their Admirers. How weak were their Incantments, which could not so much as secure themselves. The Devil can give no Protection to those that are in Confederacy with him. 3. Thus they were driven the Field. Their Power was restrained before, *Chap.* 8. 18. but they continued to confront Moses, and confirm Pharaoh in his Unbelief, till now at length they were forced to retreat, and could not stand before Moses; to which

the Apostle refers, *2 Tim.* 3. 9. when he saith, that their Folly was manifested unto all Men.

5. Pharaoh continued obstinate, for now the Lord hardened his Heart, v. 12. Before he had hardened his own Heart, and resisted the Grace of God, and now God justly gave him up to his own Hearts Lusts, to a reprobate Mind, and strong Delusions, permitting Satan to blind and harden him, and ordering every thing from henceforward so as to make him more and more obstinate. *Note*, Wilful Hardness is commonly punished with judicial Hardness. If Men shut their Eyes against the Light, 'tis just with God to close them. Let us dread this as the worst Judgment a Man can be under on this side Hell.

13 And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me. 14 For I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people: that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth. 15 For now I will stretch out my hand, that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth. 16 And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth. 17 As yet exaltest thou thy self against my people, that thou wilt not let them go? 18 Behold, to morrow about this time, I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail, such as hath not been in Egypt, since the foundation thereof, even until now. 19 Send therefore now, and gather thy cattel, and all that thou hast in the field: for upon every man and beast which shall be found in the field, and shall not be brought home, the hail shall come down upon them, and they shall die. 20 He that feared the word of the LORD amongst the servants of Pharaoh, made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses. 21 And he that regarded not the word of the LORD, left his servants and his cattle in the field.

Here's, 1. A general Declaration of the Wrath of God against Pharaoh, for his Obstinacy. Tho' God had hardened his Heart, v. 12. yet Moses must repeat his Applications to him; God suspends his Grace, and yet demands Obedience, to punish him for requiring Bricks of the Children of Israel, when he denied them Straw. God would likewise shew forth a Pattern of Long-suffering, and how he waits to be gracious to a rebellious and gainsaying People. Six times this Demand hath been made in vain, yet Moses must make it the seventh time, *Let my People go*, v. 13.

A most dreadful Message Moses is here ordered to deliver to him, whether he will hear, or whether he will forbear. 1. He must tell him, that he is marked for Ruine. That he now stands as the Butt at which God would shoot all the Arrows of his Wrath, v. 14, 15. Now I'll send all my Plagues, now no place is found for Repentance in Pharaoh, nothing can prevent his utter Destruction, for that only would have prevented it. Now God begins to harden his Heart, his Case is desperate. I'll send my Plagues upon thy Heart, not only temporal Plagues upon thy Body, but Spiritual Plagues upon thy Soul. *Note*, God can send Plagues upon the Heart, either by making it Senseless, or by making it Hopeless, and those are the worst Plagues. Pharaoh must now expect no respite, no Cessation of Arms, but to be followed with Plague upon Plague, till he is utterly consumed. *Note*, When God judgeth, he will overcome; none ever hardened his Heart against him and prospered. 2. He must tell him, that he is to remain in History a standing Monument of the Justice and Power of God's Wrath, v. 16. For this Cause have I raised thee up to the Throne at this Time, and made thee to stand the shock of the Plagues hitherto, to shew in thee my Power. Providence ordered it so that Moses should have a Man of such a fierce and stubborn Spirit as he was to deal with, and every thing was so managed in this Transaction, as to make it a most signal and memorable Instance of the Power God has to humble and bring down the proudest of his Enemies. Every thing concurred to signalize this, that God's Name, i. e. his uncontrollable Sovereignty, his irresistible Power, and his inflexible Justice might be declared throughout all the Earth, not only to all places, but through all Ages while the Earth remains. *Note*,

Note, God raiseth up sometimes very ill Men to Honour and Power, spares them long, and suffers them to grow insufferably insolent, that he may be so much the more glorified in their Destruction at last. See how the neighbour Nations at that Time improved the Ruine of Pharaoh to the Glory of God, *Exod.* 18.

11. *Jethro* said upon it, *Now know I that the Lord is greater than all Gods.* The Apostle illustrates the Doctrine of God's Sovereignty with this Instance, *Rom.* 9. 17. To justify God in these Resolutions, *Moses* is bid to ask him, *v.* 17. *As yet exaltest thou thy self against my People? Pharaoh* was a great King, God's People were poor Shepherds at the best, and now poor Slaves, and yet it shall be the Ruine of Pharaoh if he exalts himself against them, for it is interpreted exalting himself against God. This was not the first Time he reproved Kings for their sakes, and let them know that he would not suffer his People to be trampled upon and insulted, no, not by the biggest of them.

2. Here's a particular Prediction of the Plague of Hail, *v.* 18. and a gracious Advice to Pharaoh and his People to fend for their Servants and Cattle out of the Field, that they might be sheltered from the Hail, *v.* 19. *Note*, When God's Justice threatens Ruin, his Mercy at the same Time shews us a Way of Escape from it, so unwilling is he that any should perish. See here what Care God took not only to distinguish between Egyptians and Israelites, but between some Egyptians and others. If Pharaoh will not yield, and so prevent the Judgment it self, yet an Opportunity is given to those that had any dread of God and his Word, to save themselves from sharing in the Judgment. *Note*, Those that will take warning may take shelter, and those that will not, may thank themselves if they fall by the overflowing Scourge, and the Hail which will sweep away the Refuge of Lies, *Isa.* 28. 17. See the different Effect of this Warning. 1. Some believed the Things which were spoken, and they feared, and housed their Servants and Cattle, *v.* 20. like Noah, *Heb.* 11. 7. and it was their Wisdom: Even among the Servants of Pharaoh there were some that trembled at God's Word, and shall not the Sons of Israel dread it? But, 2. Others believed not; tho' whatever Plague *Moses* had hitherto foretold, the Event exactly answered the Prediction, and tho' if they had any Reason to question this, it would have been no great Damage to them to have kept their Cattle in the House for one Day, and so supposing it a doubtful case to have chosen the surer Side; yet they were so fool-hardy as in Defiance to the Truth of *Moses* and the Power of God (of both which they had already had Experience enough to their Cost) to leave out their Cattle, Pharaoh himself 'tis probable giving them an Example of the Presumption, *v.* 21. *Note*, Obstinate Infidelity is deaf to the fairest Warnings and the wisest Counsels, which leaves the Blood of them that perish upon their own Heads.

22 And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch forth thine hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, upon man, and upon beast, and upon every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt. 23 And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven, and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt. 24 So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt, since it became a nation. 25 And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt, all that was in the field, both man and beast: and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field. 26 Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail. 27 And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the LORD is righteous, and I and my people are wicked. 28 Intreat the LORD (for it is enough) that there be no more thundrings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer. 29 And Moses said unto him, As soon as I am gone out of the city, I will spread abroad my hands unto the LORD: and the thunder shall cease, neither shall there be any more hail; that thou mayest know, how that the earth is the LORDS. 30 But as for thee and thy servants, I know that ye will not yet fear the LORD God. 31 And the flax, and the barley

was smitten: for the barley was in the ear, and the flax was bolled. 32 But the wheat and the rie were not smitten, for they were not grown up. 33 And Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh, and spread abroad his hands unto the LORD: and the thunders and hail ceased, and the rain was not poured upon the earth. 34 And when Pharaoh saw that the rain, and the hail, and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants. 35 And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, neither would he let the children of Israel go; as the LORD had spoken by Moses.

The threatened Plague of Hail is here summon'd by the powerful Hand and Rod of *Moses*, *v.* 22, 23. and it obeys the Summons, or rather the Divine Command, for Fire and Hail fulfil God's Word, *Psal.* 148. 8. And here we are told,

1. What Desolations it made upon the Earth: The Thunder and Fire from Heaven, or Lightning made it both the more dreadful and the more destroying, *v.* 23, 24. *Note*, God makes the Clouds not only his Store-houses, whence he drops fatness on his People, but his Magazines, whence when he pleaseth he can draw out a most formidable Train of Artillery wherewith to destroy his Enemies. He himself speaks of the Treasures of Hail which he hath reserved against the day of Battle and War, *Job* 38. 22, 23. Woful Havock this Hail made in the Land of Egypt. It killed both Men and Cattle, and batter'd down not only the Herbs but the Trees, *v.* 25. The Corn that was above Ground was destroy'd, and that only preserved which as yet was not come up, *v.* 31, 32. *Note*, God has many Ways of taking away the corn in the season thereof, *Hos.* 2. 9. either by a secret blasting, or a noisie Hail. In this Plague the hot Thunderbolts are said to destroy their Flocks, as well as the Hail, *Pf.* 71. 47, 48. and see *Pf.* 105. 32, 33. Perhaps *David* alludes to this when in God's glorious Appearances for the Discomfiture of his Enemies, he speaks of the Hail-stones and Coles of Fire he threw among them, *Pf.* 18. 12, 13. And there's a plain Reference to it on the pouring out of the seventh Vial, *Rev.* 16. 21. Notice is taken, *v.* 26. of the Land of Goshen's being preserved from receiving any Damage by this Plague. God has the directing of the pregnant Clouds, and causeth it to Rain or Hail on one City and not on another, either in Mercy or Judgment.

2. What a Consternation it put Pharaoh in; see what Effect it had upon him. 1. He humbled himself to *Moses* in the Language of a Penitent, *v.* 27, 28. No Man could have spoke better. He owns himself on the wrong Side in his Contest with the God of the Hebrews, I have sinned in standing it out so long: He owns the Equity of God's Proceedings against him, The Lord is righteous, and must be justified when he speaks, tho' he speaks in Thunder and Lightning: He condemns himself and his Land, I and my People are wicked, and deserve what is brought upon us: He begs the Prayers of *Moses*, Intreat the Lord for me that this direful Plague may be removed. And lastly, He promises to yield up his Prisoners, I will let you go: What could one desire more? And yet his Heart harden'd all this while. *Note*, The Terror of the Rod oft extorts penitent Acknowledgments from those who have no penitent Affections; under the Surprise and Smart of an Affliction, they start up, and say that which is pertinent enough, not because they do think it, but because they knew they should, and that 'tis meet so be said. 2. *Moses* hereupon becomes an Intercessor for him with God. Tho' he had all the Reason in the World to think that he would presently repent of his Repentance, and told him so, *v.* 30. yet he promises to be his Friend in the Court of Heaven. *Note*, Even those whom we have little hopes of, yet we should continue to pray for, and to admonish, *1 Sam.* 12. 23. Observe, 1. The Place *Moses* chose for his Intercession, he went out of the City, *v.* 33. not only for Privacy in his Communion with God, but to shew that he durst venture abroad into the Field, notwithstanding the Hail and Lightning which kept Pharaoh and his Servants within Doors; knowing that every Hail-stone had its Direction from his God, who meant him no Hurt. *Note*, Peace with God makes Men Thunder-proof, for 'tis the Voice of their Father. 2. The Gesture; he spread abroad his Hands unto the Lord; an outward Expression of earnest Desire, and humble Expectation: Those that come to God for Mercy must stand ready to receive it. 3. The End *Moses* aim'd at in interceding for him, that thou mayst know and be convinced, that the Earth is the LORDS, *v.* 29. i. e. that God has a Sovereign Dominion over all the Creatures, that they all are rul'd by him, and therefore thou ought'st to be so. See what various Methods God useth to bring Men to their Wits. Judgments are sent, and Judgments removed, and all for the same End to make Men know that,

that the Lord reigns. 4. The Success of it. 1. He prevailed with God, v. 33. But, 2. He could not prevail with Pharaoh, he sinned yet more, and hardened his Heart, v. 34, 35. The Prayer of Moses open'd and shut Heaven, like Elias's, Jam. 5. 17, 18. and such is the Power of God's two Witnesses, Rev. 11. 6. yet neither Moses nor Elias, nor those two Witnesses could subdue the hard Hearts of Men. Pharaoh was frighted into a Compliance by the Judgment, but when it was over his Convictions vanished, and his fair Promises were forgotten. Note, Little Credit is to be given to Confessions upon the Rack. Nay, Those that are not better'd by Judgments and Mercies are commonly made worse.

CHAP. X.

The eighth and ninth of the Plagues of Egypt, that of Locusts, and that of Darkness are recorded in this Chapter.

1. Concerning the Plague of Locusts, (1.) God instructs Moses in the meaning of these amazing Dispensations of his Providence, v. 1, 2. (2.) He threatens the Locusts, v. 3—6. (3.) Pharaoh, at the Persuasion of his Servants, is willing to treat again with Moses, v. 7, 8, 9. but they cannot agree, v. 10, 11. (4.) The Locusts come, v. 12—15. (5.) Pharaoh cries Peccavi, v. 16, 17. whereupon Moses prays for the Removal of the Plague, and it is done, but Pharaoh's Heart is still hardened, v. 18—20.
2. Concerning the Plague of Darkness, 1. 'Tis inflicted, v. 21—23.
2. Pharaoh again treats with Moses about a Surrender, but the Treaty breaks off in a heat, v. 24—29.

AND the LORD said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh: for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants; that I might shew these my signs before him: 2 And that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy sons son, what things I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have done amongst them; that ye may know how that I am the LORD. 3 And Moses and Aaron came in unto Pharaoh, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, How long wilt thou refuse to humble thy self before me? Let my people go, that they may serve me. 4 Else if thou refuse to let my people go, behold, to morrow will I bring the locusts into thy coast. 5 And they shall cover the face of the earth, that one cannot be able to see the earth: and they shall eat the residue of that which is escaped, which remaineth unto you from the hail, and shall eat every tree which groweth for you out of the field. 6 And they shall fill thy houses, and the houses of all thy servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians; which neither thy fathers, nor thy fathers father have seen, since the day that they were upon the earth, unto this day. And he turned himself and went out from Pharaoh. 7 And Pharaoh's servants said unto him, How long shall this man be a snare unto us? Let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God: Knowest thou not yet, that Egypt is destroyed? 8 And Moses and Aaron were brought again unto Pharaoh: and he said unto them, Go serve the LORD your God: but who are they that shall go? 9 And Moses said, We will go with our young, and with our old, with our sons, and with our daughters; with our flocks, and with our herds will we go: for we must hold a feast unto the LORD. 10 And he said unto them, Let the LORD be so with you, as I will let you go, and your little ones: look to it, for evil is before you. 11 Not so: go now ye that are men, and serve the LORD, for that you did desire. And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence.

Here, 1. Moses is instructed, we may well suppose he for his Part was much astonished both at Pharaoh's Obstinacy and at God's Severity, and could not but be compassionately concern'd for the Desolations of Egypt, and at a Loss what this Contest would come to at last: Now here God tells him what he design'd, not only Israel's Release, but the magnifying of his own Name,

that thou mayest tell in thy Writings, which shall continue to the World's End, what I have wrought in Egypt, v. 1, 2. The ten Plagues of Egypt must be inflicted that they may be recorded for the Generations to come as undeniable Proofs, (1.) Of God's over-ruling Power in the Kingdom of Nature, his Dominion over all the Creatures, and his Authority to use them either as Servants to his Justice, or Sufferers by it according to the Counsel of his Will. (2.) Of God's victorious Power over the Kingdom of Satan, to restrain the Malice, and chastise the Insolence of his and his Church's Enemies. These Plagues are standing Monuments of the Greatness of God, the Happiness of the Church, and the Sinfulness of Sin; and standing Monitors to the Children of Men in all Ages not to provoke the Lord to jealousy, not to strive with their Maker. The Benefit of these Instructions to the World doth sufficiently balance the Expence.

2. Pharaoh is reprov'd. v. 3. Thus saith the Lord God of the Poor, Despised, Persecuted Hebrews, How long wilt thou refuse to humble thy self before me? Note, It is justly expected from the greatest of Men, that they humble themselves before the great God, and it is at their Peril, if they refuse to do it. This hath more than once been God's Quarrel with Princes; Belshazzar did not humble his Heart, Dan. 5. 22. Zedekiah humbled not himself before Jeremiah, 2 Chr. 36. 12. And those that will not humble themselves, God will humble them. Pharaoh had sometimes pretended to humble himself, but no Account was made of it, because he was neither sincere nor constant in it.

3. The Plague of Locusts is threaten'd, v. 4, 5, 6. The Hail had broke down the Fruits of the Earth, but these Locusts should come and devour them: And not that only, but they should fill their Houses, whereas their Country had sometimes been infested by these Insects which had done them Damage. This should be much worse than all the Calamities of that Kind which had ever been known. Moses, when he had delivered his Message, not expecting any better answer than he had formerly, turned himself and went out from Pharaoh, v. 6. Thus Christ appointed his Disciples to depart from those who would not receive them, and to shake off the Dust of their Feet for a Testimony against them, and Ruin is not far off from those who are thus justly abandon'd by the Lord's Messengers, 1 Sam. 15. 27.

4. Pharaoh's Attendants, his Ministers of State, or Privy-Councillors interpose to persuade him to come to some Terms with Moses, v. 7. They, as in Duty bound, represent to him the deplorable Condition of the Kingdom, Egypt is destroyed, and advise him by all Means to release his Prisoners, Let the Men go, for Moses they found would be a Snare to them, till it was done, and as good consent at first as at last, the Israelites were become a burthenome Stone to the Egyptians, and now at length the Princes of Egypt were willing to be rid of them, Zech. 12. 3. Note, It is a Thing to be pitied (and prevented if possible) that a whole Nation should be ruined for the Pride and Obstinacy of its Princes, Salus populi suprema lex.

5. A new Treaty is hereupon set on Foot between Pharaoh and Moses, in which Pharaoh yields they shall go into the Wilderness to do Sacrifice; but the Matter in Dispute was, who should go v. 8. 1. Moses insists upon it, that they would take their whole Families, and all their Effects along with them, v. 9. Note, Those that serve God must serve him with all they have. Moses pleads, we must hold a Feast, therefore we must have our Families to feast with, and our Flocks and Herds to feast upon to the Honour of God. 2. Pharaoh will by no Means grant this: He will allow the Men to go, pretending that was all they desir'd, tho' this Matter was never yet mentioned in any of the former Treaties: But for the little Ones, he resolves to keep them as Hostages, to oblige them to return, v. 10, 11. In a great Passion he curseth and threatneth them in Case they offer'd to remove their Little Ones, telling them it was at their Peril. Note, Satan doth all he can to hinder those that serve God themselves from bringing their Children in to serve him. He is a sworn Enemy to early Piety, knowing how destructive it is to the Interests of his Kingdom: Whatever would put us by from engaging our Children to the utmost in God's Service, we have Reason to suspect the Hand of Satan in it. 3. The Treaty hereupon breaks off abruptly; they that went out from Pharaoh's Presence, v. 6. were now driven out. Those will quickly hear their Doom that cannot bear to hear their Duty. See 2 Chr. 25. 16. Quos Deos destruit eos dementat. Never was Man so infatuated to his own Ruin as Pharaoh was.

12 And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come up upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land, even all that the hail hath left. 13 And Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east-wind upon the land all that day, and all that night: and when it was morning,

morning, the east-wind brought the locusts. **14** And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt, and rested in all the coasts of Egypt: very grievous were they; before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such. **15** For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened, and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees, which the hail had left: and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field through all the land of Egypt. **16** Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste; and he said, I have sinned against the LORD God, and against you. **17** Now therefore forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once, and intreat the LORD your God, that he may take away from me this death only. **18** And he went out from Pharaoh, and intreated the LORD. **19** And the LORD turned a mighty strong west-wind, which took away the locusts, and cast them into the Red sea: there remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt. **20** But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go.

Here's, 1. The Locusts Invasion of the Land, God's great Army, Joel 2. 11. God bid Moses stretch out his hand, v. 12. to becken them as it were, for they came at a call, and he stretched out his Rod, v. 13. compare chap. 9. 22, 13. Moses ascribes it not to the stretching out of his own Hand, but of the Rod of God, the Instituted Sign of God's Presence with him. The Locusts obey the Summons, and fly upon the Wings of the Wind, the East Wind, and Caterpillars without number, as we are told, Pf. 105. 34, 35. A formidable Army of Horse and Foot might more easily have been resisted than this Host of Insects; Who then is able to stand before the great God?

2. The Desolations they made in it, v. 15. They covered the Face of the Earth, and eat up the Fruit of it. The Earth God has given to the children of Men, yet when God pleaseth he can disturb his Possession by Locusts and Caterpillars, and send them to justle him out. Herb grows for the Service of Man, yet when God pleaseth, those Contemptible Insects shall not only be fellow Commoners with him, but shall plunder him, and eat the Bread out of his Mouth. Let our Labour be not for the Habitation and Meat which thus lies expos'd, but for that which endures to eternal Life, which cannot be thus invaded, nor thus corrupted.

3. Pharaoh's Submission hereupon, v. 16, 17. He had driven Moses and Aaron from him, v. 11. telling them 'tis likely he would have no more to do with them. But now he calls for them again in all haste, and makes court to them with as much respect as before he had dismissed them with disdain. Note, The day will come when those who set at nought their Counsellors and despise all their Reproofs, would be glad to make an Interest in them, and engage their Intercessions for them. The foolish Virgins court the wife to give them of their Oyl; and see Pf. 141. 6.

(1.) Pharaoh confesseth his Fault, I have sinned against the Lord your God and against you. He now sees his own Folly in the Sights and Affronts he had put on God and his Embassadors, and seems at least to repent of it. Note, When God convinceth Men of Sin, and humbleth them for it, their contempt of God's Ministers, and the Word of the Lord in their Mouths will certainly come into the Account, and lie heavy upon their Consciences. Some think when Pharaoh called God the Lord your God, he did in effect say he should be none of his God. Many treat with God as a potent Enemy, whom they are willing not to be at War with, but care not for treating with him as their Rightful Prince, whom they are willing to return to their Allegiance to. True Penitents lament Sin as committed against God, even their own God, to whom they stand obliged.

(2.) He begs Pardon, not of God as Penitents ought, but of Moses, which yet was more excusable in him, because by a special Commission Moses was made a God to Pharaoh, and whosever Sins he remitted, they were forgiven; when he prays, forgive this once, he, in effect, promiseth not to offend in like manner any more, yet seems loth to express that promise, nor doth he say any thing particularly, of letting the People go. Note, Counterfeit Repentance commonly cheats Men with general Promises, and is loth to Covenant against particular Sins.

(3.) He sets Moses on Work to pray for him: There are those who in distress implore the Help of other Peoples Prayers, but have no mind to pray for themselves, shewing there-

by that they have no true love to God, nor any delight in Communion with him. Pharaoh desires their Prayers, that this Death only might be taken away, not this Sin: He deprecates the Plague of Locusts, not the Plague of a hard Heart, which yet was much the more dangerous.

4. The Removal of the Judgment upon the Prayer of Moses, v. 18, 19. This was (1.) as great an Instance of the Power of God as the Judgment it self. An East Wind brought the Locusts, and now a West Wind carried them off. Note, Whatever Point of the Compass the Wind is in, 'tis fulfilling God's Word, and turns about by his Counsel: The Wind blows where it listeth for us, but not where it listeth for him: He directeth it under the whole Heaven. (2.) 'Twas as great a Proof of the Authority of Moses, and as firm a Ratification of his Commission, and his Interest in that God who both makes Peace and creates Evil, Isa. 45. 7. Nay hereby he not only commanded a Respect, but recommended himself to the good Affections of the Egyptians, that the Judgment came in obedience to his Summons, but the removal of it in answer to his Prayers; he never desired the woful day, tho' he threaten'd it; his Commission indeed ran against Egypt, but his Intercession was for it, which was a good reason why they should love him, tho' they feared him. (3.) 'Twas also as strong an Argument for their Repentance, as the Judgment it self, for by this it appeared that God is ready to forgive, and swift to shew Mercy. If he turn away a particular Judgment, as he did often from Pharaoh, or defer it, as in Ahab's case, upon the Profession of Repentance, and the shews of Humiliation, what will he do if we be sincere, and how welcome will true Penitents be to him? O that this Goodness of God might lead us to Repentance!

5. Pharaoh's return to his impious Resolution again, not to let the People go, (v. 20.) through the righteous Hand of God upon him hardening his Heart, and confirming him in his Obstinacy. Note, Those that have oft baffled their Convictions, and stood it out against them, forfeit the Benefit of them, and are justly given up to those Lufts of their own Hearts, which (how strong soever their Convictions be) prove too strong for them.

21 And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt. **22** And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven: and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. **23** They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings. **24** And Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Go ye, serve the LORD; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed: let your little ones also go with you. **25** And Moses said, Thou must give us also sacrifices, and burnt-offerings, that we may sacrifice unto the LORD our God. **26** Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not an hoof be left behind: for thereof must we take to serve the LORD our God; and we know not with what we must serve the LORD, until we come thither. **27** But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go. **28** And Pharaoh said unto him, Get thee from me, take heed to thy self, see my face no more: for in that day thou seeest my face, thou shalt die. **29** And Moses said, Thou hast spoken well, I will see thy face again no more.

Here's, 1. The Plague of Darkness brought upon Egypt, and a most dreadful Plague it was, and therefore is put first of the ten, Pf. 105. 28. tho' it was one of the last, and in the Destruction of the Spiritual Egypt is produced by the fifth Vial which is poured out upon the Seat of the Beast, Rev. 16. 10. His Kingdom was full of Darkness. Observe particularly concerning this Plague.

1. That it was a total Darkness: We have reason to think, not only that the Lights of Heaven were clouded, but that all their Fires and Candles were put out by the Damps or clammy Vapours which were the cause of this Darkness, for 'tis said, v. 23. they saw not one another. 'Tis threaten'd to the Wicked, Job 18. 5, 6. that the spark of his Fire shall not shine (even the Spark of his own kindling, as they are called, Isa. 50. 11.) and that the light shall be dark in his Tabernacle. Hell is utter Darkness, the light of a Candle shall shine no more as all in thee, Rev. 18. 23.

2. That it was Darkneſs which *might be felt*, v. 21, felt in its cauſes by their Fingers-ends, ſo thick were the Fogs felt in its effects (ſome think) by their Eyes which were prick'd with Pain, and made the more ſore by their rubbing of them. Great Pain is ſpoken of as the effect of that Darkneſs, Rev. 16. 10. which alludes to this.

3. No doubt it was very frightful and amazing. The Cloud of Locuſts which had darken'd the Land, v. 15, was nothing to this. The Tradition of the Jews is, that in this Darkneſs they were terrified by the Apparitions of Evil Spirits, or rather, by dreadful Sounds and Murmurs which they made, or (which is no leſs frightful) by the Horrors of their own Conſciences; and this is the Plague which ſome think is intended (for otherwiſe it is not mentioned at all there) *Pſal. 78. 49. He poured upon them the fierceneſs of his Anger, by ſending evil Angels among them*, for thoſe to whom the Devil has been a Deceiver he will at length be a Terror.

4. It continued *three Days; ſix Nights* (ſaith Biſhop Hall) in one; ſo long they were Imprison'd by thoſe Chains of Darkneſs, and the moſt lightſome Palaces were perfect Dungeons. No Man roſe from his Place, v. 23. They were all confined to their Houſes, and ſuch a Terror ſeiz'd them that few of them had the Courage to go from the Chair to the Bed, or from the Bed to the Chair. Thus were they ſilent in Darkneſs, 1 Sam. 2. 9. Now Pharaoh had time to conſider, if he would have improved it. Spiritual Darkneſs is Spiritual Bondage, while Satan blinds Mens Eyes that they ſee not, he binds their Hands and Feet that they work not for God, nor move towards Heaven. They ſit in Darkneſs.

5. It was a righteous thing with God thus to puniſh them; Pharaoh and his People had rebelled againſt the Light of God's Word which Moſes ſpoke to them, juſtly therefore are they puniſhed with Darkneſs, for they lov'd and choſe it rather. The Blindneſs of their Minds brings upon them this Darkneſs of their Air: never was Mind ſo blinded as Pharaoh's, never was Air ſo darken'd as Egypt's. The Egyptians by their Cruelty would have extinguish'd the Lamp of Iſrael, and quenched their Coal, juſtly therefore doth God put out their Lights; compare it with the puniſhment of the Sodomites, Gen. 19. 11. Let us dread the Conſequences of Sin; if three days Darkneſs was ſo dreadful, what will everlaſting Darkneſs be?

6. The Children of Iſrael at the ſame time had Light in their Dwellings, v. 23. not only in the Land of Gaſhen, where moſt of them inhabited, but in the particular Dwellings which in other Places the Iſraelites had diſperſed among the Egyptians, as it appears they had by the diſtinction afterwards appointed to be put on their Door-poſts. This is an Inſtance (1.) of the Power of God, above the ordinary Power of Nature; we muſt not think 'tis of courſe that we ſhare in common Mercies, and therefore no thanks to God for them, he could diſtinguiſh, and withhold that from us which he grants to others. He doth indeed ordinarily make his Sun to ſhine on the Juſt and the Unjuſt, but he could make a difference, and we muſt own our ſelves indebted to his Mercy that he doth not. (2.) Of the particular Favour he bears to his People: They walk in the Light when others wander endleſsly in thick Darkneſs; where-ever there's an Iſraelite indeed, tho' in this dark World, there's Light, there's a Child of Light, one for whom Light is ſown, and whom the Day-ſpring ſhall ſoon viſit. When God made this difference between the Iſraelites and the Egyptians, who would not have prefer'd the pooreſt Cottage of an Iſraelite, before the fineſt Palace of an Egyptian? there is ſtill a real difference, tho' not ſo diſcernable as one between the Houſe of the Wicked which is under a Curſe, and the Habitation of the juſt which is bleſſed, Prov. 3. 33. we ſhould believe that difference, and govern our ſelves by it; upon *Pſal. 105. 28. he ſent Darkneſs, and made it dark, and they rebelled not againſt his Word*, ſome ground a Conjecture, that during theſe three days of Darkneſs, the Iſraelites were circumciſ'd in order to their celebrating of the Paſſover which was now approaching: and that that was the Word againſt which they rebelled not; for their Circumciſion when they enter'd Canaan is ſpoken of as a ſecond general Circumciſion, Joſ. 5. 2. However, during theſe three days of Darkneſs to the Egyptians, if God had ſo pleaſed, the Iſraelites, by the Light which they had, might have made their eſcape, and have aſked Pharaoh no leave, but God would bring them out with a high Hand, and not by Stealth, or in haſte, *Iſa. 52. 12.*

2. Here's the Impreſſion made upon Pharaoh by this Plague, much like that of the foregoing Plagues.

1. It awakened him ſo far that he renewed the Treaty with Moſes and Aaron, and now at length conſented that they ſhould take their little ones with them, only would have their Cattle left in Pawn, v. 24. 'Tis common for Sinners thus to dodge with God Almighty; ſome Sins they will leave, but not all; they will leave their Sins for a time, but they will not bid them a final Farewel. They will allow him ſome ſhare in their Hearts, but the World and the Fleſh muſt ſhare with him; thus they mock God, but they deceive themſelves. Moſes reſolves not to abate in his Terms, *our Cattle ſhall go with us*, v. 26.

Note, The Terms of Reconciliation are ſo fixed, that tho' Men diſpute 'em never ſo long they cannot poſſibly alter them, nor bring them lower: We muſt come up to the Demands of God's Will, for we cannot expect he ſhould condeſcend to the Provocations of our Luſts. God's Meſſengers muſt always be bound up by that Rule, Jer. 15. 19. *Let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them.* Moſes gives a very good reaſon why they muſt take their Cattle with them; they muſt go to do Sacrifice, and therefore they muſt take wherewithal. What numbers and kinds of Sacrifices would be required, they did not yet know, and therefore they muſt take all they had. Note, With our ſelves and our Children we muſt devote all our Worldly Poſſeſſions to the Service of God, becauſe we know not what uſe God will make of what we have, nor in what way we may be called upon to honour God with it.

2. Yet it exaſperated him ſo far that when he might not make his own Terms, he broke off the Conference abruptly, and took up a Reſolution to treat no more, *Wrath now came upon him to the uttermoſt*, and he became boundleſſly outrageous, v. 28. Moſes is diſmiſſed in anger, forbidden the Court upon pain of Death, or ſo much as to meet Pharaoh any more as he had been uſed to do by the River ſide, *In that day thou ſhalt ſee my Face thou ſhalt dye*: Prodigious Madneſs! Had not he found that Moſes could plague him without ſeeing his Face? Or, had he forgot how oft he has ſent for him as his Phyſician to heal him, and eaſe him of his Plagues, and muſt he now be bid to come near him no more? Impotent Malice! to threaten him with Death, who was arm'd with ſuch a Power, and at whoſe Mercy he had ſo often lain himſelf? What will not hardneſs of Heart and contempt of God's Word and Commandments bring Men to?

Moſes takes him at his Word, v. 29. *I will ſee thy Face no more*, viz. after this time, for this Conference did not break off till chap. 11. 8. when Moſes went out in a great anger and told Pharaoh how ſoon he would change his Mind, and his proud Stomach would come down; which was fulfilled, chap. 12. 31. when Pharaoh became an humble Suppliant to Moſes to depart. So that after this Interview Moſes came no more till he was ſent for. Note, When Men drive God's Word from them, he juſtly chuſeth their deluſions, and answers them according to the multitude of their Idols: When the Gadarens deſired Chriſt to depart, he left them preſently.

CHAP. XI.

Pharaoh had bid Moſes get out of his preſence, chap. 11. 28. and Moſes had promis'd this ſhould be the laſt time he would trouble him, yet he reſolves to ſay out what he had to ſay, before he left him; accordingly we have in this Chapter, 1. The Inſtructions God had given to Moſes, which he was now to purſue, v. 1, 2. together with the Interſt Iſrael and Moſes had in the Eſteem of the Egyptians, v. 3. 2. The laſt Meſſage Moſes delivered to Pharaoh concerning the Death of the firſt-born, v. 4-8. 3. A Repetition of the Prediction of Pharaoh's hardning his Heart, v. 9. and the Event answering it, v. 10.

1 AND the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Yet will I bring one plague more upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go hence: when he ſhall let you go, he ſhall ſurely thruſt you out hence altogether. 2 Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow of his neighbour, and every woman of her neighbour, jewels of ſilver, and jewels of gold. 3 And the LORD gave the people favour in the ſight of the Egyptians. Moreover, the man Moſes was very great in the land of Egypt, in the ſight of Pharaoh's ſervants, and in the ſight of the people.

Here's, (1.) The mighty favour Moſes and Iſrael were in with God. 1. Moſes was a Favourite of Heaven, for God will not hide from him the thing he will do: God not only makes him his Meſſenger to deliver his Errands, but as the Man of his Counſel communicates his Purpoſe to him, that he would bring one Plague more, and but one upon Pharaoh, and by that would compleat the Deliverance of Iſrael, v. 1. Moſes long'd to ſee an end of this dreadful Work, to ſee Egypt no more plagu'd, and Iſrael no more oppreſſed; well, ſaith God, now it's near an end, the warfare ſhall ſhortly be accompliſhed, the point gain'd, Pharaoh ſhall be forced to own himſelf conquer'd, and to give up the Cauſe. After all the reſt of the Plagues God ſaith, I'll bring one more. Thus after all the Judgments executed upon Sinners in this World, ſtill there's one more reſerved to be brought on them in the other World, which will compleatly humble thoſe whom nothing elſe would humble.

(2.) The

(2.) The *Israelites* were Favourites of Heaven, for God himself espouseth their Injur'd Cause, and takes care to see them paid for all their Pains in serving the *Egyptians*. This was the last day of their Servitude; when they were to go away; and their Masters who had abus'd them in their Work would now have defrauded them of their Wages, and have sent them away empty, and the poor *Israelites* were so fond of Liberty, that they themselves would be satisfied with that without Pay, and glad to get out upon any Terms. But he that executeth Righteousness and Judgment for the Oppressed, provided that the Labourers should not lose their hire, ordered them to demand it now at their departure, (v. 2.) in Jewels of Silver and Jewels of Gold, to prepare for which, God by the Plagues had now made the *Egyptians* as willing to part with them upon any Terms, as before the *Egyptians* by their Severities had made them willing to go upon any Terms. Tho' the patient *Israelites* were content to lose their Wages, yet God would not let them go without it. Note, One way or other God will right the Injur'd, that in an humble silence commit their Cause to him, and will see to it that none be losers at last by their patient suffering no more than by their Services.

2. The mighty Favour Moses and Israel were in with the *Egyptians*, v. 3. (1.) Even the People that had been hated and despised now came to be respected, the Wonders wrought on their behalf put an Honour upon them, and made them considerable. How very great do they look for whom God thus fights! Thus the Lord gave them Favour in the sight of the *Egyptians*, by making it appear how much he favoured them: He also changed the Spirit of the *Egyptians* towards them, and made them to be pitied of their Oppressors, Ps. 106. 46. (2.) The Man Moses was very great: How could it be otherwise when they saw what Power he was cloath'd with, and what Wonders were wrought by his Hand. Thus the Apostles tho' otherwise despicable Men came to be magnified, Acts 4. 13. Those that Honour God he will Honour, and those that approve themselves Faithful to him, how meanly soever they may pass through this World, there is a day coming when they will look great, very great, in the Eyes of all the World, even their's who now look upon them with the utmost Contempt. Observe, tho' Pharaoh hated Moses, there were those of Pharaoh's Servants that respected him. Thus in Caesar's Household, even Nero's, there were some that had an Esteem for Blessed Paul, Phil. 1. 13.

4 And Moses said, Thus saith the LORD, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt. 5 And all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first-born of Pharaoh, that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the first-born of the maid-servant that is behind the mill; and all the first-born of beasts. 6 And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more. 7 But against any of the children of Israel, shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that the LORD doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel. 8 And all these thy servants shall come down unto me, and bow down themselves unto me, saying, Get thee out, and all the people that follow thee; and after that I will go out: and he went out from Pharaoh in a great anger. 9 And the LORD said unto Moses, Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you; that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt. 10 And Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh: and the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go out of his land.

Warning is here given to Pharaoh of the last and conquering Plague which was now to be inflicted, which was the Death of all the first-born in Egypt at once. This had been first threatened, Exod. 4. 23. I will slay thy Son, thy first-born, but is last executed, and lesser Judgments tried; which, if they had done the Work, would have prevented this. See how flow God is to Wrath; and how willing to be met in the way of his Judgments, and to have his Anger turned away, and particularly how precious the Lives of Men are in his Eyes: If the Death of their Cattle would have humbled and reformed them, their Children had been spared, but if Men will not improve the gradual Advances of Divine Judgments, they must thank themselves if they find in the Issue that the worst was reserved for the last.

1. The Plague it self is here particularly foretold, v. 4, 5, 6. The time is fixed, about midnight, the very next midnight, the dead time of the night, when they were all asleep, all their First-born should sleep the sleep of Death; not silently and in-

sensibly, so as not to be discovered till morning, but so as to rouse the Families at midnight, to stand by and see them dye. The extent of this Plague is describ'd, v. 5. The Prince that was to succeed in the Throne was not too high to be reached by it, nor the Slaves at the Mill too low to be taken notice of. Moses and Aaron were not ordered to summon this Plague, no, I will go out, saith God, v. 4. It is a fearful thing to fall into the Hands of the living God; what's Hell but that?

2. The special Protection which the Children of Israel should be under, and the manifest difference that should be put between them and the *Egyptians*, while Angels drew their Swords against the *Egyptians*, there should not so much as a Dog bark at any of the Children of Israel, v. 7. An Earnest was hereby given of the difference which shall be put in the great day between God's People and his Enemies: Did Men know what a difference God puts, and will put to Eternity, between those that serve him and those that serve him not, Religion would not seem to them such an indifferent thing as they make it, nor would they act in it with so much indifference as they do.

3. The humble Submission which Pharaoh's Servants should make to Moses, and how they should speak him fair to be gone, v. 8. they shall come down, and bow themselves. Note, The Proud Enemies of God and his Israel shall be made to truckle at last, Rev. 3. 9. and shall be found Liars to them, Deut. 33. 29. when Moses had thus delivered his Message, he said he went out from Pharaoh in a great Anger, tho' he was the meekest of all the Men of the Earth. Probably he expected that the very threatening of the Death of the first-born should have wrought upon Pharaoh to comply, especially he having comply'd so far already, and having seen how exactly all Moses's Predictions hitherto were fulfilled. But it had not that effect; his proud Heart would not yield, no, not to save all the First-born of his Kingdom: No marvel that Men are not deterr'd from Vicious Courses, by the Prospects given them of Eternal Misery in the other World, when the imminent peril they run of the loss of all that's dear to them in this World, will not frighten them. Moses hereupon was provok'd to a holy Indignation, being griev'd, as our Saviour afterwards, for the hardness of his Heart, Mark 3. 5. Note, It's a great Vexation to the Spirits of good Ministers, to see People deaf to all the fair Warnings given them, and running head-long upon Ruin, notwithstanding all the kind Methods taken to prevent it: Thus Ezekiel went in the bitterness of his Spirit, Ezek. 3. 14. because God had told him that the House of Israel would not hearken to him; v. 7. Thus to be angry at nothing but Sin is the way not to Sin in Anger.

Moses, upon occasion of the mention of the Disturbance Pharaoh's Obstinacy gave him, (1.) reflects upon the previous notice God had given him of this, v. 5. The Lord had said unto Moses, Pharaoh shall not hearken to you. The Scripture has foretold the Incredulity of those who should hear the Gospel, that it might not be a surprize or stumbling-block to us, John 12. 37, 38. Rom. 10. 16. Let us think never the worse of the Gospel of Christ, for the slights Men generally put upon it; for we are told before what cold Entertainment it would meet with. (2.) He recapitulates all he had said before to this purpose, v. 10. That Moses did all these Wonders, as they are related before Pharaoh, he himself was an Eye-witness of them, and yet he could not prevail, which was a certain sign that God himself had in a way of righteous Judgment harden'd his Heart. Thus the Jews Rejection of the Gospel of Christ was so grob's an Absurdity, that it might easily be inferred from it, that God had given them the Spirit of slumber, Rom. 11. 8.

CHAP. XII.

This Chapter gives an account of one of the most memorable Ordinances, and one of the most memorable Providences of all that are recorded in the Old Testament. 1. None of all the Ordinances of the Jewish Church were more eminent than that of the Passover, nor any more frequently mentioned in the New Testament, and we have here an account of the Institution of it. The Ordinance consisted of three Parts. 1. The killing and eating of the Paschal Lamb, v. 1—6. 2. The sprinkling of the Blood upon the Doorposts, spoken of as a distinct thing, Heb. 11. 28. and peculiar to this first Passover, v. 7. with the reason for it, v. 11—13. 3. The Feast of unleavened Bread for seven days after; this points rather at what was to be done after in the observance of this Ordinance, v. 14—20. This Institution is communicated to the People, and they instructed in the observance. 1. Of this first Passover, v. 21—23. 2. Of the after Passovers, v. 24—27. And the Israelites Obedience to these Orders, v. 28. 2. None of all the Providences of God concerning the Jewish Church was more illustrious, nor more frequently mentioned than the Deliverance of the Children of Israel out of Egypt. 1. The First-born of the Egyptians are slain, v. 29, 30. 2. Orders are given immediately for their Discharge, v. 31—33. 3. They begin their March, (1.) loaded with their own Effects, v. 34. (2.) Enriched with the Spoils of Egypt, v. 35, 36. (3.) Attended with a mixed Multitude, v. 37, 38. (4.) Put to their shifts for present Supply,

Supply, v. 39. This Event is dated, v. 40—42. Lastly, A Recapitulation in the close, (1.) of this memorable Ordinance, with some Additions, v. 43—39. (2.) Of this memorable Providence, v. 30, 31.

1 AND the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, 2 This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you. 3 Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house. 4 And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house, take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating, shall make your count for the lamb. 5 Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep or from the goats. 6 And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. 7 And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side-posts, and on the upper door-post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. 8 And they shall eat the flesh in that night; rost with fire, and unleavened bread, and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. 9 Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but rost with fire: his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. 10 And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning, and that which remaineth of it until the morning: ye shall burn with fire. 11 And thus shall ye eat it; with your loyns girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand: and ye shall eat it in haste; it is the LORDS passover. 12 For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast: and against all the gods of Egypt, I will execute judgment; I am the LORD. 13 And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where you are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. 14 And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and you shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations: you shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever. 15 Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread, even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread, from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. 16 And in the first day there shall be an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you: no manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you. 17 And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this self-same day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations, by an ordinance for ever. 18 In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even. 19 Seven days shall there be no leaven found

in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger or born in the land. 20 Ye shall eat nothing leavened: in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread.

Moses and Aaron here receive of the Lord, what they were afterwards to deliver to the People, concerning the Ordinance of the Passover, to which is prefixed an Order for a New Style to be observed in their Months, v. 1; 2. This shall be to you the beginning of Months. They had hitherto begun their year from the middle of September, but henceforward they were to begin it from the middle of March, at least in all their Ecclesiastical Computations. 'Tis good to begin the Day, and begin the Year, especially to begin our lives with God. This new Calculation began the Year with the Spring, which reneweth the Face of the Earth, and was us'd as a Figure of the coming of Christ, Cant. 2. 11, 12.

We may suppose that while Moses was bringing the ten Plagues upon the Egyptians, he was directing the Israelites to prepare for their departure at an hour's warning. Probably he had by degrees brought them near together from their Dispersions, for they are here called the Congregation of Israel, v. 3. And to them as a Congregation Orders are here sent. 'Tis easy to imagine what a gaze they were all at, what a hurry they were all in, yet now they must apply themselves to the observance of a sacred Rite, to the Honour of God. Note, When our Heads are fullest of Care, and our Hands of Business, yet we must not forget our Religion, nor suffer our selves to be indisposed for Acts of Devotion.

1. God appointed that on the Night wherein they were to go out of Egypt, they should in each of their Families kill a Lamb, or two or three Families, if they were small, should joyn for a Lamb. The Lamb was to be got ready four days before, and that Afternoon they should kill it (v. 6.) as a Sacrifice, not strictly, for it was not offered upon the Altar, but as a Religious Ceremony, acknowledging God's Goodness to them, not only in preserving them from, but in delivering them by the Plagues inflicted on the Egyptians. See the Antiquity of Family Religion: And see the convenience of the joyning of small Families together for Religious Worship, that it may be made the more solemn.

2. The Lamb so slain they were to eat, roasted, (we may suppose, in its several Quarters) with unleavened Bread and bitter Herbs, because they were to eat it in haste, v. 11. and to leave none of it until the Morning; for God would have them to depend upon him for their daily Bread, and not to take thought for the morrow. He that led them would feed them.

3. Before they eat the Flesh of the Lamb, they were to sprinkle the Blood upon the Door-posts, v. 7. by which their Houses were to be distinguished from the Houses of the Egyptians, and so their First-born secured from the Sword of the destroying Angel, v. 12, 13. Dreadful work was to be made this Night in Egypt, all the First-born both of Man and Beast were to be slain, and Judgment executed upon the Gods of Egypt, which tho' Moses doth not mention the fulfilling of in this Chapter, yet he speaks of it, Num. 33. 4. 'Tis very probable the Idols which the Egyptians worshipped were defaced, those of Metal melted, those of Wood consumed; and those of Stone broke to pieces; whence Jethro saith, Exod. 18. 11. The Lord is greater than all Gods. The same Angel that destroy'd their First-born demolish'd their Idols, which were no less dear to them. For the Protection of Israel from this Plague, they were ordered to sprinkle the Blood of the Lamb upon the Door-posts, their doing of which would be accepted, as an Instance of their Faith in the Divine Warnings, and their obedience to the Divine Precepts. Note, 1. In times of common Calamity God will secure his own People, and set a mark upon them, they shall be hid either in Heaven or under Heaven; preserved either from the stroke of Judgments, or at least from the sting of them. 2. The Blood of sprinkling is the Saints Security in times of common Calamity; that's it that marks them for God, pacifies Conscience, and gives them boldness of access to the Throne of Grace, and so becomes a Wall of Protection round them, and a Wall of Partition between them and the Children of this World.

4. This was to be annually observed as a Feast of the Lord in their Generations, to which the Feast of unleavened Bread was annexed, during which for seven days they were to eat no Bread, but what was unleavened in remembrance of their being confined to such Bread of necessity, for many days after they came out of Egypt, v. 14—20. The appointment is inculcated for their better Direction, and that they might not mistake concerning it, and to awaken them, who perhaps in Egypt were grown generally very stupid and careless in the matters of Religion, to a diligent observance of the Institution.

Now

Now without doubt there was much of Gospel in this Ordinance; 'tis oft referred to in the New Testament, and to us in it is the Gospel preached, and not to them only, who could not steadfastly look to the end of these things, Heb. 4. 2. 2 Cor. 3. 13.

1. The Paschal Lamb was typical; Christ is our Passover, 1 Cor. 5. 7. (1.) 'Twas to be a Lamb, and Christ is the Lamb of God, John 1. 29. oft in the Revelation called the Lamb; Meek and Innocent as a Lamb, dumb before the Shearers, before the Butchers. (2.) 'Twas to be a Male of the first year, v. 3. in its prime; Christ offered up himself in the midst of his days, not in Infancy with the Babes of Bethlehem. It notes the strength and sufficiency of the Lord Jesus, on whom our Help was laid. (3.) 'Twas to be without Blemish, v. 5. noting the purity of the Lord Jesus, a Lamb without Spot, 1 Pet. 1. 19. the Judge that condemned him (as if his Trial were only like the Scrutiny that was made concerning the Sacrifices, whether they were without blemish or no) pronounced him Innocent. (4.) 'Twas to set apart four days before; v. 3. 6. noting the Designation of the Lord Jesus to be a Saviour, both in the Purpose, and in the Promise. 'Tis very observable that as Christ was Crucified at the Passover, so he solemnly enter'd into Jerusalem four days before, the very day that the Paschal Lamb was set apart. (5.) 'Twas to be slain and roasted with Fire, v. 6. 8. 9. noting the exquisite Sufferings of the Lord Jesus; even unto Death, the Death of the Cross. The Wrath of God is a Fire, and Christ was made a Curse for us. (6.) 'Twas to be killed by the whole Congregation between the two Evenings, i. e. between three a Clock and six. Christ suffered in the latter end of the World, Heb. 9. 26. by the Hand of the Jews the whole Multitude of them, Luke 23. 18. and for the good of all his Spiritual Israel. (7.) Not a Bone of it must be broken, v. 46. which is expressly said to be fulfilled in Christ, John 19. 33, 36. noting the unbroken strength of the Lord Jesus.

2. The sprinkling of the Blood was typical, (1.) It was not enough that the Blood of the Lamb was shed, but it must be sprinkled, noting the application of the Merits of Christ's Death to our Souls; we must receive the atonement, Rom. 5. 11. (2.) It was to be sprinkled with a bunch of Hyssop, (v. 22.) dips in the Bason. The everlasting Covenant, like the Bason, is the Conservatory of this Blood; the Benefits and Privileges purchased by it are laid up for us there; Faith is the bunch of Hyssop, by which we apply the Promises to our selves, and the Benefits of the Blood of Christ laid up in them. (3.) 'Twas to be sprinkled upon the Door-posts, noting the open Profession we are to make of Faith in Christ, and Obedience to him, as those that are not ashamed to own our dependance upon him. The mark of the Beast may be received in the Forehead, or in the Right Hand, but the Seal of the Lamb is always in the Forehead, Rev. 7. 3. There's a back-way to Hell, but no back-way to Heaven; no, that's a high-way, Isa. 35. 8. (4.) 'Twas to be sprinkled upon the Lintel and the Side-posts, but not upon the Threshold, v. 7. which cautions us to take heed of trampling under foot the Blood of the Covenant, Heb. 10. 29. 'Tis precious Blood, and must be precious to us. (5.) The Blood thus sprinkled was a means of the Preservation of the Israelites from the Destroying Angel, who had nothing to do there where the Blood was. If the Blood of Christ be sprinkled upon our Consciences, 'twill be our Protection from the Wrath of God, the Curse of the Law, and the Damnation of Hell, Rom. 8. 1.

3. The solemn eating of the Lamb was typical of our Gospel Duty to Christ. (1.) The Paschal Lamb was killed not to be looked upon only, but to be fed upon; so we must by Faith make Christ ours, as we do that which we eat, and we must receive Spiritual Strength and Nourishment from him; as from our Food, and have Delight and Satisfaction in him, as we have in Eating and Drinking, when we are Hungry or Thirsty: See John 6. 53, 54. (2.) 'Twas to be all eaten; those that by Faith feed upon Christ must feed upon a whole Christ; they must take Christ and his Yoke, Christ and his Cross, as well as Christ and his Crown. Is Christ divided? Those that gather much of Christ will have nothing over. (3.) It was to be eaten presently, not deferred till Morning, v. 10. so day Christ is offered, and is to be accepted while it is called to day, before we sleep the sleep of Death. (4.) It was to be eaten with bitter Herbs, v. 8. in remembrance of the bitterness of their Bondage in Egypt; we must feed upon Christ with Sorrow and brokenness of Heart in remembrance of Sin, this will give an admirable relish to the Paschal Lamb; Christ will be sweet to us if Sin be bitter. (5.) 'Twas to be eaten in a departing Posture, v. 11. when we feed upon Christ by Faith, we must absolutely forsake the Rule and Dominion of Sin, shake off Pharaoh's Yoke; and we must sit loose to the World, and every thing it, forsake all for Christ, and reckon it no bad Bargain, Heb. 13. 13, 14.

4. The Feast of unleavened Bread was typical of the Christian Life, 1 Cor. 5. 7, 8. Having received Christ Jesus the Lord, 1. We must keep a Feast, in holy Joy, continually delighting our selves in Christ Jesus; no manner of Work must be done, (v. 16.) no Care admitted and indulg'd inconsistent with, or prejudicial to this Holy Joy: If true Believers have not a continual Feast, 'tis their own Fault. 2. It must be a Feast of unleavened Bread,

kept in Charity, without the leaven of Malice, and in Sincerity without the leaven of Hypocrisie. The Law was very strict as to the Passover, and the Jews were so in their Usages, that no leaven should be found in their Houses, v. 19. All the old leaven of Sin must be put far from us, with the utmost Caution and Abhorrence, if we would keep the Feast of a Holy Life to the Honour of Christ. 3. 'Twas to be an Ordinance for ever, v. 17. as long as we live we must continue feeding upon Christ, and rejoicing in him always with thankful mentions of the Great Things he has done for us.

21 Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb, according to your families, and kill the passover. 22 And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side-posts, with the blood that is in the bason: and none of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning. 23 For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians, and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side-posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you. 24 And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee, and to thy sons for ever. 25 And it shall come to pass when ye be come to the land, which the LORD will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service. 26 And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean you by this service? 27 That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the LORDS passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped. 28 And the children of Israel went away, and did as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they.

(1.) Moses is here as a Faithful Steward in God's House teaching the Children of Israel to observe all things which God had commanded him, and no doubt he gave the Instructions as largely as he received them, tho' they be not so largely recorded. It is here added, (1.) That this Night, when the First-born were to be destroyed, no Israelite must stir out of Doors till Morning, i. e. till towards Morning when they would be called for to march out of Egypt, v. 22. Not but that the destroying Angel could have known an Israelite from an Egyptian in the Street; but God would intimate to them, that their safety was owing to the Blood of sprinkling, if they put themselves from under the Protection of that it was at their Peril. Also, that those whom God hath mark'd for himself must not mingle themselves with evil doers: See Isa. 26. 20, 21. They must not go out of Doors lest they should straggle and be to seek when they should be summoned to depart: They must stay within to wait for the Salvation of the Lord, and it is good to do so. (2.) That hereafter they should carefully teach their Children the meaning of this Service, v. 26, 27. Observe, 1. The Question which the Children should ask concerning this Solemnity, which they would soon take notice of in the Family, What mean you by this Service? What's the meaning of all this Care and Exactness about eating this Lamb, and this unleavened Bread more than about common Food? Why such a difference between this Meal and other Meals? Note, (1.) 'Tis a good thing to see Children Inquisitive about the things of God; 'tis to be hoped they will find the way that are careful to ask it: Christ himself, when a Child, heard and asked Questions, Luke 2. 46. (2.) It concerns us all rightly to understand the meaning of those Holy Ordinances wherein we worship God; what's the Nature and what the End of them? What is signified, and what intended? What's the Duty expected from us in them, and what the Advantages to be expected by us? Every Ordinance has a meaning, some Ordinances, as Sacraments, have not their meaning so plain and obvious as others have, there therefore we are concern'd to search that we may not offer the Blind for Sacrifice, but may do a reasonable Service. If either we be ignorant of or mistake about the meaning of Holy Ordinances, we can neither please God nor profit our selves. 2. The Answer which the Parents were to return to this Question, v. 27. ye shall say, It is the Sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, i. e. by the Killing and Sacrificing of this Lamb we keep in re-

membrance that work of Wonder and Grace which God did for our Fathers, when (1.) to make way for our deliverance out of Bondage he *slew the First-born of the Egyptians*, so compelling them to *sign our Discharge*, and (2.) tho' there were *with us, even with us, Sins against the Lord our God*, for which the destroying Angel, when he was abroad doing Execution, might justly have destroyed our *First-born* too, yet God graciously appointed and accepted the *Family Sacrifice of a Lamb*, instead of the *First-born*, as of old the *Ram* instead of *Isaac*, and in every House where the Lamb was slain, the *First-born* were sav'd. The Repetition of this Solemnity in the return of every year was designed, 1. to look backward, as a Memorial, that in it they might remember what great things God had done for them and their Fathers. The word *Pasach* signifies a *Leap*, or *Transiion*, 'tis a *passing over*; for the destroying Angel *passed over* the Houses of the *Israelites*, and did not destroy their *First-born*. When God brings utter Ruin upon his People he saith, he will not pass by them any more, Amos 7. 8.—8. 1. intimating how oft he had passed by them, as now when the destroying Angel passed over their Houses. Note, (1.) Distinguishing Mercies are very obliging; when a thousand fall as our side and ten thousand at our right Hand, and yet we are preserved and have our Lives given us for a Prey, this should greatly affect us, Ps. 91. 7. In War or Pestilence if the Arrows of Death have passed by us, passed over us, hit the next to us, and just missed us, we must not say it was by chance that we were preserved, but by the special Providence of our God. (2.) Old Mercies to our selves or to our Fathers must not be forgotten, but had in everlasting remembrance, that God may be praised, our Faith in him encouraged, and our Hearts enlarged in his Service.

2. 'Twas designed to look forward as an earnest of the great Sacrifice of the *Lamb of God* in the fulness of time, instead of us, and our *First-born*; we were obnoxious to the Sword of the destroying Angel, but *Christ our Passover was Sacrificed for us*, his Death was our Life, and thus he was the *Lamb slain from the Foundation of the World*, from the Foundation of the Jewish Church: *Moses kept the Passover by Faith in Christ*, for he was the end of the Law for Righteousness.

(2.) The People received these Instructions with Reverence and ready Obedience. 1. They bowed the Head and worshipped, v. 27. They hereby signified their Submission to this Institution as a Law, and their Thankfulness for it as a Favour and Privilege. Note, When God gives Law to us, we must give Honour to him; when he speaks we must bow our Heads and worship. 2. They went away and did as they were commanded, v. 28. Here was none of that Discontent and Murmuring among them which we read of, Chap. 5. 20, 21. The Plagues of Egypt had done them good, and raised their Expectations of a glorious Deliverance which before they despaired of, and now they went forth to meet it in the way appointed. Note, The perfecting of God's Mercies to us must be waited for in an humble observance of his Institutions.

29 And it came to pass that at midnight the LORD smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh, that sat on his throne, unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the first-born of cattle. 30 And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt: for there was not a house where there was not one dead. 31 And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from amongst my people, both you and the children of Israel: and go, serve the LORD, as ye have said. 32 Also take your flocks, and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone: and bless me also. 33 And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste: for they said, We be all dead men. 34 And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading-troughs being bound up in their cloths upon their shoulders. 35 And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses: and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment. 36 And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required: and they spoiled the Egyptians.

Here's, 1. The Egyptians Sons, even their First-born slain, v. 29, 30. If Pharaoh would have taken the Warning which was given him of this Plague; and would thereupon have released Israel, what a great many dear and valuable Lives might have been preserved? But see what obstinate Infidelity brings upon Men. Observe, (1.) The time when this Blow was given, 'twas at Midnight, which added to the Terror of it: The three Nights next before were made dreadful by the additional Plague of Darkness, which might be felt, and doubts disturb'd their repose; and now when they hoped for one quiet Night's rest, at Midnight was the Alarm given: When the Destroying Angel drew his Sword against Jerusalem; 'twas in the Day-time, 2 Sam. 24. 15, which made it the less frightful, but the Destruction of Egypt was by a Pestilence walking in Darkness, Ps. 91. 6. Shortly there will be a rousing Cry at Midnight, Behold the Bridegroom cometh. (2.) On whom the Plague fallen'd, on their First-born, the Joys and Hopes of their respective Families. They had slain the Hebrews Children, and now God slew theirs. Thus he visiteth the Iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children, and he is not unrighteous who taketh Vengeance. (3.) How far it reached, from the Throne to the Dungeon; Prince and Peasant stand upon the same level before God's Judgments, for there is no respect of Persons with him: See Job 34. 19, 20. Now the slain of the Lord were many, Multitudes, Multitudes fall in this Valley of decision, when the Controversie between God and Pharaoh was to be determined. (4.) What an Out-cry was made upon it, there was a great cry in Egypt, universal Lamentation for their only Sons (with many) and with all for their First-born. If any be suddenly taken ill in the Night we use to call up Neighbours, but the Egyptians could have no Help, no Comfort from their Neighbours, being all were involved in the same Calamity. Let us learn from hence, 1. to tremble before God, and to be afraid of his Judgments, Ps. 119. 120. who is able to stand before him, or dares resist him? 2. To be thankful to God for the daily preservation of us and our Families: Lying so much expos'd we have reason to say, It is of the Lord's Mercies we are not consum'd.

2. God's Son, even his First-born, released, this Judgment conquer'd Pharaoh, and obliged him to surrender at Discretion, without capitulating: Men had as good come up to God's Terms at first, for he will never come down to theirs, let them dodge as long as they will. Now Pharaoh's proud Stomach comes down, and he yields to all that Moses had insisted on, serve the Lord as ye have said, v. 31. and take your Flocks as ye have said, v. 32. Note, God's Word will stand, and we shall get nothing by disputing it, or delaying to submit to it. Hitherto the Israelites might not be permitted to depart, but now things were come to the last Extremity; and now, 1. They are commanded to depart, v. 31. Rise up and get you forth. Pharaoh had told Moses he should see his Face no more, but now he sent for him; those will seek God early in their Distress, who before had set him at defiance. Such a fright he was now in that he gave orders by Night for their Discharge, fearing lest if he delay'd any longer he himself should fall next; and that he sent them out not as Men hated (as the Pagan Historians have represented this Matter) but as Men fear'd, is plainly discovered by his humble Request to them, v. 32. bless me also; let me have your Prayers, that I may not be plagu'd for what's past when you are gone. Note, Those that are Enemies to God's Church are Enemies to themselves, and sooner or later they will be made to see it. 2. They are hired to depart by the Egyptians; they cried out, v. 33. we be all dead Men. Note, When Death comes into our Houses, it is seasonable for us to think of our own Mortality. Are our Relations dead? 'Tis easie to infer from thence that we are dying, and in effect already dead Men: Upon this Consideration they were urgent with the Israelites to be gone, which gave great Advantage to the Israelites in borrowing their Jewels, v. 35, 36. When the Egyptians urged them to be gone, 'twas easie for them to say, the Egyptians had kept them Poor, and they could not undertake such a Journey with empty Purfes; if they would give them wherewithal to bear their Charges, they would be gone. And this the Divine Wisdom designed in suffering things to come to this Extremity; that they becoming formidable to the Egyptians might have what they would for the asking: The Lord also by the influence he has on the Minds of People inclined the Hearts of the Egyptians to furnish them with what they desired, probably intending thereby to make them atonement, that the Plagues might be staid, as the Philistines when they returned to the Ark sent a present with it for a Trespas-offering, having an Eye to this Precedent, 1 Sam. 6. 3, 6. The Israelites might receive and keep what they thus borrowed or rather required, of the Egyptians, 1. As justly as Servants receive Wages from their Masters for Work done, and sue for it, if it be detained. 2. As justly as Conquerors take the Spoils of their Enemies whom they have subdued; Pharaoh was in Rebellion against the God of the Hebrews, by which all that he has is forfeited.

3. As justly as Subjects receive the Estates granted them by their Prince. God is the sovereign Proprietor of the Earth, and the Fulness thereof, and if he take from one and give to another, who may say unto him, what dost thou? It was by God's special Order and Appointment that the *Israelites* did what they did, which was sufficient to justify them; and bear them out; but what they did will by no Means patronize the like done by any other, who cannot pretend to any such Warrant. Let us remember, 1. That the King of Kings can do no wrong. 2. That he will do right to those whom Men wrong, *Pf. 146. 7.* Hence it is, that the *Wealth of the Sinner* often proves to be laid up for the *Just*; *Job 27. 16, 17.*

37 And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, besides children. 38 And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle. 39 And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough, which they brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened: because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any victual. 40 Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years. 41 And it came to pass, at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the self-same day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt. 42 It is a night to be much observed unto the LORD, for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of the LORD to be observed of all the children of Israel, in their generations.

Here's the Departure of the Children of Israel out of Egypt; having obtained their Dismission, they set forward without Delay, and did not defer till any more convenient Season. Pharaoh was now in a *Good Mind*, but they had reason to think he would not long continue so, and therefore 'twas no Time to linger. We have here an Account,

1. Of their Number, about Six hundred Thousand Men, (*v. 37.*) besides Women and Children, which I think we cannot suppose to make less than twelve hundred thousand more. What a vast Increase was this to arise from seventy Souls in little more than Two hundred Years time. See the Power and Efficacy of that Blessing, when God commands it, *Be fruitful and multiply.* This was typical of the Multitudes that were brought into the Gospel Church, when it was first founded, so *mighty grew the Word of God and prevailed.*

2. Of their Retinue, *v. 38.* a mixed Multitude went up with them, Hangers on to that great Family. Some perhaps willing to leave their Country, because it was laid waste by the Plagues, and to go seek their Fortune (as we say) with the *Israelites*. Others went out of Curiosity to see the Solemnities of Israel's Sacrifice to their God which had been so much talked of, and expecting to see some glorious Appearances of their God to them in the Wilderness, having seen such glorious Appearances of their God for them in the Field of Zoan. Probably the greatest Part of this mixed Multitude was but a rude unthinking Mob, that followed the Crowd, they know not why; we afterwards find that they proved a Snare to them, *Num. 11. 4.* and 'tis likely when soon after they understood that the Children of Israel were to continue forty Years in the Wilderness, they quitted them, and returned to Egypt again. Note, There were always those among the *Israelites*, that were not *Israelites*: Hypocrites in the Church, who make a deal of Mischief, but will be shaken off at last.

3. Of their Effects. They had with them flocks and herds, even very much cattle. This is taken Notice of because it was long ere Pharaoh would give them Leave to remove their Effects, which were chiefly Cattle, *Gen. 46. 32.*

4. Of the Provision made for the Camp, which was very poor and slender. They brought some dough with them out of Egypt, in their Knap-sacks, *v. 34.* They had prepared to bake the next Day, in Order to their Remove, understanding it was very near, but being hastened away sooner than they thought of, by some Hours, they took the dough as it was unleavened, and when they came to Succoth, their first Stage, they baked unleavened Cakes, and tho' they were sapless and unsavory, yet the Liberty they were brought into made it the most joyful Meal they had ever eaten in their Lives. Note, The Servants of God must not be Slaves to their Appetites, nor solicitous to wind up all the Delights of Sense to the Height of Pleasurableness.

We should be willing to take up with dry bread, nay, with unleavened Bread, rather than neglect or delay any Service we have to do for God, as those whose Meats and Drink it is to do his Will.

5. Of the Date of this great Event; It was just Four hundred and thirty Years from the Promise made to Abraham (as the Apostle explains it, *Gal. 3. 17.*) At his first coming into Canaan, during all which Time, the Children of Israel, i.e. the Hebrews, the distinguished chosen Seed, were Sojourners in a Land that was not theirs, either Canaan or Egypt. So long the Promise God made to Abraham of a Settlement lay dormant, and unfulfilled, but now at length it revived, and Things began to work towards the Accomplishment of it. The first Day of the Match of Abraham's Seed towards Canaan was just Four hundred and thirty Years (it should seem, to a day) from the Promise made to Abraham, *Gen. 12. 1.* I will make of thee a great Nation. See how punctual God is to his time; Tho' his Promises be not performed quickly, they will be accomplished in their Season.

6. Of the Memorableness of it, *v. 42.* It is a Night to be much observed. 1. The Providences of that Night were very observable; memorable was the Destruction of the Egyptians, and the Deliverance of the Israelites by it: God herein made himself taken Notice of. 2. The Ordinances of that Night in the annual Return of it were to be carefully observed, this is that Night of the Lord, that remarkable Night, to be celebrated in all Generations. Note, The great Things God doth for his People are not to be only nine Days Wonder, (as we say) but the Remembrance of them is to be perpetuated throughout all Ages. Especially the Work of our Redemption by Christ; This first Passover Night was a Night of the Lord; much to be observed, but the last Passover Night in which Christ was betrayed (and that with the rest of the ceremonial Institutions superseded and abolished) was a Night of the Lord much more to be observed, when a Yoke heavier than that of Egypt was broke from off our Necks, and a Land better than that of Canaan set before us. That was a temporal Deliverance, to be celebrated in their Generations; This an Eternal Redemption to be celebrated in the Praises of glorified Saints, World without end.

43 And the Lord said unto Moses and Aaron, This is the ordinance of the passover: there shall no stranger eat thereof. 44 But every mans servant that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof. 45 A foreigner, and an hired servant shall not eat thereof. 46 In one house shall it be eaten, thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house: neither shall ye break a bone thereof. 47 All the congregation of Israel shall keep it. 48 And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it: and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof. 49 One law shall be to him that is home-born, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you. 50 Thus did all the children of Israel; as the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they. 51 And it came to pass the self-same day, that the LORD did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, by their armies.

Some further Precepts are here given concerning the Passover, as it should be observed in Times to come.

1. All the Congregation of Israel must keep it, *v. 47.* All that share in God's Mercies should join in thankful Praises for them. Tho' it was observed in Families apart, yet 'tis look'd upon as the Act of the whole Congregation, for the lesser Communities constituted the greater. The New Testament Passover, the Lord's Supper, ought not to be neglected by any that are capable of celebrating it. He is unworthy the Name of an *Israelite*, that can contentedly neglect the Commemoration of so great a Deliverance.

2. No Stranger that was uncircumcised might be admitted to eat of it, *v. 43, 45, 48.* None might sit at the Table, but those that came in by the Door, nor may any now approach to the improving Ordinance of the Lord's Supper, who have not first submitted to the initiating Ordinance of Baptism. We must be born again by the Word, ere we can be nourished by it. Nor shall any partake of the Benefit of Christ's Sacrifice, nor feast upon it, who are not first circumcised in Heart, *Col. 2. 11.*

3. Any Stranger that was circumcised might be welcome to eat of the Passover, even Servants, *v. 44.* If by Circumcision they would make themselves Debtors to the Law, in its Burthens, they

they were welcome to share in the Joy of its solemn Feasts, and not otherwise. Only 'tis intimated, v. 48. that those who were Masters of Families must not only be circumcised themselves, but all their Males *must be circumcised* too. It in Sincerity, and with that Zeal which the Thing requires and deserves we give up our selves to God, we will with our selves give up all we have to him, and do our utmost that all ours may be his too. Here's an early Indication of Favour to the poor *Gentiles*: that the *stranger*, if circumcised, stands upon the same Level with the Home-born *Israelite*. *One Law for both*, v. 49. This was a Mortification to the *Jews*, and taught them that it was their Dedication to God, not their Descent from *Abraham* that intitled them to their Privileges. A sincere Profelyte was as welcome to the Passover as a Native *Israelite*, *Iſa.* 56. 6, 7.

4. In one house shall it be eaten, (v. 46.) for good Fellowship sake, that they might rejoyce together, and edify one another in the eating of it. None of it must be carried to another Place, or left to another time, for God would not have them so taken up with Care about their Departure, as to be indisposed to take the Comfort of it, but to leave *Egypt*, and enter upon a Wilderness with Cheerfulness, and in Token of that to eat a good hearty Meal. The Papists carrying their consecrated Host from House to House is not only superstitious in it self, but contrary to this typical Law of the Passover, which was that no Part of the Lamb should be carried abroad.

The Chapter concludes with a Repetition of the whole Matter, That the Children of *Israel* did as they were bidden, and God did for them as he promised, v. 50, 51. for he will certainly be the Author of Salvation to them that obey him.

CHAP. XIII.

In this Chapter we have, 1. The Commands God gave to *Israel*, (1.) To sanctify all their first-born to him, v. 1, 2. (2.) To be sure to remember their Deliverance out of *Egypt*, v. 3, 4. and in Remembrance of it to keep the Feast of unleavened bread, v. 5—8. (3.) To transmit the Knowledge of it with all possible Care to their Children, v. 8—10. (4.) To set apart unto God the Firstlings of their Cattle, v. 11—13. and to explain that also to their Children, v. 14—16. 2. The Care God took of *Israel* when he had brought them out of *Egypt*. (1.) Choosing their Way for them, v. 17, 18. (2.) Guiding them in the Way, v. 20—22. And their Care of Joseph's Bones, v. 19.

1 AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Sanctifie unto me all the first-born, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of *Israel*, both of man and of beast: it is mine. 3 And Moses said unto the people, Remember this day, in which ye came out from *Egypt*, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out from this place: there shall no leavened bread be eaten. 4 This day came ye out, in the month Abib. 5 And it shall be when the LORD shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee, a land flowing with milk and honey, that thou shalt keep this service in this month. 6 Seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day shall be a feast to the LORD. 7 Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days: and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters. 8 And thou shalt shew thy son in that day, saying, *This is done* because of that which the LORD did unto me, when I came forth out of *Egypt*. 9 And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes; that the LORDS law may be in thy mouth: for with a strong hand hath the LORD brought thee out of *Egypt*. 10 Thou shalt therefore keep this ordinance in season from year to year.

Care is here taken to perpetuate the Remembrance,

1. Of the Preservation of *Israel's* First-born, when the First-born of the *Egyptians* were slain. In Memory of that distinguishing Favour, and in Gratitude for it, the First-born in all Ages were to be consecrated to God, as his Peculiars, v. 2. and to be redeemed, v. 13. God who by the Right of Creation is Proprietor and Sovereign of all the Creatures, here lays

Claim in particular to the First-born of the *Israelites*, by Right of Protection, sanctify to me all the First-born. The Parents were not to look upon themselves as interested in their first-born, till they had first solemnly presented them to God, recogniz'd his Title to them, and received them back, at a certain Rate from him again. Note, (1.) That which is by special distinguishing Mercy spared to us, should be in a peculiar Manner dedicated to God's Honour; at least some grateful Acknowledgment in Works of Piety and Charity should be made, when our Lives have been given us for a Prey, or the Lives of our Children, (2.) God that is the First and Best, should have the First and Best, and to him we should resign that which is most dear to us, and most valuable. The First-born were the Joy and Hope of their Families, therefore they shall be mine, saith God. By this it will appear that we love God best (as we ought) if we are willing to part with that to him which we love best in this World. (3.) 'Tis the Church of the First-born that is sanctified to God, *Heb.* 12. 23. Christ is the First-born among many Brethren, *Rom.* 8. 29. and by Virtue of their Union with him, all that are born again, and born from above are accounted as First-born. There's an Excellency of Dignity and Power belonging to them, and if Children then Heirs.

2. The Remembrance of their coming out of *Egypt* must also be perpetuated, v. 3. Remember this day. Remember it by a good token, as the most remarkable Day of your Lives, the Birth-day of our Nation, or the Day of its coming to Age, to be no longer under the Rod. Thus the Day of Christ's Resurrection is to be remembered, for in it we were raised up with Christ out of Death's House of Bondage. The Scripture tells us not expressly what Day of the Year Christ rose, as he told the *Israelites* what Day of the Year they were brought out of *Egypt*, that they might remember it yearly, but very particularly what Day of the Week it was, plainly intimating that as the more valuable Deliverance, and of greater Importance, it should be remembered weekly. Remember it, for by strength of Hand the Lord brought you out. Note, The more of God and his Power appears in any Deliverance, the more memorable it is. Now that it might be remembered, (1.) They must be sure to keep the Feast of unleavened Bread, v. 5, 6, 7. 'Twas not enough that they remembered it, but they must celebrate the Memorial of it in that Way and Manner which God had appointed, and use the instituted Means of preserving the Remembrance of it. So under the Gospel we must not only remember Christ, but do this in Remembrance of him. Observe, How strict the Prohibition of Leaven is, v. 7. not only no leaven must be eaten, but none must be seen, no not in all their Quarters. Accordingly the *Jews* Usage was, before the Feast of the Passover, to cast all the Leavened Bread out of their Houses, either they burnt it, or buried it, or broke it small and threw it into the Wind, they searched diligently with lighted Candles in all the Corners of their Houses, lest any Leaven should remain. The Care and Strictness enjoyed in this Matter was designed, 1. To make the Feast the more Solemn, and consequently the more taken Notice of by the Children, who would ask, why is so much ado made? 2. To teach us how solicitous we should be to put away from us all Sin, 1 Cor. 5. 7.

(2.) They must instruct their Children in the Meaning of it, and relate to them the Story of their Deliverance out of *Egypt*, v. 8. Note 1. Care must be taken betimes to instruct Children in the Knowledge of God. Here's an ancient Law for catechizing. 2. 'Tis particularly of great Use to acquaint Children betimes with the Stories of Scripture, and to make those familiar to them. (3.) 'Tis a Debt we owe to the Honour of God, and to the Benefit of our Childrens Souls, to tell them of the great Works God hath done for his Church, both those which we have seen with our Eyes done in our day, and which we have heard with our Ears, and our Fathers have told us. Thou shalt shew thy Son in that day, the day of the Feast, these things. When they were celebrating the Ordinance they must explain it. Every Thing is beautiful in its Season. The Passover is appointed for a Sign, and for a Memorial, that the Lord's Law may be in thy Mouth. Note, We must retain the Remembrance of God's Works that we may remain under the Influence of God's Law. And those that have God's Law in their Heart should have it in their Mouth, and be often speaking of it, the more to affect themselves, and to instruct others.

11 And it shall be when the LORD shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, as he sware unto thee and to thy fathers, and shall give it thee, 12 That thou shalt set apart unto the LORD all that openeth the matrix: and every firstling that cometh of a beast, which thou hast, the males shall be the LORDS. 13 And every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck: and all the first-born of man amongst thy

thy children shalt thou redeem. 14. And it shall be when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What is this? that thou shalt say unto him, By strength of hand the LORD brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage. 15. And it came to pass when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that the LORD slew all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both the first-born of man, and the first-born of beast: therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all that openeth the matrix, being males; but all the first-born of my children I redeem. 16. And it shall be for a token upon thine hand, and for frontlets between thine eyes: for by strength of hand the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt.

Here's, 1. Further Directions concerning the dedicating of their First-born to God. (1.) The Firstlings of their Cattle were to be dedicated to God, as part of their Possessions. Those of clean Beasts, Calves, Lambs and Kids, if Males, were to be sacrificed, *Exod. 22. 30. Numb. 18. 17, 18.* Those of unclean Beasts, as Colts, were to be redeemed with a Lamb, or knocked on the Head. For whatsoever is unclean (as we all are by Nature) if it be not redeemed will be destroyed, *v. 11, 12, 13.* (2.) The First-born of their Children were to be redeemed, and by no Means sacrificed as the Gentiles sacrificed their Children to Moloch. The Price of the Redemption of the First-born was fixed by the Law, *Numb. 18. 16. five Shekels*: we were all obnoxious to the Wrath and Curse of God, by the Blood of Christ we are redeemed that we may be joined to the Church of the First-born. They were to redeem both their Children, and the Firstlings of the unclean Beasts; for our Children are by Nature polluted, *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean thing?*

2. Further Directions concerning the catechizing of their Children, and all those of the rising Generation from Time to Time in this Matter. 'Tis supposed, when they saw all the Firstlings thus devoted, they would ask the meaning of it, and their Parents and Teachers must tell them the Meaning of it, *v. 14, 15, 16.* That God's special Propriety in their First-born, and all their Firstlings was founded in his special Preservation of them from the Sword of the Destroying Angel. Being thus delivered, they must serve him. *Note.* (1.) Children should be directed and encouraged to ask their Parents Questions concerning the Things of God, which if they would do, 'twould be perhaps of all other the most profitable Way of Caterhizing; and Parents must furnish themselves with useful Knowledge, that they may be ready always to give Answer to their Enquiries. If ever the Knowledge of God cover the Earth, as the Waters do the Sea, the Fountains of Family Instruction must first be broken up. (2.) We should all be able to show Cause for what we do in Religion. As Sacraments are sanctified by the Word, so they must be explained and understood by it. God's Service is reasonable, and 'tis then acceptable when we perform it intelligently, knowing what we do, and why we do it.

(3.) It must be observed, how oft it is said in this Chapter that by strength of Hand, *v. 3. 14, 16.* and with a strong Hand, *v. 9.* the Lord brought them out of Egypt. The more Opposition is given to the Accomplishment of God's Promises, the more is his Power magnified therein. 'Tis a strong hand that conquers hard Hearts. Sometimes God is said to work Deliverance, not by Might or Power, *Zech. 4. 6.* not by such visible Displays of his Power as this here.

(4.) Their Posterity that should be born in Canaan are directed to say, The Lord brought us out of Egypt, *v. 14, 16.* Mercies to our Fathers and Mercies to us, we reap the Benefit of them, and therefore must keep up a grateful Remembrance of them. We stand upon the Bottom of former Deliverances, and were in the Loins of our Ancestors when they were delivered. Much more Reason have we to say, that in the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ we were redeemed.

17 And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near: for God said, Left peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt. 18 But God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red sea: and the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt. 19 And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit

you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you. 20 And they took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness. 21 And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light: to go by day and night. 22 He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.

Here's 1. The Choice God made of their way, *v. 17, 18.* He was their Guide, Moses gave them Direction but as he received it from the Lord. *Note.* The Way of Man is not in himself, *Jer. 10. 23.* He may devise his way, and design it; but after all 'tis God that directeth his steps; *Pr. 16. 9.* Man proposeth, but God disposeth, and in his Disposal we must acquiesce, and set our selves to follow Providence.

There were two Ways from Egypt to Canaan. One was a short cut, from the North of Egypt to the South of Canaan, perhaps about four or five Days Journey; The other was much further about through the Wilderness, and that was the Way which God chose to lead his People Israel in; *v. 18.* (1.) There were many Reasons why God let them through the Way of the Wilderness of the Red Sea. The Egyptians were to be drowned in the Red Sea, the Israelites were to be humbled, and proved in the Wilderness, *Deut. 8. 2.* God had given it to Moses for a Sign, *Chap. 3. 12.* ye shall serve God in this Mountain. They had again and again told Pharaoh that they must go three days Journey into the Wilderness to do Sacrifice, and therefore 'twas requisite they should bend their March that Way, else they had justly been exclaimed against as notorious Dissemblers. Before they entered the Lists with their Enemies, Matters must be settled between them and their God, Laws must be given, Ordinances instituted, Covenants sealed, the Original Contracts ratified, and for the doing of this 'twas necessary they should retire into the Solitudes of a Wilderness, the only Closet for such a Crowd; The High Road would be no proper Place for these Transactions. 'Tis said, *Deut. 32. 10.* he led them about, some hundreds of Miles about, and yet *Pf. 107. 7.* he led them forth by the right way; God's way, is the right way, tho' it seem about. If we think he leads not his People the next way, yet we may be sure he leads them the best way, and so it will appear when we come to our Journey's end. Judge nothing before the time.

(2.) There was one Reason why God did not lead them the nearest Way, which would have brought them in a few Days March to the Land of the Philistines, for 'twas that Part of Canaan that lay next to Egypt, because they were not as yet fit for War, much less for War with the Philistines; *v. 17.* Their Spirits were broke with Slavery. 'Twas not easy for them to turn their Hands of a sudden from the Trowel to the Sword; The Philistines were formidable Enemies, too fierce to be encountered by fresh-water Soldiers: 'Twas convenient they should begin with the Amalekites, and be prepared for the Wars of Canaan, by experiencing the Difficulties of the Wilderness. *Note.* God proportions his Peoples Trials to their Strength, and will not suffer them to be tempted above what they are able, *1 Cor. 10. 13.* That Promise, if compared with the foregoing Verses, will seem to refer to this here, as an Instance of it. God knows our Frame, and considers our Weakness, and Faint-heartedness, and and by lesser Trials will prepare us for greater. God is, said to bring Israel out of Egypt as the Eagle brings up her Young ones, *Deut. 32. 11.* teaching them by Degrees to fly.

Orders being thus given which Way they should go, we are told, 1. That they went up themselves, not as a confused Rout, but in good Order, Rank and File; they went up harnessed, *v. 18.* They went up by five in a Rank, so some; in five Squadrons, so others. They marched like an Army with Banners, which added much to their Strength and Honour.

2. That they took the Bones of Joseph along with them, (*v. 19.*) and probably the Bones of the rest of Jacob's Sons, unless (as some think) they had been privately carried to Canaan, *Act. 7. 16.*) severally as they died. Joseph had particularly appointed that his Bones should be carried up then when God visited them, *Gen. 50. 25, 26.* so that their carrying up his Bones was not only a Performance of the Oath their Fathers had sworn to Joseph, but an Acknowledgment of the Performance of God's Promise to them by Joseph, that he would visit them, and bring them out of the Land of Egypt, and an Encouragement to their Faith and Hope, that he would fulfil the other Part of the Promise, which was to bring them to Canaan; in Expectation of which they carried these Bones with them: while they wandered in the desert they might think, Joseph's Bones must rest at last, and then we shall. Moses is said to take these Bones with him: Moses was now a very great Man; so had Joseph been in his Day, yet he was now but a Box full of dry Bones; That was all that remained of him in this World, which might serve for a Monitor

to Moses, to remember his Mortality. *I have said ye are Gods, 'twas said so to Moses expressly, but ye shall die like Men.*

2. Here's the Conduct they were blessed with in the Way, v. 21, 22. *The Lord went before them in a Pillar.* In the two first Stages, 'twas enough that God directed Moses whither to march, he knew the Country and the Road, well enough, but now they are come to the edge of the Wilderness, v. 20. they would have Occasion for a Guide, and a very good Guide they had, infinitely Wise, Kind, and Faithful, *the Lord went before them, the Shechinah or Appearance of the Divine Majesty, which was Typical of Christ, or a previous Manifestation of the Eternal Word, which in the Fullness of Time was to be made Flesh, and dwell among us.* Christ was with the Church in the Wilderness, 1 Cor. 10. 9. *Now their King passed before them, even the Lord on the Head of them, Mic. 2. 13.* Note, Those whom God brings into a Wilderness, he will not leave nor lose there, but will take Care to lead them through it; we may well think it was a very great Satisfaction to Moses and the pious Israelites, to be sure that they were under a Divine Conduct. They need not fear missing their Way who were thus led, nor being lost who were thus directed; they need not fear being blighted who were thus illuminated, nor being robbed, who were thus protected. They who make the Glory of God their End, and the Word of God their Rule, the Spirit of God the Guide of their Affairs, may be confident that *the Lord goes before them, as truly as he went before Israel in the Wilderness, tho' not so sensibly; we must live by Faith.*

1. They had sensible Evidences of God's going before them. They all saw an Appearance from Heaven of a Pillar, which in the bright day appeared Cloudy, and in the dark night appeared Fiery; we commonly see, that that which is a Flame in the Night is a Smoke in the Day, so was this. God gave them this ocular Demonstration of his Presence, in Compassion to the Infirmary of their Faith, and in Compliance with the Infant-state of the Church which needed to be thus lif'd to in their own Language; but blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed God's gracious Presence with them, according to his Promise.

2. They had sensible Effects of God's going before them in this Pillar. For, (1.) It led them the way in that vast howling Wilderness, in which was no Road, no Track, no Way-marks, of which they had no Maps, through which they had no Guides. When they marched, this Pillar went before them, at the Rate that they could follow, and appointed the Place of their Encampment, as infinite Wisdom saw fit; which both eased them from Care, and secured them from Danger, both in moving, and in resting. (2.) It sheltered them from the Heat by day, which at some times of the Year was extreme. (3.) It gave them light by Night when they had Occasion for it, and all Times made their Camp pleasant, and the Wilderness they were in less frightful.

3. These were constant, standing Miracles, v. 22. He took not away the Pillar of Cloud; no not when they seemed to have less Occasion for it, travelling through inhabited Countries; no not when they murmured, and were provoking; It never left them till it brought them to the Borders of Canaan. 'Twas a Cloud which the Wind could not scatter. This Favour is acknowledged with Thankfulness long after, *Neh. 9. 19. Ps. 78. 14.*

There was something Spiritual in this Pillar of Cloud and Fire. (1.) The Children of Israel were baptized unto Moses in this Cloud, which some think distilled Dew upon them, 1 Cor. 10. 2. By coming under this Cloud they signified their putting of themselves under the Divine Conduct and Command by the Ministry of Moses. *Protection draws Allegiance;* This Cloud was the Badge of God's Protection, and so became the Bond of their Allegiance. Thus they were initiated, and admitted under that Government, now when they were entering upon the Wilderness. (2.) Some make this Cloud a Type of Christ. The Cloud of his Humane Nature was a Veil to the Light and Fire of his Divine Nature, we find him *Rev. 10. 1. Clothed with a Cloud, and his Feet as Pillars of Fire:* Christ is our way, the Light of our Way, and the Guide of it. (3.) It signifies the special Conduct and Protection which the Church of Christ is under in this World. God himself is the keeper of Israel, and he neither slumbers nor sleeps, *Ps. 121. 4. Isa. 27. 3.* There's a Defence created not only on Zion's Assemblies, but on every dwelling Place in Zion. See *Isa. 4. 5, 6.* Nay every Israelite indeed is hid under the Shadow of God's Wings, *Ps. 17. 8.* Angels, whose Ministry was made Use of in this Cloud, are employed for their Good, and pitch their Tents about them. *Happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee, O People!*

C H A P. XIV.

The Departure of the Children of Israel out of Egypt, (which was indeed the Birth of the Jewish Church) is made yet more memorable by further Works of Wonder which were wrought immediately upon it. Witness the Records of this Chapter, the Con-

tents whereof together with a Key to it, we have, *Heb. 11. 29.* They passed through the Red Sea as by dry Land, which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned, and this they did by Faith, which intimates that there was something Typical and Spiritual in it. Here's, 1. The extreme Distress and Danger that Israel was in at the Red Sea. (1.) Notice was given of it to Moses before, v. 1—4. (2.) The Cause of it was Pharaoh's violent Pursuit of them, v. 5—9. (3.) Israel was in a mighty Consternation upon it, v. 10—12. (4.) Moses endeavours to encourage them, v. 13, 14. 2. The wonderful Deliverance that God wrought for them out of this Distress. 1. Moses is instructed concerning it, v. 15—18. 2. Lines that could not be forced are set between the Camp of Israel and Pharaoh's Camp, v. 19, 20. 3. By the Divine Power the Red Sea is divided, v. 21. and is made, 1. A Lane to the Israelites, who marched safely through it, v. 22, 29. But, 2. To the Egyptians it was made, (1.) An Ambush into which they were drawn, v. 23—25. And, (2.) A Grave in which they were all buried, v. 26—28. Lastly, The Impressions this made upon the Israelites, v. 30, 31.

1 AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baalzephon: before it shall ye encamp by the sea. 3 For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are intangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in. 4 And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them, and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I am the LORD. And they did so. 5 And it was told the king of Egypt, that the people fled: and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people, and they said, Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us? 6 And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him. 7 And he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them. 8 And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel: and the children of Israel went out with an high hand. 9 But the Egyptians pursued after them (all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army) and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pi-hahiroth before Baalzephon.

Here's, 1. Instructions given to Moses concerning Israel's Motions and Encampments, which were so very surprising, that if Moses had not had express Orders about them before, they would scarce have persuaded themselves to follow the Pillar of Cloud and Fire. That therefore there might be no Scruple or Dissatisfaction about it, Moses is told before, 1. Whither they must go, v. 1, 2. They were got to the edge of the Wilderness, Chap. 13. 20. and one Stage or two more would have brought them to Horeb, the place appointed for their serving God; but instead of going forward, they are ordered to turn short off, on the Right Hand from-wards Canaan, and to march towards the Red Sea. Where they were at Etham, there was no Sea in their Way to obstruct their Passage, but God himself orders them into Straits, which might give them an Assurance, that when his Purposes were served, he would without fail bring them out of those Straits. Note, God sometime raiseth Difficulties in the Way of the Salvation of his People, that he may have the Glory of subduing them, and helping his People over them.

2. What God designed in these strange Orders. Moses would have yielded an implicit Obedience, tho' he had given him no Reason, but shall he hide from Moses the Thing that he doth? No, Moses shall know, (1.) That Pharaoh has a Design to ruine Israel, v. 3. (2.) That therefore God has a Design to ruine Pharaoh, and he takes this Way to effect it, v. 4. Pharaoh's Politicks would conclude that Israel was entangled in the Wilderness, and so would become an easy Prey to him, and that he might be the more apt to think so, God orders them into yet greater Entanglements: also by turning them so much out of their Road, he amazeth him yet more, and gives

gives him further occasion to suspect them. And thus (saith God) *I will be honoured upon Pharaoh*, Note, 1. All Men being made for the Honour of their Maker, those whom he is not *honoured by*, he will be *honoured upon*. 2. What seems to tend to the Church's Ruine, is oft over-ruled to the Ruine of the Church's Enemies, whose Pride and Malice are fed by Providence, that they may be ripened for Destruction.

2. *Pharaoh's Pursuit of Israel*, in which while he gratifies his own Malice and Revenge, he is furthering the Accomplishment of God's Counsels concerning him. 'Twas told him that the People fled, v. 5. Such a Fright he was in when he gave them leave to go, that when the Fright was a little over, he either forgot, or would not own that they departed with his Consent, and therefore was willing it should be represented to him as a Revolt from their Allegiance. Thus what may easily be justified is easily condemned by putting false Colours upon it. Now hereupon,

1. He reflects upon it with regret, that he had connived at their Departure. He and his Servants, tho' it was with the greatest reason in the World that they had *let Israel go*, yet were now angry at themselves for it, *Why have ye done thus?* (1.) It vexed them that *Israel* had their Liberty, that they had lost the Profits of their Labours, and the Pleasure of chastising them. 'Tis Meat and Drink to proud Persecutors to trample upon the Saints of the most high, and say to their Souls *bow down that we may go over*, and therefore it vexeth them to have their Hands tied. Note, the Liberty of God's People is a mighty Grievance to their Enemies, *Eph. 5. 12, 13. Act. 5. 17, 33.* (2.) It aggravated the Vexation that they themselves had consented to it, thinking now, they *might have hindered it*, and that they needed not to have yielded, tho' they had stood it out to the last Extremity. Thus God makes Mens Envy and Rage against his People a Torment to themselves, *Pf. 112. 10.* 'Twas well done to let *Israel* go, and what they would have reflected upon with comfort, if they had done it from an honest Principle, but doing it by constraint, they called themselves a thousand Fools for doing it, and passionately wish it undone again. Note, It is a very common thing, but a very ill thing for People to repent of their good Deeds, their Justice and Charity, and even their Repentance is *repented of*. See an Instance somewhat like this, *Jer. 34. 10.*

2. He resolves if possible either to *reduce* them, or be *revenged* on them; in order to that he levies an Army, musters all his Force of *Chariots and Horsemen*, (v. 17, 18.) (for it should seem he took no Foot with him, because the King's Business required haste) and thus he doubts not but to *reinslave* them, v. 6; 7. 'Tis easy to imagine what a Toss *Pharaoh* was now in, roaring like a Lion disappointed of his Prey; how his proud Heart aggravated the Affront, swelled with Indignation, scorned to be baffled, longed to be revenged; And now all the Plagues are as if they had never been, has quite forgot the sorrowful Funerals of his *First-born*, he can think of nothing but making *Israel* feel his Repentments; Now he thinks he can be too hard for God himself, for otherwise he cannot imagine how he should conquer a People so dear to him. God gave him up to these Passions of his own Heart and so *hardened* it. 'Tis said, v. 8. the Children of *Israel* went out with an high hand, i. e. with a great deal of Courage and Bravery, triumphing in their Enlargement, and resolved to break through the Difficulties that lay in their way. But the *Egyptians*, v. 9. pursued after them. Note, Those that in good earnest set their Faces Heavenward, and will live *godly in Christ Jesus*, must expect to be set upon by Satan's Temptations and Terrors. He will not tamely part with any out of his Service, nor go out without *raging*, *Mar. 9. 36.*

10 And when *Pharaoh* drew nigh, the children of *Israel* lift up their eyes, and behold, the *Egyptians* marched after them, and they were sore afraid: and the children of *Israel* cried out unto the LORD. 11 And they said unto *Moses*, Because there were no graves in *Egypt*, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of *Egypt*? 12 Is not this the word that we did tell thee in *Egypt*, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the *Egyptians*? For it had been better for us to serve the *Egyptians*, then that we should die in the wilderness. 13 And *Moses* said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the *Egyptians* whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. 14 The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.

V O L. I.

Here's, 1. The Fright that the Children of *Israel* were in when they perceived that *Pharaoh* pursued them, v. 10. They knew very well the Strength and Rage of the Enemy, and their own Weakness; Numerous indeed they were, but all Foot, unarmed, undisciplined, disquieted by long Servitude, and (which was worst of all) now penna'd up by the Situation of their Camp, so that they could not make their escape. On one Hand was *Pi-hahiroth*, a range of craggy Rocks unpassable; on the other Hand were *Migdol* and *Baal-zephon*, which some think were Forts and Garrisons upon the Frontiers of *Egypt*, before them was the Sea, behind them were the *Egyptians*, so that there was no way open for them but upwards, and thence their Deliverance came. Note, We may be in the way of our Duty, following God, and hastning towards Heaven, and yet may be in great Straits, troubled on every side, *2 Cor. 4. 8.*

In this Distress no marvel that they were *sore afraid*, their Father *Jacob* was so in a like Case, *Gen. 32. 7.* when *without* are *Fightings*, it cannot be otherwise, but that *within* are *Fears*; what therefore was the Fruit of this Fear! According as that was, the Fear was Good or Evil.

1. Some of them cried out unto the Lord; Their Fear set them a praying, and that was a good Effect of it. God brings us into Straits, that he may bring us to our Knees.

2. Others of them tried out against *Moses*: Their Fear set 'em a Murmuring, v. 11, 12. They give up themselves for lost, and as if God's Arm were shortned all of a sudden, and he were not as able to work Miracles to day, as he was yesterday, they despair of Deliverance, and can count upon nothing but dying in the Wilderness. How inexcusable was their Distrust! Did they not see themselves under the Conduct and Protection of a Pillar from Heaven? And can Almighty Power fail 'em, or Infinite Goodness be false to them? Yet this was not the worst, They quarrel with *Moses*, for bringing them out of *Egypt*, and, in quarrelling with him, fly in the Face of God himself, and provoke him to Wrath, whose Favour was now the only Succour they had to flee to. As the *Egyptians* were angry at themselves for the best Deed they ever did, so the *Israelites* were angry at God for the greatest Kindness that was ever done them, so gross are the Absurdities of Unbelief. They here express, 1. A sordid Contempt of Liberty, preferring Servitude before it, only because it was attended with some Difficulties. A generous Spirit would have said, If the worst come to the worst (as we say) 'tis better to die in the Bed of Honour than live in the Chains of Slavery; Nay, under God's Conduct they could not miscarry, and therefore they might say, better live God's Freemen in the open Air of a Wilderness, than the *Egyptians* Bondmen in the Smoke of the Brick-Kilns: But because for the present they are a little embarrassed, they are Angry that they were not left buried alive in their House of Bondage. 2. Base ingratitude to *Moses* who had been the faithful Instrument of their Deliverance: They condemn him as if he had dealt hardly and unkindly with them, whereas 'twas evident beyond dispute, that whatever he did, and however it issued, 'twas by direction from their God, and with Design for their Good. What they had said in a former Passion, when they hearkned not to *Moses* for anguish of Spirit, they repeat and justify in this, *we said in Egypt, Let us alone*, and it was ill said, yet more excusable, because, then they had not had so much Experience as they had now of God's wonderful Appearances in their Favours. But they had as soon forgot the Miracles of Mercy as the *Egyptians* had forgot the Miracles of Wrath, and they as well as the *Egyptians* hardened their Hearts at last to their own Ruine; As *Egypt* after ten Plagues, so *Israel* after ten Provocations (of which this was the first) *Num. 14. 22.* were sentenced to die in the Wilderness.

3. The seasonable Encouragement that *Moses* gave them in this Distress, v. 13, 14. He answered not these Fools according to their Folly: God bore with the Provocation they gave to him, and did not as he might justly have done, *chuse their Delusions*, and bring their Fears upon them, and therefore *Moses* might well afford to pass by the Affront they put upon him; Instead of chiding them he comforts them, and with an admirable Presence and Composure of Mind, not disheartened either by the Threatnings of *Egypt*, or the Tremblings of *Israel*, stills their Murmuring with the Assurance of a speedy and complete Deliverance, *Fear ye not*. Note, It is our Duty and Interest when we cannot get out of our Troubles, yet to get above our Fears, so as that they may only serve to quicken our Prayers and Endeavours, but may not prevail to silence our Faith and Hope.

4. He assures them that God would deliver them. That he would undertake their Deliverance, *The Lord fights for you*, and that he would effect it, in the utter Ruine of their Pursuers. This *Moses* was confident of himself, and would have them to be so, tho' as yet he knew not how or which way it would be brought to pass. God had assured him that *Pharaoh* and his Host should be ruined, and he comforts them with the same Comforts where-with he had been comforted.

1. He directs them to leave it to God in a silent Expectation of the Event, *Stand still*, and think not to save your selves either by fighting or flying, *wait God's Orders*, and observe them, be not contriving what course to take, but follow your Leader; *wait God's Appearances*, and take notice of them, that you may see what Fools you are to distrust him. Compose your selves by an intire Confidence in God, into a peaceful Prospect of the Great Salvation God is now about to work for you. *Hold your Peace*, you need not so much as give a Shout against the Enemy (as *Josh. 6. 16.*) the Work shall be done without any Concurrency of yours. *Note*, 1. If God himself bring his People into Straits, he will himself find out a way to bring them out again. 2. In times of Great Difficulty, and Great Expectation, it is our Wisdom to keep our Spirits calm, quiet, and sedate, for then we are in the best Frame both to do our own Work, and to consider the Work of God. *Your strength is to sit still*, (*Isa. 30. 7.*) for the Egyptians shall help in vain, and threaten to hurt in vain.

15 And the LORD said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward. 16 But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry-ground through the midst of the sea. 17 And I, behold I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them: and I will get me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. 18 And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten me honour upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. 19 And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them. 20 And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel, and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night.

Here's, (1.) Direction given to Israel's Leader, (1.) What he must do himself, he must for the present leave off praying, and apply himself to his Business, *v. 15. Wherefore criest thou unto me? Moses* tho' he was assured of a good Issue to the present Distress, yet did not neglect Prayer. We read not of one Word he said in Prayer, but he *lift up his Heart* to God, the Language of which God well understood, and took notice of. *Moses's* silent Prayers of Faith prevailed more with God, than *Israel's* loud Out-cries of Fear, *v. 10. Note*, 1. Praying if it be right, is crying to God, which speaks it the Language both of a natural, and of an importunate Desire. 2. There may be true crying to God by Prayer, where the Voice is not heard, as *Hannah's*, *1 Sam. 1. 13.* But is God displeased with *Moses* for praying? No, he asks this Question, *wherefore criest thou unto me?* 1. To satisfy his Faith. Wherefore shouldst thou press thy Petition any further, when it is already granted, enough is said, speak no more of this Matter, *I have accepted thy Prayer*; so the Chaldee explains it. 2. To quicken his Diligence. *Moses* has something else to do besides praying, he is to command the Hosts of Israel, and 'twas now requisite he should be at his Post. Every thing is beautiful in its Season. (2.) What he must order Israel to do, speak to them that they go forward. Some think *Moses* had prayed not so much for their Deliverance, he was assured of that, as for the Pardon of their Murmurings, and God's ordering them to go forward was an intimation of the Pardon. No going forward with any Comfort, but in the Sense of our Reconciliation to God. *Moses* bid them stand still and expect Orders from God, and now Orders are given. They thought they must have been directed either to the Right Hand, or to the Left, no, saith God, speak to them to go forward, directly to the Sea-side, as if there had lain a Fleet of Transport Ships ready for them to embark in. *Note*, When we are in the Way of our Duty, tho' we meet with Difficulties we must go forward, and not stand at a gaze, mind present Work, and then leave the Event to God, use Means, and trust him with the Issue. (3.) What he might expect God to do. Let the Children of Israel go as far as they can upon dry Ground, and then God will divide the Sea, and open a Passage for them through it, *v. 16, 17, 18.* God designs not only to deliver the Israelites, but to destroy the Egyptians, and the Plan of his Counsels is accordingly. (1.) He will show favour to Israel, the Waters shall be divided for them to pass through, *v. 16.*

The same Power could have congealed the Waters for them to pass over, but infinite Wisdom chose rather to divide the Waters for them, to pass through, for that way of Salvation is always pitched upon which is most humbling. Thus 'tis said with reference to this, *Isa. 63. 13, 14. he led them through the Deep, as a Beast goes down into the Valley*, and thus made himself an everlasting Name. (2.) He will get him Honour upon Pharaoh. If the due Rent of Honour be not paid to the great Landlord, by and from whom we have, and hold our Beings and Comforts, he will distrust for it, and recover it. God will be a loser by no Man.

In order to this, 'tis threatened, *v. 17. I, behold I will harden Pharaoh's Heart*. The manner of Expression is observable, *I, behold I will do it*. I that may do it, so 'tis the Language of his Sovereignty, we may not contribute to the hardning of any Man's Heart, nor withhold any thing that we can do towards the softning of it, but God's Grace is his own, he hath Mercy on whom he will have Mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. I that can do it, so 'tis the Language of his Power, none but the Almighty can make the Heart soft, *Job. 23. 16.* nor can any but he make it hard. I that will do it, for 'tis the Language of his Justice; 'Tis a righteous thing with God to put those under the Impressions of his Wrath, that have long resisted the Influences of his Grace. 'Tis spoken in a way of Triumph over this obstinate and presumptuous Rebel; *I, even I will take an effectual Course to humble him; He shall break that would not bend*, 'Tis an Expression like that, *Isa. 1. 24. Ah, I will case me of mine Adversaries*.

(2.) A Guard set upon Israel's Camp, there where it now lay most exposed, which was in the rear, *v. 19, 20. The Angel of God*, whose Ministry was made use of in the Pillar of Cloud and Fire, went from before the Camp of Israel, where they did not now need a Guide, there was no danger of missing their way through the Sea, nor needed they any other word of Command, but to go forward, and it came behind them, where now they needed a Guard, the Egyptians being just ready to seize the hindmost of them, and so was a Wall of Partition between them. There it was of use to the Israelites, not only to protect them, but to light them through the Sea, and at the same time it confounded the Egyptians, so that they lost sight of their Prey, just then when they were ready to lay Hands on it. The Word and Providence of God have a black and dark side towards Sin and Sinners, but a bright and pleasant side towards those that are Israelites indeed. That which is a favor of Life unto Life to some, is a favor of Death, unto Death to others. This was not the first time that he who in the beginning divided between Light and Darkness, (*Gen. 1. 4.*) and still forms both (*Isa. 45. 7.*) had at the same time allotted darkness to the Egyptians, and light to the Israelites, a Specimen of the Endless Distinction which will be made between the Inheritance of the Saints in Light, and that utter Darkness which will be the Portion of Hypocrites. Now and for ever God will separate between the precious and the vile.

21 And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east-wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. 22 And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. 23 And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them, to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. 24 And it came to pass, that in the morning-watch the LORD looked unto the host of the Egyptians, through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians. 25 And took off their chariot-wheels, that they drove them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the LORD fighteth for them, against the Egyptians. 26 And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen. 27 And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared, and the Egyptians fled against it: and the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. 28 And the waters returned and covered the chariots, and the

the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them: there remained not so much as one of them. 29 But the children of Israel walked upon dry-land in the midst of the sea: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. 30 Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians: and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore. 31 And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and his servant Moses.

We have here the History of that Work of Wonder, which is so often mentioned both in the Old and New Testament, the dividing of the Red Sea before the Children of Israel. 'Twas the Terror of the Canaanites, Josh. 2. 10. the Praise and Triumph of the Israelites, Ps. 114. 3—106. 9—136. 13, 14. 'Twas a Type of Baptism, 1 Cor. 10. 1. Israel's Passage through it was Typical of the conversion of Souls, Isa. 11. 15. and the Egyptians Perdition in it was typical of the final ruin of all impenitent Sinners, Rev. 20. 14. Here's,

1. An Instance of God's Almighty Power in the Kingdom of Nature, in dividing the Sea, and opening a Passage through the Waters. 'Twas a Bay, or Gulf, or Arm of the Sea, two or three Leagues over, which was divided, v. 21. The instituted Sign made use of, was Moses's stretching out his Hand over it, to signify, that it was done in answer to his Prayer, for the Confirmation of his Mission, and in favour to the People which he led. The Natural Sign was a strong East-wind, signifying that it was done by the Power of God, whom the Winds and the Seas obey. If there be any Passage in the Book of Job which has reference to the Miracles wrought for Israel's Deliverance out of Egypt, 'tis that Job 26. 12. He divideth the Sea with his Power, and by his Understanding he smiteth through Rahab (so the Word is) that is, Egypt. Note, God can bring his People through the greatest Difficulties, and force a way where he doth not find it. The God of Nature has not tyed himself to its Laws, but when he pleases dispenseth with them, and then the Fire doth not burn, nor the Water flow.

2. An Instance of his wonderful Favour to his Israel. They went through the Sea to the opposite Shore (I cannot but think they did so, and not as some do, that they fetched a Compass, and came out again on the same side) v. 22. they walked upon dry Land in the midst of the Sea, v. 29. And the Pillar of Cloud, *that Glory of the Lord* being their rearward (Isa. 63. 8.) that the Egyptians might not charge them in the flank, the Waters were a wall to them ('tis twice mentioned) on their right hand, and on their left. Moses and Aaron 'tis likely ventured first, into this untrodden Path, and then all Israel after them; and this March through the Paths of the great Waters would make their March afterwards through the Wilderness less formidable. They needed not fear to follow God any whither, that had followed him through the Sea. This March through the Sea was in the Night, and not a Moon-shine Night, for it was seven days after the Full Moon, so that they had no Light but what they had from the Pillar of Cloud and Fire. This made it the more awful; but where God leads us, he will light us, while we follow his Conduct, we shall not want his Comforts.

This was done and recorded for the Encouragement of God's People in all Ages to trust in him in the greatest Straits. What cannot he do that did this? What will not he do for those that fear and love him, who did this for these murmuring, unbelieving Israelites, who yet were beloved for the Fathers sakes, and for the sake of a Remnant among them. We find the Saints long after making themselves sharers in the Triumphs of this March, Ps. 66. 6. they went through the Flood on Foot, there did we rejoice in him, and see how this work of Wonder is improved, Ps. 77. 11, 16, 19.

3. An Instance of his just and righteous Wrath upon his and his People's Enemies, the Egyptians. Observe here,

1. How they were infuriated. In the Heat of their Pursuit they went in after the Israelites into the midst of the Sea, v. 23. They thought, why might they not venture where Israel did? Once or twice the Magicians of Egypt had done what Moses did with their Enchantments, Pharaoh remembered that, but forgot how they were non-plused at last. They were more advantageously provided with Chariots and Horses, while the Israelites were on Foot. Pharaoh had said, I know not the Lord, and by this it appeared he did not, else he would not have ventured thus. None so bold as those that are blind. Rage against Israel made them thus daring, and inconsiderate: They had long hardened their own Hearts, and now God hardened them to their Ruine, and hid from their Eyes the things that belonged to their Peace and Safety. Surely in vain is the Net spread in

the sight of any bird, Prov. 1. 17. yet so blind were the Egyptians that they hasted to the Snare, Prov. 7. 23. Note, The Ruine of Sinners is brought on by their own Presumption, which hurries them headlong into the Pit. They are all self-destroyers.

2. How they were troubled and perplexed, v. 24, 25. For some Hours they marched through the divided Waters as safely and triumphantly as Israel did, not doubting but in a little time, to gain their Point. But in the morning Watch, the Lord looked upon the Host of the Egyptians and troubled them. Something or other they saw or heard from the Pillar of Cloud and Fire which put them into a mighty Consternation, and gave them a sight of their Ruine before it was brought upon them. Now it appeared that the triumphing of the Wicked is short, and that God has ways to frighten Sinners into Despair, before he plungeth them into Destruction, He cuts off the Spirit of Princes, and is terrible to the Kings of the Earth. (1.) They had hee'd and boasted, as if the day were their own, but now they were troubled and dismay'd, struck with a panick Fear. (2.) They had driven furiously, but now they drove heavily, and found themselves plunged and embarrassed at every step, the Way grew deep, their Hearts grew sad, their Wheels dropt off, and the Axletrees fail'd. Thus can God check the Violence of those that are in pursuit of his People. (3.) They had been flying upon the back of Israel, as the Hawk upon the trembling Dove, but now they cry'd, Let us flee from the Face of Israel, which is become to them like a Torch of Fire in a Sheaf, Zech. 12. 6. Israel is now all of a sudden become as much a Terror to them as they had been to Israel. They might have let Israel alone and would not, now they would flee from the Face of Israel, and cannot. Men will not be convinced, till 'tis too late, that those who meddle with God's People, meddle to their own hurt; when the Lord shall come with ten thousands of his Saints to execute Judgment, the Mighty Men will in vain seek to shelter themselves under Rocks and Mountains from the face of Israel, and Israel's King, Rev. 6. 16. Compare with this Story, Job 27. 10, &c.

3. How they were all drowned, as soon as ever the Children of Israel were got safe to the Shore, Moses was ordered to stretch out his Hand over the Sea, and thereby give a signal to the Waters to close again, as before upon the Word of Command they had open'd to the right and the left, v. 28. He did so, and immediately the Waters returned to their Place, and overwhelm'd all the Host of the Egyptians, v. 27, 28. Pharaoh and his Servants that had harden'd one another in Sin, now fell together, and not one escaped. An ancient Tradition saith, That Pharaoh's Magicians Jannes and Jambres perished with the rest, as Balaam with the Midianites whom he had seduc'd, Num. 31. 8. And now, (1.) God revenged upon the Egyptians the Blood of the first-born whom they had drown'd, and the Principal is repaid with Interest, 'tis recompens'd double, full-grown Egyptians for new-born Israelites, and the Lord is Righteous, precious is his People's Blood in his sight, Ps. 74. 14. (2.) God reckoned with Pharaoh for all his Proud and Insolent Carriage towards Moses, his Ambassador: Mocking the Messengers of the Lord, and playing the Fool with them brings Ruin without Remedy: Now God got him Honour upon Pharaoh, looking upon that Proud Man and abusing him, Job. 40. 12. Come and see the Desolations he made, and write it, not in Water, but with an Iron Pen in the Rock for ever, Here lies that bloody Tyrant that bid defiance to his Maker, to his Demands, Threatnings and Judgments; a Rebel to God, and a Slave to his own barbarous Passions; perfectly lost to Humanity, Virtue and all true Honour; here he lies buried in the deep, a perpetual Monument of Divine Justice. Here he went down to the Pit, tho' he was the Terror of the Mighty in the Land of the living. This is Pharaoh and all his Multitude, Ezek. 31. 13.

Lastly, Here's the notice which the Israelites took of this wonderful Work God wrought for them, and the good Impressions it made upon them for the present.

1. They saw the Egyptians dead upon the Sands, v. 30. Providence so ordered it that the next Tide threw up the dead Bodies, (1.) for the great Disgrace of the Egyptians. Now the Beasts and Birds of prey were called to eat the Flesh of Captains and Mighty Men, Rev. 19. 17, 18. The Egyptians were very nice and curious in Embalming and Preserving the Bodies of their Great Men, but here the utmost Contempt is pour'd upon all the Grandees of Egypt, see how they lie heaped upon heaps, as Dung upon the Face of the Earth. (2.) For the greater Triumph of the Israelites, and to affect them the more with their Deliverance, for the Eye affects the Heart. See Isa. 60. 24. They shall go forth, and look upon the Carcasses of the Men that have transgressed against me. Probably they strip the slain, and having recovered the Jewels of their Neighbours before, which the Egyptians having by this hostile pursuit of them broke their Faith with them) from henceforward they were not under any Obligation to restore, they now got Arms from them, which some think they were not before provided with. Thus when God broke the Chain of Leviathan in pieces, he gave him to be Meat to the People, making him the Wilderness, Ps. 74. 14.

2. The sight of this great Work greatly affected them, and now they feared the Lord, and believed the Lord and his servant Moses, v. 31. Now they were ashamed of their Distrusts and Murmurings, and in the good Mind they were in, they would never again despair of Help from Heaven, no not in the greatest Straits, they would never again quarrel with Moses, nor talk of returning to Egypt. They were now baptized to Moses in the Sea, 1 Cor. 10: 2. This great Work which God wrought for them by the Ministry of Moses, bound them effectually to follow his Conduct under God. This confirm'd their Faith in the Promises that were yet to be fulfilled, and being brought thus triumphantly out of Egypt, they did not doubt but to be in Canaan shortly, and having such a God to trust to, and such a Mediator between them and him, O that there had been such a Heart in them as now there seem'd to be! Sensible Mercies when they are fresh make sensible Impressions, but with many they wear off presently: While they see God's Works and feel the Benefit of them, they fear him and trust in him; but they soon forget his Works, and then they slight him: How well were it for us if we were always in as good a Frame as we are in sometimes!

CHAP. XV.

In this Chapter, 1. Israel looks back upon Egypt with a Song of Praise for their Deliverance. Here's, (1.) The Song it self, v. 1-19. (2.) The solemn singing of it, v. 20, 21. 2. Israel marches forward in the Wilderness, v. 22, and there, 1. Their Discontent at the Waters of Marah, v. 23, 24. and the Relief granted them, v. 25, 26. 2. Their Satisfaction in the Waters of Elim, v. 27.

Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. 2 The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my fathers God, and I will exalt him. 3 The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name. 4 Pharaohs chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red sea. 5 The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone. 6 Thy right hand, O LORD, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O LORD, hath dashed in pieces the enemy. 7 And in the greatness of thine excellency thou hast overthrown them that rose up against thee: thou sentest forth thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble. 8 And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together: the floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea. 9 The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil: my lust shall be satisfied upon them, I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them. 10 Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters. 11 Who is like unto thee, O LORD, amongst the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? 12 Thou stretchedst out thy right hand, the earth swallowed them. 13 Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation. 14 The people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestine. 15 Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed, the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them, all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. 16 Fear and dread shall fall upon them, by the greatness of thine arm they shall be as still as a stone: till thy people pass over, O LORD, till the people pass over,

which thou hast purchased. 17 Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O LORD, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in: in the Sanctuary, O LORD, which thy hands have established. 18 The LORD shall reign for ever and ever. 19 For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots, and with his horsemen into the sea, and the LORD brought again the waters of the sea upon them; but the children of Israel went on dry-land in the midst of the sea. 20 And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her, with timbrels, and with dances. 21 And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

Having read how that compleat Victory of Israel over the Egyptians was obtain'd, here we are told how it was celebrated; they that were to hold their Peace while the Deliverance was in working, chap. 14. 14. must not hold their Peace now it was wrought; the less they had to do then, the more they had to do now; if God accomplish Deliverance by his own immediate Power, it redounds so much the more to his Glory. Moses, no doubt, by Divine Inspiration, indited this Song, and delivered it to the Children of Israel, to be sung before they stirr'd from the Place, where they saw the Egyptians dead upon the Shore. Observe, 1. They expressed their Joy in God, and Thankfulness to him by Singing; 'tis almost natural to us thus to give vent to our Joy, and the Exultations of our Spirit. By this instance it appears that the Singing of Psalms, as an Act of Religious Worship, was used in the Church of Christ, before the giving of the Ceremonial Law, therefore no part of it, nor abolish'd with it; Singing is as much the Language of Holy Joy, as Praying is of Holy Desire. 2. Moses that had gone before them through the Sea, goes before them in the Song, and composeth it for them. Note, Those that are active in publick Services, should not be neuters in publick Praises. 3. Then when the Mercy was fresh, and they were much affected with it, then they sang this Song. Note, When we have received special Mercy from God, we ought to be quick and speedy in our returns of Praise to him, before Time, and the Deceitfulness of our own Hearts, lose the good Impressions that have been made. David sang his Triumphant Song in the Day that the Lord delivered him, 2 Sam. 22. 1. *Bis dat, qui cito dat.* 4. Then when they believed the Lord, ch. 14. 1. then they sang this Song: 'Twas a Song of Faith; this Connexion is observed, Ps. 106. 12. *Then believed they his Words, they sang Praise: If with the Heart Man believes, thus Confession must be made.*

Here's, 1. The Song it self: And it is, (1.) An ancient Song, the most ancient that we know of. (2.) A most admirable Composure, the Style lofty and magnificent, the Images lively and proper, and the whole very moving. (3.) 'Tis a Holy Song consecrated to the Honour of God, and intended to exalt his Name, and celebrate his Praise, and his only, not in the least to magnifie any Man: Holiness to the Lord is engraven on it, and to him they made melody in the singing of it. (4.) 'Tis a typical Song. The Triumphs of the Gospel Church in the downfall of its Enemies, are expressed in the Song of Moses, and the Song of the Lamb put together, and 'tis said to be sung upon a Sea of Glass, as this was upon the Red Sea, Rev. 15. 2, 3.

Let us observe what Moses chiefly aims at in this Song.

1. He gives Glory to God, and triumphs in him; this is first in his Intention, v. 1. *I will sing unto the Lord.* Note, All our Joy must terminate in God, and all our Praises be offered up to him, the Father of Lights and Father of Mercies, for he hath triumphed. Note, All that Love God triumph in his Triumphs; what is his Honour, should be our Joy. Israel rejoiceth in God, (v. 2.) (1.) as their own God, and therefore their Strength, Song and Salvation: Happy therefore the people whose God is the Lord, they need no more to make them Happy, they have Work to do, Temptations to grapple with, and Afflictions to bear, and are weak in themselves, but he strengthens them, his Grace is their Strength. They are not in Sorrow upon many Accounts, but in him they have Comfort; he is their Song. Sin and Death and Hell threaten them, but he is and will be their Salvation: See Isa. 12. 2. (2.) as their Father's God. This they take notice of, because being conscious to themselves of their own Unworthi-

nels

ness and Provocations, they had Reason to think that what God had now done for them was for their Father's sake, Deut. 4. 37. Note, The Children of the Covenant ought to improve their Father's Relation to God as their God, both for Comfort and Caution and Quickning. (3.) As a God of infinite Power, v. 5. *The Lord is a Man of War*, i. e. well able to deal with all those that strive with their Maker, and will certainly be too hard for them. (4.) As a God of matchless and incomparable Perfection, v. 11. *Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the Gods?* This is pure Praise, and a high Expression of humble Adoration. 'Tis (1.) a Challenge to all other Gods to compare with him: Let them stand forth and pretend their utmost, none of them dare make the Comparison. Egypt was notorious for the Multitude of its Gods, but the God of the Hebrews was too hard for them and baffled them all, Num. 33. 4. Deut. 32. 33. The Princes and Potentates of the World are called Gods, but they are feeble and mortal, none of them all comparable to Jehovah, the Almighty and Eternal God. (2.) 'Tis a Confession of his Infinite Perfection as transcendent and unparallel'd. Note, God is to be worshipped and adored as a Being of such infinite Perfection that there's none like him, nor any to be compared with him; as one that in all Things hath and must have the Preheminence, Ps. 89. 8. More particularly, 1. He is *Glorious in Holiness*; his Holiness is his Glory. 'Tis that Attribute which Angels adore, Isa. 6. 3. His Holiness appeared in the Destruction of Pharaoh, his Hatred of Sin, and his Wrath against obstinate Sinners: It appeared in the Deliverance of Israel, his Delight in the Holy Seed, and his Faithfulness to his own Promise. God is rich in Mercy, that's his Treasure, glorious in Holiness, that's his Honour. Let us always give Thanks as the Remembrance of his Holiness. 2. He is *fearful in Praises*; that which is the Matter of our Praise, tho' it be joyful to the Servants of God, is dreadful and very terrible to his Enemies, Ps. 66. 1, 2, 3. Or it directs us in the Manner of our praising God, with an humble holy Awe, *serve the Lord with Fear*; even our spiritual Joy and Triumph must be balanced with a religious Fear. 3. He is *doing Wonders*, wondrous to all, being above the Power and out of the common Course of Nature; especially wondrous to us, in whose Favours they were wrought, who are so unworthy that we had little Reason to expect them: They were Wonders of Power, and Wonders of Grace, in both God was to be humbly ador'd.

2. He describes the Deliverance they were now triumphing in, because the Song was intended not only to express and excite their Thankfulness for the present, but to preserve and perpetuate the Remembrance of this Work of Wonder to after-Ages. Two Things were to be taken Notice of,

(1.) The Destruction of the Enemy, the Waters were divided, v. 8. *the Floods stood upright as an heap*, Pharaoh and all his Hosts were buried in the Waters, *the Horse and his Rider* could not escape, v. 1. *the Chariots*, and the chosen Captains, v. 4. They themselves went into the Sea, and there they were overwhelmed, v. 19. *The Depths, the Sea covered them*, and the proud Waters went over the proud Sinners, they sank like a Stone, like Lead, (v. 5, 10.) under the Weight of their own Guilt, and God's Wrath. Their Sin had made them hard like a Stone, and now they justly sink like a Stone. Nay, *the Earth it self swallowed them*, v. 12. their dead Bodies sunk into the Sands upon which they were thrown up, which suck'd them in. Those whom the Creator fights against, the whole Creation is at War with.

All this was the Lord's doing, and his only. 'Twas an Act of his Power, *thy right Hand, O Lord*, not ours, *has dashed in pieces the Enemy*, v. 6. 'Twas with the blast of thy Nostrils, v. 8. and thy Wind, v. 10. and the stretching out of thy right Hand, v. 12. 'Twas an Instance of his transcendent Power, v. 7. in the Greatness of his Excellence, and 'twas the Execution of his Justice, *thou sentest forth thy Wrath*, v. 7. And that which made this Destruction of the Egyptians the more remarkable, was their Pride and Insolence, and strange Assurance of Success, v. 9. *The Enemy said, I will pursue*. Here's, (1.) great Confidence, when they pursue, they do not question but to overcome; and when they overtake, they do not question but to overcome, to obtain to clear a victory as to divide the Spoil. Note, 'Tis common for Men to be most elevated with the Hopes of Success then when they are upon the Brink of Ruin, which makes their Ruin so much the sorer: See Isa. 37. 24, 25. (2.) Great Cruelty, nothing but killing and slaying and destroying, and this will satisfy his Lust, and a barbarous Lust that is which so much Blood must be the Satisfaction of. Note, 'Tis a cruel Hatred with which the Church is hated; its Enemies are bloody Men. This is taken Notice of here to show, 1. That God resists the Proud, and delights to humble those that lift up themselves; He that saith, *I will*, and *I will*, whether God will or no, shall be made to know that wherein he dares proudly God is above him. 2. That those that thirst for Blood shall have enough of it. They that love to be destroying shall be destroy'd, for we know who hath said, *Vengeance is mine, I will repay*.

(2.) The Protection and Conduct of Israel, v. 13. *Thou in*

thy Mercy hast led forth the People, led them forth out of the Bondage of Egypt, led them forth out of the Perils of the Red Sea, v. 19. But the Children of Israel went on dry Land. Note, The Destruction of the Wicked serves for a Foil to set off the Salvation of Israel; and to make it the more illustrious, Isa. 61. 13.

4. He sets himself to improve this wonderful Appearance of God for them. 1. For their Quickning to serve God, in Consideration of this, (v. 2.) *I will prepare him a Habitation*: God having preserved them, and prepared a Covert for them, under which they had been safe and easie, they resolve to spare no Cost or Pains for the erecting of a Tabernacle to his Honour, and there they will exalt him, and mention to his Praise the Honour he had got upon Pharaoh. God had now exalted them, making them great and high, and therefore they will exalt him, by speaking him great and high. Note, Our constant Endeavour should be by praising his Name and serving his Interests to exalt God, and it is an Advancement to us to be so employ'd. 2. For their Encouragement to trust in God; so confident is this Psalmist of the happy Issue of the Salvation which was so gloriously begun, that he looks upon it as an Effect finish'd already, v. 13. *Thou hast guided them to thy holy Habitation*. Thou hast thus put them into the Way to it, and wilt in due Time bring them to the End of that Way, for God's Work is perfect, or, *thou hast guided them to attend thy Holy Habitation* in Heaven with their Praises. Note, Those whom God takes under his Conduct he will guide to his Holy Habitation, in Faith now, and in Fruition shortly.

Two Ways this great Deliverance was encouraging.

1. It was such an Instance of God's Power as would terrifie their Enemies, and quite dishearten them, v. 14, 15, 16. The very Tidings of the Overthrow of the Egyptians would be more than half the Overthrow of all their other Enemies; 'twould sink their Spirits, and that would go far towards the sinking of their Powers and Interests; the Philistines, Moabites, Edomites and Canaanites (with each of which Nations Israel was to grapple) would be alarm'd by it, would be quite dispirited, and would conclude 'twas in vain to fight against Israel when a God of such Power fought for them. It had this Effect, the Edomites were afraid of them, Deut. 2. 4. so were the Moabites, Num. 22. 3. and the Canaanites, Josh. 2. 9, 10—5. 1. Thus God sent his Fear before them, Exod. 23. 27. and cut off the Spirit of Princes.

2. It was such a Beginning of God's Favour to them, as gave them an earnest of the Perfection of his Kindness. This was but in Order to something further, v. 17. *Thou shalt bring them in*: If he thus bring them out of Egypt, notwithstanding their Unworthiness, and the Difficulties that lay in the Way of their Escape, doubtless he will bring them into Canaan, for has he begun, so begun, and will he not make an End? Note, Our Experiences of God's Power and Favour should be improved for the Support of our Expectations; *thou hast*, therefore not only thou can'st, but we trust thou wilt, is good arguing. Observe, *Thou wilt plant them in the Place which thou hast made for them to dwell in*. Note, It's good dwelling where God dwells, in his Church on Earth, Ps. 27. 4. in his Church in Heaven, John 17. 24. where he saith, *This is my Rest for ever*, we should say, let it be ours.

Lastly, The great Ground of the Encouragement which they draw from this Work of Wonder is, v. 18. *The Lord shall reign for ever and ever*. They had now seen an End of Pharaoh's Reign, but Time it self shall not put a Period to Jehovah's Reign, which, like himself, is Eternal, and not subject to change. Note, It is the unspeakable Comfort of all God's Faithful Subjects, not only that he doth reign universally, and with an uncontrollable Sovereignty, but that he will reign eternally, and there shall be no End of his Dominion.

2. The solemn singing of this Song, v. 20, 21. *Miriam* (or *Mary*, 'tis the same Name) presided in an Assembly of the Women, who (according to the Softness of their Sex, and the common Usage of those Times for expressing Joy) with *Timbrils and Dances*, sung this Song. Moses led the Psalm, and gave it out for the Men, and then *Miriam* for the Women: Famous Victories were wont to be applauded by the Daughters of Israel, 1 Sam. 18. 6, 7. so was this, when God brought Israel out of Egypt, it is said, Mic. 6. 4. he sent before them *Moses, Aaron and Miriam*, tho' we read not of any thing remarkable that *Miriam* did but this. But those are to be reckon'd great Blessings to a People, that assist them and go before them in praising God.

22 So Moses brought Israel from the Red sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur: and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water. 23 And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. 24 And the people murmured

murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? 25 And he cried unto the LORD, and the LORD shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them, 26 And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes; I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee. 27 And they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm-trees: and they encamped there by the waters.

It should seem it was with some Difficulty that Moses prevailed with Israel to leave that *Triumphant Shore*, on which they sang the foregoing Song. They were so taken up either with the Sight, or with the Song, or with the spoiling of the Dead Bodies, that they cared not to go forward; but Moses with much ado brought them from the Red Sea, into a Wilderness: The Pleasures of our Way to Canaan must not retard our Progress but quicken it, though we have a Wilderness before us. Now here we are told, 1. That in the Wilderness of Shur, they had no Water, v. 22. This was a sore Trial to the young Travellers, and an Allay to their Joy; thus God would train them up to Difficulties: David in a dry and thirsty Land, where no Water is, reaches forth towards God, Ps. 63. 1.

2. That at Marah, they had Water, but it was bitter, so that tho' they had been three Days without Water they could not drink it, either because it was extremely unpleasant to the Taste, or was likely to be prejudicial to their Health, or was so brackish that it rather increased their Thirst than quenched it, v. 13. Note, God can imbitter that to us which we promise our selves most Satisfaction from, and often doth so in the Wilderness of this World, that our Wants and Disappointments in the Creature may drive us to the Creator, in whose Favour alone true Comfort is to be had. Now in this Distress, (1.) The People fretted and quarrelled with Moses as if he had done ill by them; what shall we drink is all their Clamour, v. 24. Note, The greatest Joys and Hopes are soon turned into the greatest Grievances and Fears with them that live by Sense only, and not by Faith. (2.) Moses pray'd, v. 25. he cried unto the Lord. The Complaints which they brought to him, he brought to God, on whom notwithstanding his Elevation he own'd a constant Dependence. Note, It is the greatest Relief of the Cares of Magistrates and Ministers, when those under their Charge make them uneasy, that they may have Recourse to God by Prayer; he is the Guide of the Church's Guides, and to the chief Shepherd, the under Shepherds must upon all Occasions apply themselves. (3.) God provided graciously for them; he directed Moses to a Tree which he cast into the Waters, and all of a sudden they were made sweet: Some think this Wood had a peculiar Virtue in it for this Purpose, because 'tis said God shewed him the Tree; God is to be acknowledg'd not only in the creating of Things useful for Man, but in discovering their Usefulness. Or perhaps this was only a Sign, and not at all a Means of the Cure, no more than the brazen Serpent, or Elisha's casting one Cruse full of Salt into the Waters of Jericho. Some make this Tree typical of the Cross of Christ, which sweetens the bitter Water of Affliction to all the Faithful, and enables them to rejoice in Tribulation. The Jews Tradition is, that the Wood of this Tree was it self bitter, yet it sweeten'd the Waters of Marah; the Bitterness of Christ's Sufferings and Death alters the Property of ours. (4.) Upon this Occasion God came upon Terms with them, and plainly told them now they were got clear of the Egyptians, and were entred into the Wilderness, they were upon their good Behaviour, and according as they carried themselves, so it would be well or ill with him; there he made a Statute and an Ordinance, and settled Matters with them, there he proved them, i. e. there he put them upon the Trial, admitted them as Probationers for his Favour. In short, he tells them, v. 26. 1. what he expected from them, and that was in one Word Obedience. They must diligently hearken to his Voice, and give ear to his Commandments, that they might know their Duty, and not transgress through Ignorance; and they must take Care in every Thing to do that which was right in God's Sight, and to keep all his Statutes. They must not think, that now they were delivered from their Bondage in Egypt, they had no Lord over them, but were their own Masters, no, therefore they must look upon themselves as God's Servants, because he had

loosed their Bonds, Psal. 116. 16, Luke 1. 74, 75. 2. What they might then expect from him, I will put none of these Diseases upon thee, i. e. I will not bring upon thee any of the Plagues of Egypt. This intimates that if they were rebellious and disobedient, the very Plagues which they had seen inflicted upon their Enemies should be brought upon them; so it is threaten'd, Deut. 28. 60. God's Judgments upon Egypt, as they were Mercies to Israel, opening the Way to their Deliverance, so they were Warnings to Israel, and designed to awe them into Obedience: Let not the Israelites think that because God had thus highly honoured them in the great Things he had done for them, and proclaimed them to all the World his Favourites, that therefore he would connive at their Sins, and let them do as they would: No; God is no Respector of Persons; a rebellious Israelite shall fare no better than a rebellious Egyptian; and so they found to their Cost before they got to Canaan. But if thou wilt be Obedient, thou shalt be safe and happy; the Threatning is implied only, but the Promise is express'd, I am the Lord that healeth thee, and will take Care of thy Comfort where-ever thou goest. Note, God is the great Physician. If we be kept well, 'tis he that keeps us; if we be made well, 'tis he that recovers us; he is our Life, and the Length of our days.

3. That at Elim they had good Water and enough of it, v. 27. Tho' God may for a Time order his People to encamp by the Waters of Marah, yet that shall not always be their Lot. See how changeable our Condition is in this World, from better to worse, from worse to better; let us therefore learn both how to be abased and how to abound, to rejoice as tho' we rejoiced not when we are full, and to weep as tho' we wept not when we are emptied. Here was for their Supply twelve Wells, one for every Tribe, that they might not strive for Water, as their Fathers had sometimes done; and for their Pleasure seventy Palm-trees, under the Shadow of which their great Men might repose themselves. Note, God can find Places of Refreshment for his People even in the Wilderness of this World, Wells in the Valley of Baca, lest they should faint in their Mind with a perpetual Fatigue; yet whatever our Delights may be in the Land of our Pilgrimage, we must remember that we do but encamp by them for a Time, but here we have no continuing City.

CHAP. XVI.

This Chapter gives an Account of the Viſtualling of the Camp of Israel. 1. Their Complaint for Want of Bread, v. 1-3. 2. The Notice God gave them before-hand of the Provision he intended to make for them, v. 4-12. 3. The sending of the Manna, v. 13-15. 4. The Laws and Orders concerning the Manna. 1. That they should gather it daily for their daily Bread, v. 16-21. 2. That they should gather a double Portion on the sixth day, v. 22-26. 3. That they should expect none on the seventh day, v. 27-31. 4. That they should preserve a Pot of it for a Memorial, v. 32.

AND they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month, after their departing out of the land of Egypt. 2 And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. 3 And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had dyed by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh-pots, and when we did eat bread to the full: for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger. 4 Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no. 5 And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day, they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily. 6 And Moses and Aaron said unto all the children of Israel, At even, then ye shall know that the LORD hath brought you out from the land of Egypt. 7 And in the morning then ye shall see the glory of the LORD; for that he heareth your murmurings against the LORD:

LORD: And what *are* we, that ye murmur against us? 8 And Moses said, *This shall be* when the LORD shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that the LORD heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against him: And what *are* we? your murmurings *are* not against us, but against the LORD. 9 And Moses spake unto Aaron, Say unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, Come near before the LORD: for he hath heard your murmurings. 10 And it came to pass as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud. 11 And the LORD spake unto Moses saying, 12 I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel; speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread: and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God.

A Month's Provision it seems the Host of Israel took along with them out of Egypt, when they came thence on the 15th Day of the first Month, which by the 15th day of the second Month was all spent; and here we have,

1. Their Discontent and Murmuring upon that Occasion, v. 2, 3. The whole Congregation, the greatest Part of them, joyn'd in this Mutiny; 'twas not immediately against God that they murmur'd, but (which was equivalent) against Moses and Aaron, God's Vicegerents among them. (1.) They count upon being killed in the Wilderness; nothing less at the first Word. If the Lord had been pleas'd to kill them, he could easily have done that in the Red Sea; but then he preserv'd them, and now could as easily provide for them. It argues great Distrust of God and of his Power and Goodness, in every Distress and Appearance of Danger to despair of Life, and to talk of nothing but being killed presently. (2.) They invidiously charge Moses with a Design to starve them when he brought them out of Egypt, whereas what he had done was both by Order from God, and with a Desire of their Welfare. Note, It is no new Thing for the greatest Kindnesses to be misinterpreted, and safely represented as the greatest Injuries. The worst Colours are sometimes put upon the best Actions. Nay, (3.) They so far undervalue their Deliverance that they wish they had dy'd in Egypt, nay, and dy'd by the Hand of the Lord too, i. e. by some of the Plagues which cut off the Egyptians, as if it were not the Hand of the Lord but of Moses only that brought them into this hungry Wilderness. 'Tis common for People to say of that Pain or Sickness or Sore which they see not second Causes of, 'Tis what pleaseth God, as if that were not so likewise which comes by the Hand of Man, or some visible Accident. Prodigious Madnes! They will rather dye by the Flesh-pots of Egypt where they were at their own finding, than live under the Conduct of the heavenly Pillar in a Wilderness and be at God's findings: They wish to have fallen in the Destruction of God's Enemies, rather than to bear the fatherly Discipline of his Children. We cannot suppose they had any great Plenty in Egypt, how largely soever they now talk of the *Flesh-pots*, nor could they fear dying for Want in the Wilderness while they had their Flocks and Herds with them, but Discontent magnifies what's past, and vilifies what's present without Regard to Truth or Reason. None talk more absurdly than Murmurers. Their Impatience, Ingratitude and Distrust of God was so much the worse, in that they had lately received such miraculous Favours, and convincing Proofs, both that God could help them in the greatest Exigencies, and that really he had Mercy in store for them; See how soon they forget his Works, and provoked him at the Sea, even at the Red Sea, Pl. 106. 7. 13. Note, Experiences of God's Mercies greatly aggravate our Distrusts and Murmurings.

2. The Care God graciously took for their Supply; justly he might have said, I will rain Fire and Brimstone upon these Murmurers, and consume them, but quite contrary he promiseth to rain Bread upon them. Observe,

1. How God makes known to Moses his kind Intentions, that he might not be uneasy at their Murmurings, nor be tempted to wish he had let them alone in Egypt. (1.) He takes Notice of the People's Complaints, v. 12. I have heard the Murmurings of the Children of Israel. As a God of Pity he took Cognizance of their Necessity, which was the Occasion of their Murmuring; as a just and holy God he took Cognizance of their base and unworthy Reflections upon his Servant Moses, and was much displeased with them. Note, When we begin to fret and be uneasy, we ought to consider, that God hears all our Murmurings, tho' silent, and only the Murmurings of the Heart.

Princes, Parents, Masters do not hear all the Murmurs of their Inferiors against them, and 'tis well they do not, for perhaps they could not bear it, but God hears, and yet bears. We must not think that because God doth not presently take Vengeance on Men for their Sins, that therefore he doth not take Notice of them, no, he hear the Murmurings of Israel, and is grieved with this Generation, and yet continues his Care of them, as the tender Parent of the froward Child. (2.) He promiseth them a speedy, sufficient and constant Supply, v. 4. Man being made out of the Earth, his Maker has wisely ordered him Food out of the Earth, Pl. 104. 14. But the People of Israel typifying the Church of the First-born that are written in Heaven, and born from above, and being themselves immediately under the Conduct and Government of Heaven, receiving their Charters, Laws and Commissions from Heaven, from Heaven also they received their Food: Their Law being given by the disposition of Angels, they did also eat Angels Food. See what God designed in making this Provision for them, that I may prove them whether they will walk in my Law or no. 1. Thus he tried whether they would trust him, and walk in the Law of Faith or no; whether they could live from Hand to Mouth, and (tho' now uneasy because their Provisions were spent) could rest satisfied with no more but the Bread of the Day in its Day, and depend upon God for fresh Supplies to Morrow. 2. Thus he tried whether they would serve him, and be ever Faithful to so good a Master that provided so well for his Servants; and hereby he made it appear to all the World in the Issue, what an ungrateful People they were, whom nothing could oblige. Let favour be shewed to them, yet will they not learn Righteousness, Isa. 26. 10.

2. How Moses made known these Intentions to Israel as God ordered him; here Aaron was his Prophet, as he had been to Pharaoh; Moses directed Aaron what to speak to the Congregation of Israel, v. 4. and some think while Aaron was giving publick Summons to the Congregation to come near before the Lord, Moses retired to pray, and the Appearance of the Glory of the Lord, v. 10. was an Answer to his Prayer. They are called to come near, as Isa. 1. 18. come and let us reason together. Note, God condescends to give even Murmurers a fair hearing; and shall we then despise the Cause of our Inferiors when they contend with us? Job 31. 13.

(1.) He convinceth them of the Evil of their Murmurings; they thought they reflected only upon Moses and Aaron, but here they are told that God was struck at through their Sides. This is much insisted on, v. 7, 8. your murmurings are not against us, then we would have been silent, but against the Lord; 'twas he that led you into these Straits, and not we. Note, When we murmur against those who are Instruments of any Unpleasantness to us, whether justly or unjustly, we would do well to consider how much we reflect upon God by it; Men are but God's Hand. They that quarrel with the Reproofs and Convictions of the Word, and are angry at their Ministers, when they are touched in a tender Part, know not what they do, for therein they strive with their Maker. Let this for ever stop the Mouth of Murmuring, that 'tis daring Impiety to murmur at God, because he is God; and gross Absurdity to murmur at Men, because they are but Men.

(2.) He assures them of the Supply of their Wants; that since they had harp'd upon the *Flesh-pots* so much, they should for once have Flesh in Abundance that Evening, and Bread next Morning, and so every Day from thenceforward, v. 8, 12. Many there are of whom we say, that they are better fed than taught, but Israel was thus fed that they might be taught, he led him about, he instructed him, Deut. 32. 10. and as to this Instance see Deut. 8. 3. He fed thee with Manna, that thou mightest know that Man doth not live by Bread only. And besides that, here are two Things mentioned which he intended to teach them by sending them Manna. (1.) By this ye shall know that the Lord hath brought you out from the Land of Egypt, v. 6. That they were brought out of Egypt was plain enough, but so strangely sottish and short-sighted were they that they said 'twas Moses brought them out, v. 3. Now God sent them Manna to prove that it was no less than an Infinite Power and Goodness that brought them out, which could perfect what was begun. If Moses only had brought them out of Egypt, he could not thus have fed them, they must therefore own that was the Lord's doing because this was so, and both were marvellous in their Eyes, yet long after they had need to be told that Moses gave them not this Bread from Heaven, John 6. 32. (2.) By this ye shall know that I am the Lord your God, v. 12. This gave Proof of his Power as the Lord, and his particular Favour to them as their God, when God plagued the Egyptians 'twas to make them know that he is the Lord, when he provided for the Israelites, 'twas to make them know that he was their God.

(3.) How God himself manifested his Glory, to still the Murmurings of the People, and to put a Reputation upon Moses and Aaron, v. 10. While Aaron was speaking the Glory of the Lord appeared in the Cloud. The Cloud it self, one would think, was enough both to strike an Awe upon them,

them, and to give Encouragement to them, yet in a few Days that was grown so familiar to them that it made no Impression upon them, unless it shone with an unusual Brightness. *Note*, What God's Ministers say to us is then likely to do us good, when the Glory of God shines in with it upon our Souls.

13 And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the host. 14 And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground. 15 And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat. 16 This is the thing which the LORD hath commanded, Gather of it every man according to his eating; an omer for every man, according to the number of your persons, take ye every man for them which are in his tents. 17 And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less. 18 And when they did mete it with an omer, he that gathered much, had nothing over, and he that gathered little, had no lack: they gathered every man according to his eating. 19 And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning. 20 Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses, but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms and stank: And Moses was wroth with them. 21 And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating: and when the sun waxed hot, it melted.

Now they begin to be immediately at God's finding.

1. He makes them a Feast over Night of delicate Fowl, *feather'd Fowl*, Pl. 78. 27. therefore not *Locusts*, as some think, Quails, or Pheasants; or some wild Fowl came up, and covered the Camp, so tame that they might take up as many of them as they pleased. *Note*, God gives us of the good Things of this Life, not only for Necessity, but for Delight, that we may not only serve him, but serve him cheerfully.

2. Next Morning he rained Manna upon them, which was to be continued to them for their daily Bread.

1. That which was provided for them was Manna, which descended from the Clouds, so that in some Sense they might be said to live upon the Air. It came down in Dew that melted, and yet was it self of such a Consistency as to serve for nourishing strengthening Food, without any Thing else: They called it Manna, *Man-hu*, what is this? Either what a poor Thing is this? despising it: Or, what a strange Thing is this? admiring it: Or, It is a Portion, no Matter what it is, 'tis that which our God has allotted us, and we will take it and be thankful. v. 14, 15. 'Twas pleasant Food; the Jews say, 'twas palatable to all, according as their Gust and Relish was. 'Twas wholesome Food, light of Digestion, and very necessary (Dr. Grew saith) to cleanse them from the Egyptian Mange (or Itch) with which he thinks it probable they were in the Time of their Bondage more or less infected, which a luxurious Diet would have made contagious. By this spare and plain Diet we are all taught a Lesson of Temperance, and forbidden to desire Dainties and Varieties.

2. They were to gather it every Morning, v. 16. the Portion of a day in his day, v. 4. Thus they must live upon daily Providence as the Fowls of the Air, of whom it is said, that thou givest them they gather, Pl. 104. 28. not to day for to-morrow, let the morrow take thought for the things of it self: To this daily raining and gathering of Manna our Saviour seems to allude when he teaches us to pray, Give us this day our daily Bread. We are hereby taught, 1. Prudence and Diligence in providing Food convenient for our selves and our Households; what God graciously gives we must industriously gather, with Quietness work and eat our own Bread, not the Bread either of Idleness or Deceit. God's Bounty leaves room for Man's Duty, it did so even when Manna was rain'd; they must not eat till they have gathered. 2. Contentment and Satisfaction with a Sufficiency; they must gather every Man according to his eating, enough is as good as a Feast, and more than enough is as bad as a Surfeit. They that have most have for

themselves but Food and Raiment and Mirth, and they that have least generally have that or may have, so that he who gathers much has nothing over, and he who gathers little has no lack. There is not to great a Disproportion between one and another in the Comfort and Enjoyment of the Things of this Life, as there is in the Property and Possession of the Things themselves. 3. Dependence upon Providence, let no Man leave till Morning, v. 19. but let them learn to go to Bed and sleep quietly, tho' they had not a Bit of Bread in their Tent, nor in all their Camp, trusting God with the following Day to bring them their daily Bread. 'Twas surer and safer in God's Store-house than in their own, and would thence come to them sweeter and fresher; read with this Mat. 6. 25. Take no Thought for your Life, &c. See here the Folly of hoarding: The Manna that was laid up by some who thought themselves wiser and better Husbands than their Neighbours, and would provide in Case it should fail next Day, putrified and bred Worms, and became good for nothing. *Note*, That proves to be most wasted which is covetously and distrustfully spar'd. Those Riches are corrupted, Jam. 5. 2, 3. Let us set our selves to think, (1.) of that great Power of God which fed Israel in the Wilderness, and made Miracles their daily Bread: What cannot this God do, who prepared a Table in the Wilderness, and furnished it richly even for those who questioned whether he could or no? Psal. 78. 12. 20. Never was there such a Market of Provisions as this, where so many hundred thousand Men were daily furnished without Money, and without Price. Never was there such an open House kept as God kept in the Wilderness for 40 Years together, nor such free and plentiful Entertainment given. The Feast which Ahasuerus made to shew the Riches of his Kingdom, and the Honour of his Majesty was nothing to this, Esther 1. 4. It is said, v. 21. when the Sun waxed hot it melted, as if what was left were drawn up by the heat of the Sun into the Air to be the Seed of the next Day's Harvest, and so from day to day. (2.) Of that constant Providence of God which gives Food to all Flesh, for his Mercy endures for ever, Pl. 136. 25. He is a great House-keeper that provides for all the Creatures. The same Wisdom, Power and Goodness that now brought Food daily out of the Clouds, doth in the constant Course of Nature bring Food yearly out of the Earth, and gives us all things richly to enjoy.

22 And it came to pass that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. 23 And he said unto them, This is that which the LORD hath said, To-morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD: bake that which ye will bake, to day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over, lay up for you to be kept until the morning. 24 And they laid it up until the morning as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein. 25 And Moses said, Eat that to day; for to day is a sabbath unto the LORD: to day ye shall not find it in the field. 26 Six days ye shall gather it, but on the seventh day which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none. 27 And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. 28 And the LORD said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? 29 See, for that the LORD hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days: abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. 30 So the people rested on the seventh day. 31 And the house of Israel called the name thereof Manna: And it was like coriander-seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey.

Here's, 1. A plain Intimation of the observing of a Seventh-day Sabbath, not only before the giving of the Law upon Mount Sinai, but before the bringing of Israel out of Egypt, and therefore from the beginning, Gen. 2. 3. If the Sabbath had now been first instituted, how could Moses have understood what God said to him, v. 4. concerning a double Portion to be gathered on the sixth Day without making any express mention of the Sabbath; And how could the People so readily take the Hint, v. 22. even to the Surprise of the Rulers,

lers, before *Moses* had declared that it was done with regard to the Sabbath, if they had not had some knowledge of the Sabbath before? The setting apart of one Day in seven for Holy Work, and in order to that for Holy Rest, was a Divine Appointment ever since God created Man upon the Earth, and the most ancient of positive Laws: The way of Sabbath-Sanctification is the good old way.

The double Provision which God made for the *Israelites*, and which they were to make for themselves on the sixth day; God gave them on the sixth day the Bread of two days, ver. 24. appointing them to rest on the seventh day; he took care they should be no Losers by it, and none ever will be Losers by serving God: and on that day they were to fetch in enough for two days, and to prepare it, v. 23. The Law was very strict, that they must bake and seeth the day before, and not on the Sabbath-day. This doth not now make it unlawful for us to dress Meat on the Lord's-day, but directs us to contrive our Family-Affairs so, as that they may be least our hindrance in the work of the Sabbath. Works of necessity, no doubt, are to be done on that day, but 'tis desirable to have as little as may be to do of things necessary to the Life that now is, that we may apply ourselves the more closely to the one thing needful. That which they kept for their Food on the Sabbath-day did not putrefy, v. 24. when they kept it against a Command, v. 20. it stank, when they kept it in obedience to a Command, it was sweet and good, for every thing is sanctified by the Word of God and Prayer.

3. The Intermission of the Manna on the seventh day; then God did not send it, and therefore they must not expect it, nor go out to gather, v. 26, 27. This shewed that it did not proceed from natural Causes, and that it was designed for a Confirmation of the Divine Authority of the Law which was to be given for *Moses*. Thus God took an effectual course to make them remember the Sabbath-day, they could not forget it, nor the day of Preparation for it. Some (it seems) went out on the seventh day, expecting to find Manna, v. 27. but they found none; for those that will find, must seek in the appointed time: Seek the Lord while he may be found. God, upon this occasion, said to *Moses*, How long refuse ye to keep my Commandments? v. 28. Why did he say this to *Moses*? he was not disobedient: No, but he was the Ruler of a disobedient People, and God chargeth it upon him, that he might the more warmly charge it upon them, and might take care that their Disobedience should not be through any neglect or default of his. 'Twas for going out to seek for Manna on the seventh day that they were thus reprov'd. Note 1. Disobedience, even in a small matter, is very provoking. 2. God is jealous for the Honour of his Sabbaths. If walking out to seek for Food on the Sabbath were thus reprov'd, walking out purely to find our own pleasure on that day cannot be justified.

32 And *Moses* said, This is the thing which the LORD commandeth, Fill an omer of it to be kept for your generations; that they may see the bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt. 33 And *Moses* said unto *Aaron*, Take a pot, and put an omer full of Manna therein, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations. 34 As the LORD commanded *Moses*, so *Aaron* laid it up before the testimony, to be kept. 35 And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan. 36 Now an omer is the tenth part of an ephah.

God having provided Manna to be his People's Food in the Wilderness, and to be to them a continual Feast; we are here told, 1. How the Memory of it was preserved; an Omer of this Manna was laid up in a golden Pot, as we are told, *Heb.* 9. 4. and kept before the Testimony, or the Ark, when it was afterwards made, v. 32, 33. The Preservation of this Manna from Waste and Corruption was a standing Miracle, and therefore the more proper Memorial of this miraculous Food. Posterity shall see the Bread (saith God) wherewith I have fed you in the Wilderness, see what sort of Food it was, and how much each Man's daily Proportion of it was, that it might appear they were neither kept to hard Eare, nor to short Allowance; and then judge, between God and Israel, whether they had any cause given them to murmur and find fault with their Commons, and whether they, and their Seed after them, had not a great deal of reason, with thankfulness, to own God's Goodness to them. Note, Eaten Bread must not be forgotten; God's Miracles and Mercies are to be had in everlasting remembrance, for our encouragement to trust in him at all times.

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2. How the Mercy of it was continued, as long as they had occasion for it. The Manna never ceased till they came to the Borders of Canaan, where there was Bread enough and to spare, v. 35. See how constant the Care of Providence is; Seed-time and Harvest fail not while the Earth remains. Israel was very provoking in the Wilderness, yet the Manna never failed them: Thus still God causeth his Rain to fall on the Just and Unjust.

The Manna is called *Spiritual Meat*, 1 Cor. 10. 3. because it was typical of Spiritual Blessings in Heavenly things; Christ himself is the true Manna, the Bread of Life, of which that was a Figure, *John* 6. 49, 50, 51. The Word of God is the Manna by which our Souls are nourished, *Mat.* 4. 4. The Comforts of the Spirit are hidden Manna, *Rev.* 2. 17. These come from Heaven as the Manna did, are the Support and Comfort of the Divine Life in the Soul, while we are in the Wilderness of this World; 'tis Food for *Israelites*, for those only that follow the Pillar of Cloud and Fire; 'tis to be gathered, Christ in the Word is to be applied to the Soul, and the means of Grace used; we must every one of us gather for our selves, and gather in the morning of our days, the morning or our Opportunities, which, if we let slip, it may be too late to gather. The Manna they gathered must not be hoarded up, but eaten; they that have received Christ, must, by Faith, live upon him, and not receive his Grace in vain: There was Manna enough for all, enough for each; and none had too much; so in Christ there is a complete Sufficiency, and no Superfluity. But they that did eat Manna hungered again, died at last, and with many of them God was not well pleased; whereas they that feed on Christ by Faith, shall never hunger, and shall die no more, and with them God will be for ever well-pleased. The Lord evermore give us this Bread!

C H A P. XVII.

Two Passages of Story are recorded in this Chapter.

1. The watering of the Host of Israel. (1.) In the Wilderness they wanted Water, v. 1. (2.) In their want they chide with *Moses*, v. 2, 3. (3.) *Moses* cried to God, v. 4. (4.) God ordered him to smite the Rock, and fetch Water out of that, and he did so, v. 5, 6. (5.) The Place named from it, v. 7.
2. The defeating of the Host of Amalek. (1.) The Victory obtained by the Prayer of *Moses*, v. 8-12. (2.) By the Sword of *Joshua*, v. 13. (3.) A Record kept of it, v. 14, 16. And these things, which happened to them for Examples, are written for our Instruction, in our Spiritual Journey and Warfare.

AND all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the LORD, and pitched in Rephidim; and there was no water for the people to drink. 2 Wherefore the people did chide with *Moses*, and said, Give us water, that we may drink. And *Moses* said unto them, Why chide you with me? wherefore do ye tempt the LORD? 3 And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against *Moses*, and said, wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children, and our cattel with thirst? 4 And *Moses* cried unto the LORD, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me. 5 And the LORD said unto *Moses*, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go. 6 Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb, and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And *Moses* did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. 7 And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD among us, or not?

Here's, 1. The strait that the Children of Israel were in for want of Water; once before they were in the like Distress, and now a second time, v. 1. they journeyed according to the Commandment of the Lord, led by the Pillar of Cloud and Fire, and yet they came to a Place where there was no Water for them to drink. Note, We may be in the way of our Duty, and yet

Yet may meet with Troubles, which Providence brings us into for the trial of our Faith, and that God may be glorified in our Relief.

2. Their Discontent and Distrust in this strait: 'Tis said, *v. 3. they thirsted there for Water*: If they had no Water to drink, they must needs thirst; but this intimates not only that they wanted Water, and felt the inconvenience of that want, but that their Passion sharpened their Appetite, and they were violent and impatient in their desire; their Thirst made them outrageous. Natural Desires, and those that are most craving, have need to be kept under the check and conduct of Religion and Reason.

See what was the Language of this inordinate Desire.

1. They challenged Moses to supply them, *ver. 2. Give us Water that we may drink*; demanding it as a Debt, and strongly suspecting that he was not able to discharge it. Because they were supplied with Bread, they insist upon it that they must be supplied with Water too; and indeed to those that by Faith and Prayer live a life of dependance upon God, one Favour is an Earnest of another, and may be humbly pleaded; but the Unthankful and Unbelieving have reason to think, that the abuse of former Favours is the forfeiture of further Favours, *Let not them think that they shall receive any thing*, Jam. 1. 7. yet they are ready to demand every thing.

2. They quarrelled with him for bringing them out of Egypt, as if, instead of delivering them, he designed to murder them, than which nothing could be more base and invidious. *v. 3. Many that have not only designed well, but done well for their Generations, have had their best Services thus misconstrued, and their patience thereby tried by unthinking unthankful People.* To such a degree their Malice against Moses rose, that they were almost ready to stone him, *ver. 4. Many good Works he had shewed them*, and for which of these would they stone him? *John 10. 32. Ungoverned Passions, provoked by the crossing of unbridled Appetites, sometimes make Men guilty of the greatest Absurdities, and do like Madmen, that cast Firebrands, Arrows, and Death among their best Friends.*

3. They began to question whether God were with them or no, *v. 7. they tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us or not? Is Jehovah among us by that Name by which he made himself known to us in Egypt*: They question his essential Presence, whether there be a God or no? His common Providence, whether that God govern the World? And his special Promise, whether he would be as good as his word to them? This is called their tempting God, which signifies not only a Distrust of God in general, but a Distrust of him after they had received such Experiments of his Power and Goodness, for the Confirmation of his Promise: They do in effect suppose that Moses was an Impostor, Aaron a Deceiver; the Pillar of Cloud and Fire a mere Sham and Illusion, which imposed upon their Senses; that long Series of Miracles which had rescued them, saved them, and fed them, a Chain of Cheats; and the Promise of Canaan, a bait set upon them: 'twas all so, if the Lord were not among them. Note, 'Tis a great Provocation to God for us to question his Presence, Providence, or Promise, especially for his Israel to do it; who are so much obliged to trust him.

3. The Course that Moses took when he was thus set upon and insulted. (1.) He reproveth the Murmurers, *v. 2. Why chide you with me?* Observe how mildly he answered them; 'twas well he was a Man of invincible Meekness, else their tumultuous Carriage would have lost him the possession of his own Soul. 'Tis folly to answer Passion with Passion, for that makes ill worse, but *soft Answers turn away Wrath*: He shew'd them whom their Murmurings reflected upon, and that the Reproaches they cast on him fell on God himself, *ye tempt the Lord*; i. e. by distrusting his Power you try his Patience, and so provoke his Wrath. (2.) He made his Complaint to God, *v. 4. Moses cried unto the Lord*: This Servant came and shewed his Lord all these things; Luke 14. 21. When Men unjustly censure us, and quarrel with us, 'twill be a great ease to us to go to God, and by Prayer lay the Case before him, and leave it with him: If Men will not hear us, God will; if their ill Carriage towards us ruffle our Spirits, God's Consolations will compose them. Moses begs of God to direct him *what he should do*, for he was utterly at a loss; he could not of himself either supply their Want, or pacify their Tumult, God only could do it. He pleads his own peril, they be almost ready to stone me, Lord, if thou hast any regard to the Life of thy poor Servant, interpose now.

4. God's gracious Appearance for their Relief, *v. 5, 6. He orders Moses to go before the People, and venture himself in his Post, tho' they spoke of stoning him.* He must take his Rod with him, not (as God might justly have ordered) to summon some Plague or other to chastise them for their Distrust and Murmuring, but to fetch Water for their Supply. O the wonderful Patience and Forbearance of God towards provoking Sinners! He loads those with Benefits that make him

to serve with their Sins, maintains those that are at war with him, and reaches out the Hand of his Bounty to those that lift up the Heel against him. Thus he teacheth us, if our Enemy hunger, to feed him; and if he thirst, as Israel did now, to give him Drink, Rom. 12. 20. Mat. 5. 45. Will he fail those that trust him, when he was so liberal even to those that tempted him? If God had only shewed Moses a Fountain of Water in the Wilderness, as he did to Hagar, not far from hence, *Gen. 21. 19.* that had been a great Favour, but that he might shew his Power as well as his Pity, and make it a Miracle of Mercy, he gave them Water out of a Rock. He directed Moses whither to go, appointed him to take of the Elders of Israel with him, to be Witnesses of what was done, that they might themselves be satisfied, and might satisfy others of the certainty of God's Presence with them; he promised to meet him there in the Cloud of Glory, to encourage him, ordered him to smite the Rock, which he did, and immediately Water came out of it in great abundance, which ran throughout the Camp in Streams and Rivers, *Psal. 78. 15, 16.* and followed them where-ever they went in that Wilderness: 'Tis called a Fountain of Water, *Psal. 114. 8.* God shewed his care of his People, in giving them Water when they wanted it: His own Power in fetching it out of a Rock; and put an Honour upon Moses, in appointing the Water to flow out upon his smiting of the Rock. This fair Water, that came out of the Rock, is called Honey and Oil, *Deut. 32. 13.* because the People's Thirst made it doubly pleasant; coming when they were in extreme want, it was like Honey and Oil to them. 'Tis probable the People digged Canals for the conveyance of it, and Pools for the reception of it, as long after passing through the Valley of Baca, they made it a Well, *Psal. 84. 6. Numb. 21. 18.* Let this direct us to live in a dependance, (1.) upon God's Providence, even in the greatest Straits and Difficulties, God can open Fountains for our Supply there where we least expect them, *Waters in the Wilderness*, *Ila. 43. 20.* because he makes a way in the Wilderness, *v. 19.* Those who in this Wilderness keep to God's way, may trust him to provide for them; while we follow the Pillar of Cloud and Fire, surely Goodness and Mercy shall follow us, like the Water out of the Rock. (2.) Upon Christ's Grace, that Rock was Christ, *1 Cor. 10. 4.* The Graces and Comforts of the Spirit are compared to Rivers of living Water, *John 7. 38, 39.* — 4. 14. These flow from Christ, who is the Rock, smitten by the Law of Moses, for he was made under the Law. Nothing will supply the Needs, and satisfy the Desires of a Soul, but Water out of this Rock, this Fountain opened. The Pleasures of Sense are Puddle-Water, spiritual Delights are Rock-Water, so pure, so clear, so refreshing Rivers of Pleasure.

5. A new Name was, upon this occasion, given to the Place, preserving the Remembrance, not of the Mercy of their Supply, the Water that followed them was sufficient to do that, but of the Sin of their Murmuring; *Massah, Temptation*, because they tempted God; *Meribah, Strife*, because they chid with Moses, *v. 7.* There was thus a Remembrance kept of Sin, both for the Disgrace of the Sinners themselves; Sin leaves a blot upon the Name: And for warning of their Seed to take heed of sinning, after the similitude of their Transgression.

8 Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. 9 And Moses said unto Joshua, Chuse us out Men, and go out, fight with Amalek: tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill, with the rod of God in mine hand. 10 So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek; and Moses, Aaron, and Hur, went up to the top of the hill. 11 And it came to pass when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. 12 But Moses's hands were heavy, and they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat thereon: and Aaron and Hur staid up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. 13 And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. 14 And the LORD said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua; for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. 15 And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it JEHOVAH-nissi. 16 For he said, Because the LORD hath sworn, that the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.

We have here the Story of the War with *Amalek*, which we may suppose was the first that was recorded in the *Book of the Wars of the Lord*, Numb. 21. 14. *Amalek was the first of the Nations that Israel fought with*, Numb. 24. 20. Observe, 1. *Amalek's Attempt*; they came out, and fought with Israel, v. 8. The *Amalekites* were the Posterity of *Esau*, who hated *Jacob* because of the Birthright and Blessing, and this was an Effort of the hereditary Enmity; a Malice that run in the Blood, and perhaps was now exasperated by the working of the Promise towards an Accomplishment. Consider this, (1.) As *Israel's Affliction*; they had been quarrelling with *Moses*, v. 2. and now God sends *Amalekites* to quarrel with them: Wars abroad are the just Punishment of Strifes and Discontents at home. (2.) As *Amalek's Sin*; so it is reckon'd, Deut. 25. 17, 18. They did not boldly front them, as a generous Enemy, but without any provocation given by *Israel*, or challenge given to them, basely fell upon their Rear, and smote them that were faint and feeble, and could make neither resistance, nor escape: Herein they bid defiance to that Power, which had so lately ruined the *Egyptians*; but in vain did they attack a Camp, guarded and victualled by Miracles: verily they knew not what they did. 2. *Israel's Engagement with Amalek*, in their own necessary Defence against the Aggressors: and there,

1. The Post assigned to *Joshua*, of whom this is the first mention: He is nominated Commander in chief in this Expedition, that he might be trained up to the Services he was designed for after the Death of *Moses*, and be a Man of War from his Youth. He is ordered to draw out a Detachment of choice Men out of the Thousands of *Israel*, and to drive back the *Amalekites*, v. 9. When the *Egyptians* pursued them, *Israel* must stand still, and see what God would do; but now 'twas required that they should bestir themselves. Note, God is to be trusted in the Use of Means.

2. The Post assumed by *Moses*, v. 9. *I will stand on the top of the Hill, with the Rod of God in my hand*: See how God qualifies his People for, and calls them to various Services for the Good of his Church; *Joshua* fights, *Moses* prays, and both minister to *Israel*. *Moses* went up to the top of the Hill, and placed himself probably so as to be seen by *Israel*; and there he held up the Rod of God in his hand, that Wonder-working Rod, which had summon'd the Plagues of *Egypt*, and under which *Israel* passed out of the House of Bondage. This Rod *Moses* held up, (1.) To *Israel*, to animate them; the Rod was held up as the Banner, to encourage the Soldiers, who might look up and say, Yonder's the Rod, and yonder the Hand that used it, when such glorious things were wrought for us. Note, It tends much to the Encouragement of Faith, to reflect upon the great things God has done for us, and review the Monuments of his Favour.

(2.) To God, by way of Appeal to him; is not the Battle the Lord's? is not he able to help, and engaged to help? Witness this Rod, the Voice of which thus held up, was that, Isa. 51. 9, 10. *Put on Strength, O Arm of the Lord, art not thou it that hath cut Rahab?* *Moses* was not only a Standard-bearer, but an Intercessor, pleading with God for Success and Victory. Note, When the Host goes forth against the Enemy, earnest Prayers should be made to the God of Hosts, for his Presence with them. 'Tis here the praying Legion that proves the thundering Legion. There in *Salem*, in *Sion* where Prayers were made, there the Victory was won, there brake he the Arrows of the Bow, Psal. 76. 2, 3.

Observe, (1.) How *Moses* was tired, v. 12. *His hands were heavy*; the strongest Arm will fail with being long extended, 'tis God only, whose hand is stretched out still. We do not find that *Joshua's* hands were heavy in fighting, but *Moses's* hands were heavy in praying; the more spiritual any Service is, the more apt we are apt to fail and flag in it: Praying Work, if done with due Intention of Mind, and Vigour of Affection, will be found hard Work; and tho' the Spirit be willing to it, the Flesh will be weak. Our great Intercessor in Heaven fainteth not, neither is weary, tho' he attends continually to this very thing.

(2.) What influence the Rod of *Moses* had upon the Battle, v. 11. When *Moses* held up his hand in Prayer, (so the *Chaldee* explains it) *Israel* prevailed; but when he let down his hand from Prayer, *Amalek* prevailed. To convince *Israel* that the hand of *Moses* (with whom they had just now been chiding) contributed more to their Safety than their own hands, his Rod than their Sword; the Success rises and falls, as *Moses* lifts up, or lets down his hand. It seems the Scale wavered for some time before it turned on *Israel's* side; even the best Cause must expect Disappointments, as an Allay to its Successes: tho' the Battle be the Lord's, *Amalek* may prevail for a time, the reason was, *Moses* let down his hand. Note, The

Church's Cause is ordinarily more or less successful, according as the Church's Friends are more or less strong in Faith, and fervent in Prayer.

(3.) The Care that was taken for the Support of *Moses*. When he could not stand any longer, he sat down, not in a Chair of Stone, but upon a Stone; (v. 12.) when he could not hold up his hands, he would have them held up: *Moses*, the Man of God, is glad of the Assistance of *Aaron* his Brother, and *Hur*, who some think was his Brother-in-law, the Husband of *Miriam*. We should not be shy either of asking Help from others, or giving Help to others; for we are Members one of another. *Moses's* hands, thus stayed, were steady till the going down of the Sun, and tho' it was with much ado that he held out, yet his willing Mind was accepted. No doubt it was a great Encouragement to the People to see *Joshua* before them in the Field of Battle, and *Moses* above them, upon the top of the Hill: Christ is both to us; our *Joshua*, the Captain of our Salvation, that fights our Battles; and our *Moses*, who in the upper World ever lives, making Intercession, that our Faith fail not. 3. The Defeat of *Amalek*. Victory had hovered a while between the Camps, sometimes *Israel* prevailed, and sometimes *Amalek*; but *Israel* carried the day, v. 13. Tho' *Joshua* fought upon great Disadvantages, his Soldiers undisciplined, ill armed, long enured to Servitude, and apt to murmur; yet by them God wrought a great Salvation, and made *Amalek* pay dear for their Insolence. Note, Weapons formed against God's *Israel* cannot prosper long, and shall be broke at last. The Cause of God and his *Israel* will be victorious. Tho' God gave the Victory, yet it is said *Joshua* discomfited *Amalek*; because *Joshua* was a Type of Christ, and of the same Name, and in him it is that we are more than Conquerors. 'Twas his Arm alone that spoiled Principalities and Powers, and routed all their Force.

4. The Trophies of this Victory set up.

1. *Moses* took care that God should have the Glory of it, v. 15; instead of setting up a triumphal Arch to the honour of *Joshua* (tho' it had been Policy enough to put Marks of Honour upon him) he builds an Altar to the Honour of God; and we may suppose it was not an Altar without Sacrifice, but that which is most carefully recorded, is the Inscription upon the Altar, *Jehovah-Nissi, the Lord is my Banner*; which properly refers to the lifting up of the Rod of God as a Banner in this Action. The Presence and Power of *Jehovah* was the Banner under which they were lifted, by which they were animated and kept together, and therefore which they erected in the Day of their Triumph. In the Name of our God we must always lift up our Banners, Psal. 20. 5. 'Tis fit he that doth all the Work, should have all the Praise.

2. God took care that Posterity should have the Comfort and Benefit of it. Write this for a Memorial, not in loose Papers, but in a Book, write it, and then rehearse it in the Ears of *Joshua*; let him be entrusted with this Memorial, to transmit it to the Generations to come. *Moses* must now begin to keep a Diary or Journal of Occurrences, and 'tis the first mention of Writing we find in Scripture; (and perhaps the Command was not given till after the Writing of the Law upon the Tables of Stone) write it in perpetuum rei memoriam, that which is written remaineth.

(1.) Write what had been done, what *Amalek* had done against *Israel*, write in Gall their bitter Hatred, write in Blood their cruel Attempts, let them never be forgotten. Nor yet what God had done for *Israel*, in saving them from *Amalek*. Let Ages to come know that God fighteth for his People, and he that toucheth them, toucheth the Apple of his Eye.

(2.) Write what should be done: 1. That in Process of Time *Amalek* should be totally ruined, and rooted out, v. 14. that it should be remembered only in History. *Amalek* would have cut off the Name of *Israel*, that that might be no more in remembrance, Psal. 33. 4, 7. and therefore God not only disappoints them in that, but cuts off their Name. Write it for the Encouragement of *Israel*, whenever the *Amalekites* are an Annoyance to them, that *Israel* will at last undoubtedly triumph in the Fall of *Amalek*. This Sentence was executed in part by *Saul*, 1 Sam. 15. and completely by *David*, Ch. 30. 2 Sam. 1. 1—3, 12. and after his time, we never read so much as of the Name of *Amalek*. 2. That in the mean time God would have a continual Controversy with them, v. 16. *Because their hand is against the Throne of the Lord*, i. e. against the Camp of *Israel*, in which the Lord ruled, which was the Place of his Sanctuary, and is therefore called a glorious high Throne from the beginning, Jer. 17. 12. therefore the Lord will have war with *Amalek* from Generation to Generation. This was written for Direction to *Israel* never to make any League with the *Amalekites*, but to look upon them as irreconcilable Enemies, doomed to Ruin. *Amalek's* Destruction was typical of the Destruction of all the Enemies of Christ and his Kingdom. Whoever makes war with the Lamb, the Lamb will overcome them.

C H A P. XVIII.

This Chapter is concerning Moses himself, and the Affairs of his own Family. 1. Jethro, his Father-in-law, brings him his Wife and Children, v. 1—6. 2. Moses entertains his Father-in-law with great Respect, v. 7. with good Discourse, v. 8—11. with a Sacrifice and a Feast, v. 12. 3. Jethro adviseth him about the Management of his Business, as a Judge in Israel, to take pious Judges to his Assistance, v. 13—23. and Moses, after some time, takes his Counsel, v. 24—26. and so they part, v. 27.

WHEN Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Moses, and for Israel his people, and that the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt: 2 Then Jethro, Moses father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses wife, after he had sent her back. 3 And her two sons, of which the name of the one was Gershom (for he said, I have been an alien in a strange land) 4 And the name of the other was Eliezer, (for the God of my father, said he, was mine help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh. 5 And Jethro, Moses father-in-law, came with his sons and his Wife unto Moses in the wilderness, where he encamped at the mount of God. 6 And he said unto Moses, I thy father-in-law Jethro am come unto thee, and thy wife, and her two sons with her.

This Passage may very well be allowed to happen as it is placed here, before the giving of the Law, and not as some place it, at Num. 10. 11. Sacrifices were offered before; in these here mentioned, v. 12. 'tis observable that Jethro is said to take them, not Aaron. And as to Jethro's advising Moses to constitute Judges under him, tho' 'tis intimated, v. 13. that the Occasion of his giving that Advice was *on the morrow*; yet it doth not follow but that Moses's settling of that Affair might be some time after, when the Law was given, as 'tis placed, Deut. 1. 9. 'Tis plain Jethro himself would not have him make this Alteration in the Government, till he had received Instructions from God about it, v. 23. which he did not till some time after.

Jethro comes, 1. To congratulate the Happiness of Israel, and particularly the Honour of Moses, his Son-in-law; and now Jethro thanks himself well paid for all the Kindness he had shewed to Moses in his Distress, and his Daughter better matched than he could have expected. Jethro could not but hear what all the Country rang of, the glorious Appearances of God for his People Israel, v. 1. and he comes to enquire, and inform himself more fully thereof, see Ps. 111. 2. and to rejoice with them, as one that had a true Respect both for them and for their God. Tho' he, as a Midianite, was not to share with them in the promised Land, yet he shared with them in the Day of their Deliverance. We may thus make others Comforts our own, by taking pleasure, as God doth, in the Prosperity of the Righteous. 2. To bring Moses's Wife and Children to him. It seems he had sent them back, probably from the Inn, where his Wife's Loathsomeness, to have her Son circumcised, had like to have cost him his Life, Chap. 4. 25. fearing lest they should be further his hindrance, he sent them home to his Father-in-law: He foresaw what Discouragements he was likely to meet with in the Court of Pharaoh, and therefore would not take any with him in his own Family. He was of that Tribe, that said to his Father, I have not known him, when Service was to be done for God, Deut. 33. 9. Thus Christ's Disciples, when they were to go upon an Expedition, not much unlike that of Moses, were to forsake Wife and Children, Mat. 19. 29. But tho' there might be a Reason for the Separation that was between Moses and his Wife for a time, yet they must come together again, as soon as ever they could with any Convenience. 'Tis the Law of the Relation, *Ye Husbands dwell with your Wives*, 1 Pet. 3. 7. Jethro, we may suppose, was glad of his Daughter's Company, and fond of her Children, yet he would not keep her from her Husband, nor them from their Father, v. 3, 6. Moses must have his Family with him, that while he ruled the Church of God, he might set a good Example of Prudence in Family-Government, 1 Tim. 3. 4. Moses had now a great deal, both of Honour and Care, put upon him; and it was fit his Wife should be with him, to share with him in both.

Notice is taken of the significant Names of his two Sons, 1. The eldest was called Gershom, v. 3. A Stranger, designating thereby not only a Memorial of his own Condition, but a Memorandum to his Son of his, for we are all Strangers upon

Earth, as all our Fathers were. Moses had a great Uncle almost of the same Name, Gershom, a Stranger; for tho' he was born in Canaan, Gen. 46. 11. yet even there the Patriarchs confessed themselves Strangers.

2. The other he called Eliezer, v. 4. My God a Help, as we translate it; it looks back to his Deliverance from Pharaoh, when he made his escape from the slaying of the Egyptian: but if this were (as some think) the Son that was circumcised in the Inn as he was going, I would rather translate it, so as to look forward, which the Original will bear, *The Lord is mine Help, and will deliver me from the Sword of Pharaoh*; which he had reason to expect would be drawn against him, when he was going to fetch Israel out of Bondage. Note, When we are undertaking any difficult Service for God and our Generation, 'tis good for us to encourage ourselves in God as our Help: He that hath delivered, doth and will.

7 And Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, and did obeisance, and kissed him, and they asked each other of their welfare: and they came into the tent. 8 And Moses told his father-in-law all that the LORD had done unto Pharaoh, and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, and all the travel that had come upon them by the way, and how the LORD delivered them. 9 And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the LORD had done to Israel: whom he had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians. 10 And Jethro said, Blessed be the LORD, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh, who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. 11 Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly, he was above them. 12 And Jethro, Moses father-in-law, took a burnt-offering and sacrifices for God: and Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses father-in-law before God.

Observe here, 1. The kind Greeting that was between Moses and his Father-in-law, v. 7. Tho' Moses was a Prophet of the Lord, a great Prophet, and King in Jeshurun, yet he shewed a very humble Respect to his Father-in-law. However God in his Providence is pleased to advance us, we must make Conscience of giving Honour to whom Honour is due, and never look with disdain upon our poor Relations. Those that stand high in the Favour of God, are not thereby discharged from the Duty they owe to Men; nor will that justify them in a stately haughty Carriage. Moses went out to meet Jethro, did obeisance to him, and kissed him. Religion doth not destroy Good-Manners. They asked each other of their Welfare; even the kind How-do-you's, that pass'd between them, are taken notice of, as the Expressions and Improvements of mutual Love and Friendship. 2. The Narrative that Moses gave his Father-in-law, of the great things God had done for Israel, v. 8. This was one thing Jethro came for, to know more fully and particularly what he had had the general Report of. Note, Talk of God's wondrous Works is profitable Talk; 'tis good, and to the use of edifying, Ps. 105. 2. compare Ps. 145. 11, 12. Asking and telling News, and discoursing of it, is not only an allowable Entertainment of Conversation, but is capable of being turned to a very good account, by taking notice of God's Providence, and the Operations and Tendencies of that in all Occurrences. 3. The Impressions this Narrative made upon Jethro: (1.) He congratulated God's Israel, v. 9. Jethro rejoiced; he not only rejoiced in the Honour done to his Son-in-law, but in all the Goodness done to Israel, v. 9. Note, Publick Blessings are the Joy of publick Spirits. While the Israelites were themselves murmuring, notwithstanding all God's Goodness to them, here was a Midianite rejoicing. This was not the only time that the Faith of Gentiles shamed the Unbelief of the Jews; see Mat. 8. 10. Standers-by were more affected with the Favours God had shewed to Israel, than they were that received them. (2.) He gave the Glory to Israel's God, v. 10. Blessed be Jehovah, (for by that Name he is now known) who hath delivered you, Moses and Aaron, out of the hand of Pharaoh; that tho' he designed your Death, he could not effect it, and by your Ministry has delivered the People. Note, Whatever we have the Joy of, God must have the Praise of.

(3.) His Faith was hereby confirmed, and he took this occasion to make a solemn Profession of it, v. 11. Now know I, that Jehovah is greater than all Gods. Observe, 1. The Matter of his Faith: That the God of Israel is greater than all Presiders, all false and counterfeit Deities, that usurp Divine Honours; he silenceth them, subdues them, and is too hard

for them all, and therefore is himself the only living and true God. He is also higher than all Princes and Potentates, who also are called Gods, and has both an uncontestable Authority over them, and an irresistible Power to controul and overrule them; he manageth them all as he pleaseth, and gets Honour upon them, how great soever they are. 2. The Confirmation and Improvement of his Faith. Now know I; he knew it before, but now he knew it better; his Faith grew up to a full Assurance upon this fresh Evidence. Those obstinately shut their Eyes against the clearest Light, who do not know, that the Lord is greater than all Gods. 3. The Ground and Reason upon which he built it; for wherein they dealt proudly, the Magicians and the Idols of Egypt they worshipped, or Pharaoh and his Grantees, they both opposed God, and set up in competition with him, but he was above them. The Magicians were baffled, the Idols shaken, Pharaoh humbled, his Powers broken, and in spite of all their Confederacies, God's Israel was rescued out of their hands. Note, Sooner or later, God will shew himself above those that, by their proud Dealings, contest with him. He that exalteth himself against God, shall be abased.

Lastly, The Expressions of their Joy and Thankfulness; they had Communion with each other, both in a Feast, and in a Sacrifice, v. 12. Jethro being hearty in Israel's Interests, was cheerfully admitted, tho' a Midianite, into Fellowship with Moses, and the Elders of Israel; forasmuch as he also is a Son of Abraham, tho' of a younger House.

1. They joined in a Sacrifice of Thanksgiving: Jethro took Burnt-Offerings for God, and probably offered them himself, for he was a Priest in Midian, and a Worshipper of the true God, and the Priesthood was not yet settled in Israel. Note, Mutual Friendship is sanctified by Joint-Worship. 'Tis a very good thing for Relations and Friends, when they come together, to join together in the Spiritual Sacrifices of Prayer and Praise, as those that meet in Christ, the Center of Unity.

2. They joined in a Feast of Rejoicing, a Feast upon the Sacrifice. Moses upon this occasion invited his Relations and Friends to an Entertainment in his own Tent, a laudable Usage among Friends, and which Christ himself not only warranted, but recommended by his Acceptance of such Invitations. This was a temperate Feast, they did eat Bread; this Bread, we may suppose, was Manna, Jethro must see and taste that Bread from Heaven: and tho' a Gentile is as welcome to it as any Israelite, the Gentiles still are so to Christ the Bread of Life. 'Twas a Feast kept after a godly sort, they did eat Bread before God, soberly, thankfully, in the Fear of God, and their Table-Talk such as became Saints. Thus we must eat and drink to the Glory of God, behaving ourselves at our Tables as those that believe God's Eye upon us.

13 And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses sate to judge the people: and the people stood by Moses, from the morning unto the evening. 14 And when Moses father-in-law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What is this thing that thou doest to the people? why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning unto even? 15 And Moses said unto his father-in-law, Because the people come unto me to enquire of God. 16 When they have a matter, they come unto me, and I judge between one and another, and I do make them know the statutes of God and his laws. 17 And Moses father-in-law said unto him, The thing that thou doest is not good. 18 Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: for this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone. 19 Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee: Be thou for the people to God-ward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God: 20 And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt shew them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do. 21 Moreover, thou shalt provide out of all the people, able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. 22 And let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge: So shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden

with thee. 23 If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall also go to their place in peace. 24 So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father-in-law, and did all that he had said. 25 And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. 26 And they judged the people at all seasons: the hard causes they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves. 27 And Moses let his father-in-law depart; and he went his way into his own land.

Here's, 1. The great Zeal and Industry of Moses, as a Magistrate. Having been employed to redeem Israel out of the House of Bondage, herein he is further a Type of Christ, that he is employed as a Lawgiver and a Judge among them.

(1.) He was to answer Enquiries, and acquaint them with the Will of God in doubtful Cases, and to explain the Laws of God that were already given them, concerning the Sabbath, the Manna, &c. besides the Laws of Nature, relating both to Piety and Equity, v. 15. They came to enquire of God, and happy it was for them, that they had such an Oracle to consult; we are ready to wish many a time we had some such certain way of knowing God's Mind, when we are at a loss what to do. Moses was faithful both to him that appointed him, and to them that consulted him, and made them know the Statutes of God, and his Laws, v. 16. His Business was not to make Laws, but to make known God's Laws; his Place was but that of a Servant.

(2.) He was to decide Controversies, and determine Matters in variance, judging between a Man and his Fellow, v. 16. And if the People were as quarrelsome one with another, as they were with God, no doubt he had a great many Causes brought before him; and the more, because their Trials put them to no expence, nor was the Law costly to them. When a Quarrel happened in Egypt, and Moses would have reconciled the Contenders, they asked, Who made thee a Prince and a Judge? But now it was past dispute, that God had made him one, and they humbly attend him, whom they had then proudly rejected.

This was the Business Moses was called to, and it appears that he did it, (1.) With great Consideration, which some think is intimated in his Posture, he sate to judge, v. 13. composed and sedate. (2.) With great Condescension to the People, who stood by him, v. 14. He was very easy of Access, the meanest Israelite was welcome himself to bring his Cause before him. (3.) With great Constancy and Closeness of Application. 1. Tho' Jethro, his Father-in-law, was with him, which might give him a good Pretence for a Vacation, he might have adjourned the Court for that Day, or at least have shortened it; yet he sits, even the next day after his coming, from Morning till Evening. Note, Necessary Business must always take place of civil Respects. 'Tis too great a Compliment to our Friends, to prefer the Enjoyment of their Company before our Duty to God, which ought to be done, and yet the other not left undone. 2. Tho' Moses was advanced to great Honour, yet he did not therefore sake his Ease, and throw upon others the Burden of Care and Business; no, he thought his Preferment, instead of discharging him from Service, obliged him to it. Those think of themselves above what is meet, that think it below them to do good. 'Tis the Honour even of Angels themselves to be servicable. 3. Tho' the People had been provoking to him, and were ready to stone him, Chap. 17. 4. yet still he made himself the Servant of all. Note, Tho' others fail in their Duty to us, yet we must not therefore neglect ours to them. 4. Tho' he was an old Man, yet he stuck to his Business from Morning till Night, and made it his Meat and Drink to do it. God had given him great Strength both of Body and Mind, which enabled him to go thro' a great deal of Work with ease and pleasure; and for the Encouragement of others to spend, and be spent in the Service of God, it proved, that after all his Labours, his natural Force was not abated. They that waited on the Lord and his Service, shall renew their Strength.

2. The great Prudence and Consideration of Jethro as a Friend. (1.) He disliked the Method that Moses took, and was so free with him, as to tell him so, v. 14, 17, 18. He thought it was too much Business for Moses to undertake himself alone, that it would be a Prejudice to his own Health, and too great a Fatigue to him. 'Twould likewise make the Administration of Justice tiresome to the People. And therefore he tells him plainly, It is not good. Note, There may be over-doing even in well-doing, and therefore our Zeal must always be governed by Discretion, that our Good may not be evil spoken of. Wisdom is profitable so direct, that we may neither content ourselves

elves with less than our Duty, nor over-task our selves with that which is beyond our Strength. (2.) He advised him to such a Model of Government as would better answer the Intention; which was, 1. That he should reserve to himself all Applications to God, v. 19. *Be thou for them to God-ward*; that was an Honour, which it was not fit any other should share with him in, *Numb. 12, 6, 7, 8.* Also, whatever concerned the whole Congregation in general, must pass thro' his hand, v. 20. But, 2. That he should appoint Judges in the several Tribes and Families, which should try Causes between Man and Man, and determine them, which would be done with less noise, and more dispatch, than in the general Assembly, wherein Moses himself presided. Thus they must be governed as a Nation, by a King as supreme, and interior Magistrates, sent and commissioned by him, 1 *Pet. 2, 13, 14.* Thus many hands would make light Work; Causes would be sooner heard, and the People eased, by having Justice thus brought to their Tent-Doors. Yet, 3. An Appeal might lie, if there were just Cause for it, from these inferior Courts to Moses himself; at least if the Judges were themselves at a loss, v. 22. *every great Matter they shall bring unto thee.* Thus that great Man would be the more serviceable, by being employed only in great Matters. Note, Those, whose Gifts and Stations are most eminent, may yet be greatly furthered in their Work, by the Assistance of those that are every way their Inferiors, which therefore they should not despise. The Head hath need of the Hands and Feet, 1 *Cor. 12, 21.* Great Men should not only study to be useful themselves, but contrive how to make others useful; according as their Capacity is.

This is *Jethro's Advice*, by which it appears, that tho' Moses excelled him in Prophecy, he excelled Moses in Politicks. Yet he adds two Qualifications to his Counsel:

1. That great care should be taken in the Choice of the Persons who should be admitted into this Trust, v. 21. they must be able Men, &c. 'Twas requisite that they should be Men of the best Character. (1.) For Judgment and Resolution, able Men. Men of good Sense, that understood Business; and bold Men, that would not be daunted by Frowns or Clamours. Clear Heads and stout Hearts make good Judges. (2.) For Piety and Religion, such as fear God, who believe there is a God above them, whose Eye is upon them, to whom they are accountable, and whose Judgment they stand in awe of. Conscientious Men, that dare not do an ill thing, tho' they could do it ever so secretly and securely. The Fear of God is that Principle, which will best fortify a Man against all Temptations to Injustice, *Neb. 5, 15. Gen. 42, 18.* (3.) For Integrity and Honesty, Men of Truth, whose Word one may take, and whose Fidelity one may rely upon; that would not for a World tell a Lye, act a Part, or betray a Trust. (4.) For a noble and generous Contempt of worldly Wealth, *hating Covetousness*; not only not seeking Bribes, or aiming to enrich themselves, but abhorring the thought of it: He is fit to be a Magistrate, that despiseth the Gain of Oppression, and shaketh his Hands from the holding of Bribes; *Isa. 33, 15.*

2. That he should attend God's Direction in the Case, v. 23. *If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, Jethro knew that Moses had a better Counsellor than he was, and to his Counsel he refers him.* Note, Advices must be given with an humble Submission to the Word and Providence of God, which must always over-rule.

Now Moses did not despise this Advice, because it came from one not acquainted, as he was, with the Words of God, and the Visions of the Almighty, but hearkned to the Voice of his Father-in-law, v. 24. When he came to consider the thing, he saw the Reasonableness of what his Father-in-law offered, and resolved to put it in practice; which he did soon after, when he had received Directions from God in that matter. Note, Those are not so wise as they would be thought to be, who think themselves too wise to be counselled; for a wise Man, that is truly so, will hear and will increase Learning, and not slight good Counsel, tho' given by an Inferior. Moses did not leave the Election of the Magistrates to the People, who had already done enough to prove themselves unfit for such a Trust; but he chose them, and appointed them, some for greater, others for lesser Divisions: the lesser probably subordinate to the greater. We have reason to value Government as a very great Mercy, and to thank God for Laws and Magistrates, that we are not like the Fishes of the Sea, where the greater devour the lesser. Lastly, Here's *Jethro's Return* to his own Land, v. 27. No doubt he took home with him the Improvements he had made in the Knowledge of God, and communicated them to his Neighbours for their Instruction. 'Tis supposed that the *Kenites*, mentioned 1 *Sam. 15, 8.* were the Posterity of *Jethro*, (compare *Judg. 1, 16*) and they are there taken under special Protection, for the Kindness their Ancestors here shewed to Israel. The Good-will shewed to God's People, even in the smallest Instances, shall in no wise lose its Reward, but shall be recompensed at furthest in the Resurrection.

C H A P. XIX.

This Chapter introduceth the Solemnity of the giving of the Law upon Mount Sinai, which was one of the most sensible Appearances of the Divine Glory that ever was in this lower World. Here's, 1. The Circumstances of Time and Place, v. 1, 2. 2. The Covenant between God and Israel settled in general. The gracious Proposal God made to them, v. 3—6. And their Consent to the Proposal, v. 7, 8. 3. Notice given three days before of God's Design to give the Law out of a thick Cloud, v. 9. Orders given to prepare the People to receive the Law, v. 10—13. and care taken to execute these Orders, v. 14, 15. 4. A terrible Appearance of God's Glory upon Mount Sinai, 16—20. 5. Silence proclaimed, and strict Charge given to the People, to observe a Decorum while God spake to them, v. 20—25.

IN the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai, 2 For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness, and there Israel camped before the mount. 3 And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; 4 Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you an eagles wings, and brought you unto myself. 5 Now therefore if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine. 6 And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. 7 And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him. 8 And all the people answered together, and said, all that the LORD hath spoken, we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD.

Here's, 1. The Date of that great Charter, by which Israel was incorporated. (1.) The Time when it bears date, v. 1, in the third Month after they came out of Egypt. 'Tis computed, that the Law was given just fifty Days after their coming out of Egypt, in remembrance of which the Feast of Pentecost was observed the fiftieth Day after the Passover; and in compliance with which, the Spirit was poured out upon the Apostles at the Feast of the Pentecost, fifty Days after the Death of Christ. In Egypt they had spoken of three Days Journey into the Wilderness, to the Place of their Sacrificing, Chap. 5, 3. but it proved to be almost two Months Journey, so oft are we out in Calculation of Times, and things prove longer in the doing than we expected. (2.) The Place whence it bears date, from Mount Sinai; a Place which Nature, not Art, had made eminent and conspicuous, for it was the highest in all that Range of Mountains. Thus God put Contempt upon Cities, and Places, and magnificent Structures, setting up his Pavilion on the top of a high Mountain, in a waste and barren Desert, there to carry on this Treaty. 'Tis called Sinai, from the multitude of thorny Bushes that over-spread it.

2. The Charter itself, Moses was called up to the Mountain, on the top of which God had pitched his Tent, and at the foot of which Israel had pitched theirs, and was employed as the Mediator, or rather, no more but the Messenger of the Covenant, v. 3. Thus shalt thou say to the House of Jacob, and tell the Children of Israel. Here the learned Bishop Patrick notes, That the People are called by the Names both of Jacob and Israel, to mind them, that they who lately had been as low as Jacob, when he went to Padan-aram, were now grown as great as God made him, when he came from thence, (justly enriched with the Spoils of him that had oppressed him) and was called Israel.

Now observe, 1. That the Maker and first Mover of the Covenant, is God himself. Nothing was said or done by this stupid unthinking People themselves towards this Settlement; no Motion made, no Petition put up for God's Favour; but this blessed Charter was granted *ex mero motu*, purely out of God's own Good-will. Note, In all our Dealings with God, Free Grace prevents us with the Blessings of Goodness, and all our Comfort is owing not to our knowing God, but rather

to our being known of him, Gal. 4. 9. *we love him, visit him, and covenant with him, because he first loved us, visited us, and covenanted with us: God is the Alpha, and therefore must be the Omega.* 2. That the Matter of the Covenant is not only just and unexceptionable, and such as puts no hardship upon them; but kind and gracious, and such as gives them the greatest Privileges and Advantages imaginable.

1. He minds them of what he had done for them, v. 4. He had *righted* them, and *avenged* them upon their Persecutors and Oppressors; *ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians*, how many Lives were sacrificed to Israel's Honour and Interest, he had given them unparalleled Instances of his Favour to them, and his Care of them. *I bare you on Eagles Wings*, a high Expression of the wonderful Tenderness God had shewed for them; 'tis explained, *Deut. 32. 11, 12.* It notes great Speed, God not only came upon the wing for their Deliverance, when the set time was come, *he rode on a Cherub, and did fly*, but he hastened them out, as it were, upon the wing; also that he did it with great Ease, with the Strength, as well as with the Swiftmess of an Eagle. They that *faint not*, nor are weary, are said to *mount up with Wings as Eagles*, Isa. 40. 31. especially it notes God's particular Care of them and Affection to them. Even Egypt, that Iron Furnace, was the Nest in which these young ones were hatched, where they were first formed as the Embryo of a Nation; when, by the increase of their Numbers, they grew to some maturity, they were carried out of that Nest. Other Birds carry their Young in their Talons, but the Eagle (they say) upon her Wings; so that even those Artists, which *shoot flying*, cannot hurt the young ones, but they must first shoot thro' the old one. Thus in the Red-Sea, the Pillar of Cloud and Fire, the Token of God's Presence, interposed itself between the Israelites and their Pursuers, Lines of Defence which could not be forced, a Wall which could not be penetrated; yet this was not all: their Way so paved, so guarded, was glorious, but their End much more so, *I brought you unto myself.* They were brought not only into a State of Liberty and Honour, but into Covenant and Communion with God. This, this was the Glory of their Deliverance, as it is of ours by Christ, that he died, *the Just for the Unjust*, that he might bring us to God. This God aims at in all the gracious Methods of his Providence and Grace, to bring us back to himself, from whom we have revolted; and to bring us home to himself, in whom alone we can be happy. He appeals to themselves, and their own Observation and Experience, for the Truth of what is here insisted on? *Ye have seen what I did*; so that they could not disbelieve God, unless they would first disbelieve their own Eyes. They saw how all that was done was purely the Lord's doing: It was not that they reached towards God, but it was he that brought them to himself. Some have well observed, that the Old-Testament Church is said to be borne upon Eagles Wings, noting the power of that Dispensation, which was carried on with an high Hand and an out-stretched Arm; but the New Testament Church is said to be gathered by the Lord Jesus, as a Hen gathers her Chickens under her Wings, Mat. 23. 37. noting the Grace and Compassion of that Dispensation, and the admirable Condescension and Humiliation of the Redeemer.

2. He tells them plainly what he expected and required from them, in one word, Obedience, v. 5. that they should obey his Voice indeed, and keep his Covenant. Being thus saved by him, that which he insisted upon, was, that they should be ruled by him. The Reasonableness of this Demand is long after pleaded with them, that in the day he brought them out of the Land of Egypt, this was the Condition of the Covenant, Obey my Voice, Jer. 7. 23. and this he is said to protest earnestly to them, Jer. 11. 4, 7. Only obey indeed, not in Profession and Promise only, not in Pretence, but in Sincerity. God had shewed them real Favours, and therefore required real Obedience.

3. He assures them of the Honour he would put upon them, and the Kindness he would shew them, in case they did thus keep his Covenant, v. 6. *Then ye shall be a peculiar Treasure to me.* He doth not instance in any one particular Favour, as giving them the Land of Canaan, or the like; but expresseth it in that which was inclusive of all Happiness, that he would be to them a God in Covenant; and they should be to him a People. (1.) God here asserts his Sovereignty over, and Propriety in the whole visible Creation; *All the Earth is mine*: Therefore he needed them not; he that had so vast a Dominion, was great enough, and happy enough, without concerning himself for so small a Demesne as Israel was. All Nations of the Earth being his; he might chuse which he pleased for his peculiar; and act in a way of Sovereignty. (2.) He appropriates Israel to himself, 1. As a People dear unto him, you shall be a peculiar Treasure, not that God was enriched by them, as a Man is by his Treasure, but he was pleased to value and esteem them, as a Man doth his Treasure; they were precious in his sight, and honourable, Isa. 43. 4. he set his Love upon them; Deut. 7. 7. took them under his

special Care and Protection, as a Treasure that's kept under Lock and Key. He looked upon the rest of the World but as Trash and Lumber, in comparison with them. By giving them Divine Revelation, instituted Ordinances; Promises inclusive of eternal Life, sending his Prophets among them, and pouring out his Spirit upon them, he distinguished them from, and dignified them above all People. And this Honour have all the Saints, they are unto God a peculiar People, Tit. 2. 14. his when he makes up his Jewels. 2. As a People devoted to him, and to his Honour and Service, v. 6. a Kingdom of Priests, a Holy Nation. All the Israelites, if compared with other People, were Priests unto God, so near were they to him, Ps. 148. 14. so much employed in his immediate Service, and such intimate Communion they had with him. When they were first made a free People, 'twas that they might sacrifice to the Lord their God, as Priests; they were under God's immediate Government, and the Tendency of the Laws given them, was to distinguish them from others, and engage them for God, as a holy Nation. Thus all Believers are, thro' Christ, made to our God-Kings and Priests, Rev. 1. 6. a chosen Generation; a royal Priesthood, 1 Pet. 2. 9.

3. Israel's Acceptance of this Charter, and Consent to the Conditions of it. (1.) Moses faithfully delivered God's Message to them, v. 7. he laid before their faces all those Words; he not only explained to them what God had given him in charge, but he put it to their choice, whether they would accept these Promises upon these Terms or no. His laying it to their Faces, speaks his laying it to their Consciences. (2.) They readily agreed to the Covenant proposed. They would oblige themselves to obey the Voice of God, and take it as a great favour to be made a Kingdom of Priests to him. They answered together as one Man, *ne mine contradicente*, v. 8. *All that the Lord hath spoken we will do.* Thus they strike the Bargain, accepting the Lord to be to them a God, and giving up themselves to be to him a People. O that there had been such a Heart in them! (3.) Moses, as a Mediator, returned the Words of the People to God, v. 8. Thus Christ, the Mediator between us and God, as a Prophet, reveals God's Will to us, his Precepts and Promises; and then, as a Priest, offers up to God our spiritual Sacrifices, not only of Prayer and Praise, but of devout Affections, and pious Resolutions, the Work of his own Spirit in us. Thus he is that blessed Days-man, who lays his hand upon us both.

9 And the LORD said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever. And Moses told the words of the people unto the LORD. 10 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash their clothes, 11 And be ready the against the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people, upon mount Sinai. 12 And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to your selves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount, shall be surely put to death. 13 There shall not a hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount. 14 And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people, and they washed their clothes. 15 And he said unto the people, Be ready against the third day: and come not at your wives.

Here, 1. God signifies to Moses his Purpose of coming down upon Mount Sinai, in some visible Appearance of his Glory in a thick Cloud, v. 9. for he said he would dwell in the thick Darkness, 2 Chron. 6. 1. and make this his Pavilion, Ps. 18. 11. holding back the face of his Throne, then when he set it upon Mount Sinai, and spread a Cloud upon it, Job 26. 9. This thick Cloud was to prohibit curious Enquiries into things secret, and to command an awful Adoration of that of God, which was revealed. He would come down in the sight of all the People, v. 11. tho' they should see no manner of Similitude; yet they should see so much as would convince them, that God was among them of a truth. And so high was the top of Mount Sinai, that 'tis supposed not only the Camp of Israel, but even the Countries about might discern some extraordinary Appearance of Glory upon it, which would strike a Terror upon them. But that which seems to have been much designed in it, was to put an Honour upon Moses, who

that they may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever. Thus the Correspondence was to be first settled by a sensible Appearance of the Divine Glory, which was afterwards to be carried on more silently, by the Ministry of Moses. In like manner, the Holy Ghost descended visibly upon Christ at his Baptism, and all that were present heard God speak to him, *Mat. 3. 17.* that afterwards, without the Repetition of such visible Tokens, they might believe him. So likewise the Spirit descended in cloven Tongues upon the Apostles, *Acts 2. 1.* that they might be believed. Observe, When the People had declared themselves willing to obey the Voice of God, then God promised they should hear his Voice; for if any Man be resolved to do his Will, he shall know it, *John 7. 17.*

2. He ordered Moses to make preparation for this great Solemnity, giving him two days time for it.

(1.) He must sanctify the People, *v. 10.* as Job before this sent and sanctified his Sons, *Job 1. 5.* He must raise their Expectation, by giving them notice what God would do, and assist their Preparation, by directing them what they must do. Sanctify them, i. e. call them off from their worldly Business, and call them to religious Exercises, Meditation and Prayer, that they may receive the Law from God's Mouth with Reverence and Devotion: Let them be ready, *v. 11.* Note, When we are to attend upon God in solemn Ordinances, it concerns us to sanctify ourselves, and to get ready beforehand. Wandering Thoughts must be gathered in, impure Affections abandoned, disquieting Passions suppressed, nay, and all Cares about secular Business for the present dismissed and laid by, that our Hearts may be engaged to approach unto God. Two things particularly were prescribed, as Signs and Instances of their Preparation: 1. In token of their cleansing of themselves from all sinful Pollutions, that they might be holy to God, they must wash their Clothes, *v. 10.* and they did so, *v. 14.* not that God regards our Clothes, but while they were washing their Clothes, he would have them think of washing their Souls by Repentance, from the Sins they had contracted in Egypt, and since their Deliverance. It becomes us to appear in clean Clothes when we wait upon great Men, so clean Hearts are required in our Attendance on the great God, who sees them as plainly as Men see our Clothes. This is absolutely necessary to our acceptable worshipping of God. See *Pf. 26. 6. Isa. 1. 16, 18. Heb. 10. 22.* 2. In token of their devoting themselves entirely to their religious Exercises; upon this occasion they must abstain even from lawful Enjoyments during these three Days, and not come at their Wives, *v. 15.* See *1 Cor. 7. 5.*

(2.) He must set Bounds about the Mountain, *v. 12, 13.* Probably he drew a Line or Ditch round at the foot of the Hill, which none were to pass upon pain of Death. This was to intimate, 1. That humble and awful Reverence which ought to possess the Minds of all those that worship God. We are mean Creatures before a great Creator, vile Sinners before a holy righteous Judge; and therefore a godly Fear and Shame well becomes us, *Heb. 12. 28. Pf. 2. 11.* 2. The Distance which Worshippers were kept at under that Dispensation, which we ought to take notice of, that we may the more value our Privilege under the Gospel, having Boldness to enter into the Holiest by the Blood of Jesus, *Heb. 10. 19.*

(3.) He must order the People to attend, upon the Summons that should be given, *v. 13.* When the Trumpet soundeth long, then let them take their Places at the foot of the Mount, and so sit down at God's feet, as 'tis explained, *Deut. 33. 3.* Never was to great a Congregation called together, and preached to at once, as this was here. No one Man's Voice could have reached so many, but the Voice of God did.

16 And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp, trembled: 17 And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the nether part of the mount. 18 And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. 19 And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. 20 And the LORD came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the LORD called Moses up to the top of the mount, and Moses went up. 21 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the LORD

to gaze, and many of them perish. 22 And let the priests also, which come near unto the LORD, sanctify themselves, lest the LORD break forth upon them. 23 And Moses said unto the LORD, The people cannot come up to mount Sinai: for thou chargedst us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it. 24 And the LORD said unto him, Away, get thee down, and thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron with thee: but let not the priests and the people break through, to come up unto the LORD, lest he break forth upon them. 25 So Moses went down unto the people, and spake unto them.

Now at length is come that memorable Day, that terrible Day of the Lord, that little Day of Judgment, in which Israel heard the Voice of the Lord God, speaking to them out of the midst of the Fire, and lived, *Deut. 4. 33.* Never was there such a Sermon preached before or since, as this which was here preached to the Church in the Wilderness. For,

1. The Preacher was God himself, *v. 18.* The Lord descended in Fire, and *v. 20.* The Lord came down upon Mount Sinai. The Shechinah, or the Glory of the Lord appeared in the sight of all the People; he shined forth from Mount Paran with ten thousands of his Saints, *Deut. 33. 2. 1. 11.* attended as the Divine Majesty always is, with a multitude of the Holy Angels, who were both to grace the Solemnity, and to assist it. Hence the Law is said to be given by the Disposition of Angels, *Acts 7. 53.*

2. The Pulpit (or Throne rather) was Mount Sinai, hung with a thick Cloud, *v. 16.* covered with a Smoke, *v. 18.* and made to quake greatly. Now it was that the Earth trembled at the Presence of the Lord, and the Mountains skipped like Rams, *Pf. 114. 4. 7.* that Sinai itself, though rough and rocky, melted before the Lord God of Israel, *Judg. 5. 5.* Now it was that the Mountains saw him, and trembled, *Hab. 3. 10.* and were Witnesses against hard-hearted unmoved People, whom nothing would influence.

3. The Congregation was called together by the Sound of a Trumpet, exceeding loud, *v. 16.* and waxing louder and louder, *v. 19.* This was done by the Ministry of the Angels, and we read of Trumpets sounded by Angels, *Rev. 7. 6.* 'Twas the Sound of the Trumpet that made all the People tremble, as those that knew their own Guilt, and that they had reason to expect, that the Sound of this Trumpet should have been to them the Alarm of War.

4. Moses brought the Hearers to the Place of meeting, *v. 17.* He that had led them out of the Bondage of Egypt, now led them to receive the Law from God's Mouth. Publick Persons are then publick Blessings, when they lay out themselves in their Places to promote the publick Worship of God. Moses, at the Head of an Assembly worshipping God, was as truly great, as Moses at the Head of an Army in the Field.

5. The Introductions to the Service were Thunders and Lightnings, *v. 16.* These were designed to strike an Awe upon the People, and to raise and engage their Attention. Were they asleep, the Thunders would waken them; were they looking another way, the Lightnings would engage them to turn their Faces towards him that spake to them. Thunder and Lightning have natural Causes, but the Scripture directs us in a particular manner to take notice of the Power of God, and his Terror in them. Thunder is the Voice of God, and Lightning the Fire of God; proper to engage both the learning Senses of Seeing and Hearing.

6. Moses is God's Minister, who is spoken to, to command silence, and keep the Congregation in order, *v. 19.* Moses spake. Some think now it was that he said, I exceedingly fear and quake, *Heb. 12. 21.* But God stilled his Fear by his distinguishing Favour to him, in calling him up to the top of the Mount, *v. 20.* by which also he tried his Faith and Courage. No sooner was Moses got up a little way towards the top of the Mount, but he was sent down again to keep the People from breaking through to gaze, *v. 21.* Even the Priests or Princes, the Heads of the Houses of their Fathers, who officiated for their respective Families, and therefore are said to come near to the Lord at other times, yet must now keep their distance, and carry themselves with a great deal of caution. Moses pleads, that they needed not to have any further Orders given them, effectual care was taken already to prevent any Intrusions, *v. 23.* But God, who knew their Wildness and Presumption, and what was now in the Hearts of some of them, hastens him down, with this in charge, that neither the Priests nor the People should offer to force the Lines that were set, to come up unto the Lord, but Moses and Aaron only, the Men whom God delighted so honour. Observe, 1. What it was that God forbade them breaking through to gaze; enough was provided to awaken their Consciences, but they were not allowed to gratify their vain Curiosity. They might see, but not gaze. Some of them, probably,

probably were desirous to see some Similitude, that they might know how to make an Image of God, which he took care to prevent, for they saw no manner of Similitude, Deut. 4. 15. *Note*, In divine things we must not cover to know more than God would have us know, and he has allowed us as much as is good for us. A desire of forbidden Knowledge was the Ruin of our first Parents. Those that would be wise above what is written, and intrude into those things which they have not seen, need this Admonition, that they break not through to gaze. 2. Under what Penalty it was forbidden, lest the Lord break forth upon them, v. 22, 24. and many of them perished. *Note* 1. The Restraints and Warnings of the Divine Law are all intended for our own good, and to keep us out of that Danger which otherwise we should, by our own Folly, run ourselves into. 2. It is at our peril if we break the Bounds that God hath set us, and intrude upon that which he has not allowed us; the *Bethshemites*, and *Uzza* paid dear for their Presumption. And even when we are called to approach unto God, we must remember that he is in Heaven, and we upon Earth, and therefore it behoves us to observe a Decorum.

C H A P. XX.

All things being prepared for the solemn Promulgation of the Divine Law, we have in this Chapter, 1. The Ten Commandments, as God himself spake them upon Mount Sinai, v. 1—17. as remarkable a Portion of Scripture as any in the Old Testament. 2. The Impressions made upon the People thereby, v. 18—21. 3. Some particular Instructions which God gave privately to Moses, to be by him communicated to the People, relating to his Worship, v. 22—26.

1 **A**ND God spake all these words, saying, 2 I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 3 Thou shalt have no other Gods before me. 4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. 5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, 6 And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. 7 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. 8 Remember the sabbath-day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: 10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates. 11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath-day, and hallowed it.

Here's, 1. The Preface of the Law-writer, *Moses*, ver. 1. *God spake all these words.* The Law of the Ten Commandments is, (1.) A Law of God's making. They are enjoined by the infinite eternal Majesty of Heaven and Earth; and where the Word of the King of Kings is, sure there is Power. (2.) 'Tis a Law of his own speaking. God has many ways of speaking to the Children of Men, *Job* 33. 14. once, yea twice, by his Spirit, Conscience, Providences, his Voice in all which we ought carefully to attend to; but he never spake at any time, upon any occasion, so as he spake the Ten Commandments, which therefore we ought to hear with the more earnest heed. 'Twas not only spoken audibly, so he owned the Redeemer by a Voice from Heaven, *Mat.* 3. 17. but with a great deal of dreadful Pomp. This Law God had given to Man before, 'twas written in his Heart by Nature; but Sin had so defaced that writing, that it was necessary in this manner to revive the Knowledge of it.

2. The Preface of the Law-maker, v. 2. *I am the Lord thy God.* Herein, (1.) God asserts his own Authority to enact this Law in general, I am the Lord who command thee all that follows. (2.) He proposeth himself as the sole Object of that religious Worship which is enjoined in the four first of the Commandments. They are here bound to Obedience

V O L. I.

by a threefold Cord, which one would think should not easily be broken. 1. Because God is the Lord. *Jehovah*, self-existent, independent, eternal, and the Fountain of all Being and Power; therefore he has an uncontested Right to command us. He that gives Being, may give Law: and therefore he is able to bear us out in our Obedience, to reward it, and to punish our Disobedience. 2. He was their God, a God in Covenant with them, their God by their own Consent, and if they would not keep his Commandments, who would? He had laid himself under Obligations to them by Promise, and therefore might justly lay his Obligations on them by Precept. Tho' that Covenant of Peculiarity is now no more, yet there is another, by virtue of which all that are baptized are taken into Relation to him as their God, and are therefore unjust, unfaithful, and very unkind, if they obey him not. 3. He had brought them out of the Land of Egypt; therefore they were bound in Gratitude to obey him, because he had done them so great a Kindness, had brought them out of a grievous Slavery into a glorious Liberty; they themselves had been Eye-witnesses of the great things God had done in order to their Deliverance, and could not but have observed that every Circumstance of it made it yet more obliging; they were now enjoying the blessed Fruits of their Deliverance, and in expectation of a speedy Settlement in Canaan, and could they think any thing too much to do for him, that had done so much for them? Nay, by redeeming them he acquired a farther Right to rule them, they owed their Service to him to whom they owed their Freedom, and whose they were by Purchase. And thus Christ having rescued us out of the Bondage of Sin, is intitled to the best Service we can do him, *Luke* 1. 74. Having loosed our Bonds, he has bound us to obey him, *Psal.* 116. 16.

3. The Law itself. The four first of the Ten Commandments which concern our Duty to God (commonly called the first Table) we have in these Verses. 'Twas fit those should be put first, because Man had a Maker to love before he had a Neighbour to love, and Justice and Charity are then only acceptable Acts of Obedience to God, when they flow from the Principles of Piety. It cannot be expected he should be true to his Brother, that is false to his God.

Now our Duty to God, is, in one word, to worship him, i. e. to give unto him the Glory due unto his Name, the inward Worship of our Affections, the outward Worship of solemn Address and Attendance. This is spoken of as the Sum and Substance of the everlasting Gospel, *Rev.* 14. 7. worship God.

1. The First Commandment is concerning the Object of our Worship, *Jehovah*, and him only, v. 3. *Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.* The Egyptians, and other Neighbour Nations, had many Gods, the Creatures of their own Fancy, strange Gods, new Gods; this Law was prefixed because of that Transgression, and *Jehovah* being the God of Israel, they must entirely cleave to him, and not be for any other, either of their own Invention, or borrowed from their Neighbours. This was the Sin they were most in danger of, now the World was so universally overspread with Polytheism, which yet could not be rooted out effectually but by the Gospel of Christ. The Sin against this Commandment, which we are most in danger of, is giving that Glory and Honour to any Creature, which is due to God only. Pride makes a God of Self-covetousness, makes a God of Money, Sensuality makes a God of the Belly. Whatever is esteemed and loved, feared or served, delighted in, or depended on more than God, that (whatever it is) we do in effect make a God of. This Prohibition includes a Precept, which is the Foundation of the whole Law, that we take the Lord for our God, acknowledge that he is God, accept him for ours, adore him with Admiration and humble Reverence, and set our Affections entirely upon him. There is a Reason intimated in the last words, *before me*; it intimates, (1.) That we cannot have any other God but he will certainly know it; there is none beside him, but what is before him; Idolaters coveted Secrecy, but shall not God search this out? (2.) That it is very provoking to him, 'tis a Sin that dares him to his face, which he cannot, which he will not overlook, or connive at. See *Psal.* 44. 20, 21.

2. The Second Commandment is concerning the Ordinances of Worship, or the Way in which God will be worshipped, which it is fit he himself should have the appointing of. Here's,

1. The Prohibition, we are here forbidden to worship even the true God by Images, v. 4, 5. (1.) The Jews (at least after the Captivity) thought themselves forbidden, by this Commandment, to make any Image or Picture whatsoever. Hence the very Images which the Roman Armies had in their Ensigns, are called an Abomination to them (*Mat.* 24. 15.) especially when they were set up in the Holy Place. 'Tis certain, it forbids making any Image of God, for to whom can we liken him? *1sa.* 40. 18, 25. or the Image of any Creature for a religious Use, 'tis called the changing of the Truth of God into a Lye, *Rom.* 1. 21. for an Image is a Teacher

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of *Lies*, it insinuates to us that God hath a Body, whereas he is an infinite Spirit, *Hab. 2. 8.* It also forbids us to make Images of God in our Fancies, as if he were a *Man as we are*. Our religious Worship must be governed by the power of *Faith*, not by the power of *Imagination*. They must not make such Images or Pictures as the Heathen worshipped, lest they also should be tempted to worship them. Those who would be kept from Sin, must keep themselves from the Occasions of it. (2.) They must not bow down to them occasionally, i. e. shew any Sign of Respect or Honour to them, much less serve them constantly, by Sacrifice or Incense, or any other Act of Religious Worship. When they paid their Devotion to the true God, they must not have any Image before them for the directing, exciting, or assisting of their Devotion. Tho' the Worship was designed to terminate in God, it would not please him if it came to him through an Image. The best and most ancient Lawgivers among the Heathen, forbade the setting up of Images in their Temples; 'twas forbidden in *Rome* by *Numa* a Pagan Prince, yet commanded in *Rome* by the Pope, a Christian Bishop, but in this Antichristian. The Use of Images in the Church of *Rome*, at this day, is so plainly contrary to the Letter of this Command, and so impossible to be reconciled to it, that in all their Catechisms and Books of Devotion, which they put into the hands of the People, they leave out this Commandment, joining the reason of it to the first, and so the third Commandment they call the second, the fourth the third, &c. only to make up the number ten, they divide the tenth into two. Thus have they committed two great Evils, perflit in them, and hate to be reformed; they take away from God's Word, and add to his Worship.

2. The Reasons to enforce this Prohibition, v. 5, 6. which are, 1. God's Jealousy in the matters of his Worship; *I the Lord Jehovah, and thy God, am a jealous God*, especially in things of this nature. It intimates the Care he has of his own Institutions, his Hatred of Idolatry and all false Worship, his Displeasure against Idolaters, and that he reffects every thing in his Worship, that looks like, or leads to Idolatry. Jealousy is quick-sighted. Idolatry being spiritual Adultery, as it is very often represented in Scripture, the displeasure of God against it is fitly called Jealousy. If God be jealous herein, we should be so, afraid of offering any Worship to God otherwise than as he has appointed in his Word. 2. The Punishment of Idolaters. God looks upon them as *Haters* of him, tho' they perhaps pretend Love to him, he will visit their Iniquity, i. e. he will very severely punish it, not only as a Breach of his Law, but as an Affront to his Majesty, a Violation of the Covenant, and a Blow at the Root of all Religion. He will visit it upon the Children, i. e. this being a Sin for which Churches shall be unchurch'd, and a Bill of Divorce given them, with the Parents the Children also shall be cast out of Covenant and Communion, as with the Parents the Children were at first taken in. Or, he will bring such Judgments upon a People, as shall be the total Ruin of Families. If Idolaters live to be old, so as to see their Children of the third or fourth Generation, it shall be the Vexation of their Eyes, and the breaking of their Hearts, to see them fall by the Sword, carried Captives, and enslaved. Nor is it an unrighteous thing with God if the Parents died in their Iniquity, and the Children tread in their Steps, and keep up false Worships, because they received them by Tradition from their Fathers, when the Measure is full, and God comes by his Judgments to reckon with them, to bring into the Account the Idolatries their Fathers were guilty of. Tho' he bear long with an idolatrous People, he will not bear always, but by the fourth Generation at furthest he will begin to visit. Children are dear to their Parents, therefore to deter Men from Idolatry, and to shew how much God is displeased with it, not only a Brand of Infamy is by it entailed upon Families, but the Judgments of God may for it be executed upon the poor Children when the Parents are dead and gone. 3. The Favour of God would shew to his faithful Worshippers, *Keeping Mercy for Thousands* of Persons, Thousands of Generations, of them that love me, and keep my Commandments. This intimates that the second Commandment, tho' in the Letter of it, it is only a Prohibition of false Worship, yet it includes a Precept of worshipping God in all those Ordinances which he hath instituted. As the first Commandment requires the inward Worship of Love, Desire, Joy, Hope, and Admiration, so this the outward Worship of Prayer and Praise, and solemn Attendance on his Word. Note 1. Those that truly love God, will make it their constant Care and Endeavour to keep his Commandments, particularly those that relate to his Worship. Those that love God, and keep those Commandments, shall receive Grace to keep his other Commandments. Gospel-Worship will have a good Influence upon all manner of Gospel-Obedience. 2. God has Mercy in store for such, even they need Mercy, and cannot plead Merit, and Mercy they shall find with God, merciful Protection in their Obedience, and a merciful Recompence of it. 3. This Mercy shall extend to Thousands, much further than the Wrath

threatened to those that hate him, for that reaches but to the third or fourth Generation. The Streams of Mercy run now as free, as full, and as fresh as ever.

3. The third Commandment is concerning the Manner of our Worship, that it be done with all possible Reverence and Seriousness, v. 7. Where we have,

1. A strict Prohibition, *Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain*. Supposing that having taken *Jehovah* for their God, they would make mention of his Name, (for thus all People will walk every one in the Name of his God) this Command gives a needful Caution not to mention it in vain, and it is still as needful as ever. We take God's Name in vain, (1.) By Hypocrisy, making profession of God's Name, and a Value for it, but not living up to that Profession. They that name the Name of Christ, but do not depart from Iniquity, as that Name binds them to do, name it in vain, their Worship is vain, *Mat. 15. 7, 8.* their Oblations vain, *Isa. 1. 11, 13.* their Religion vain, *Jam. 1. 26.* (2.) By Covenant-breaking; if we make Promises to God, binding our Souls with those Bonds to that which is good, and yet perform not to the Lord our Vows, we take his Name in vain, *Mat. 5. 33.* 'tis Folly, and God has no pleasure in Fools, *Ecl. 5. 4.* nor will he be mocked, *Gal. 6. 7.* (3.) By rash swearing, mentioning the Name of God, or any of his Attributes, in the form of an Oath, without any just Occasion for it, or due Application of Mind to it, but as a By-word, to no purpose at all, or to no good purpose. (4.) By false swearing, which some think is chiefly intended in the Letter of the Commandment, so it was expounded by them of old time, *Thou shalt not forswear thyself*, *Mat. 5. 33.* One part of the religious Regard the Jews were taught to pay to their God, was to swear by his Name, *Deut. 10. 20.* But they affronted him instead of doing him Honour, if they called him to be witness to a Lie. (5.) By using the Name of God lightly and carelessly, and without any regard to its awful Significancy. The Profanation of the Forms of Devotion is forbidden, as well as the Profanation of the Forms of Swearing; as also the Profanation of any of those things whereby God makes himself known, his Word, or any of his Institutions, when they are either turned into Charms and Spells, or into Jest and Sport, the Name of God is taken in vain.

2. A severe Penalty, *the Lord will not hold him guiltless*: Magistrates, that punish other Offences, may not think themselves concerned to take notice of this, because it doth not immediately offer injury either to private Property, or the publick Peace; but God, who is jealous for his Honour, will not thus connive at it. The Sinner may perhaps hold himself guiltless, and think there is no harm in it, nor that God will ever call him to an account for it; to obviate which Suggestion, the Threatning is thus expressed, *God will not hold him guiltless*, as he hopes he will: but more is implied, that God will himself be the Anger of those that take his Name in vain, and they will find it a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

4. The fourth Commandment concerns the Time of Worship; God is to be served and honoured daily, but one Day in seven is to be particularly dedicated to his Honour, and spent in his Service.

Here's, (1.) The Command itself, v. 8. *Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it Holy*; and v. 10. *in it thou shalt do no manner of Work*. It is taken for granted that the Sabbath was instituted before; we read of God's blessing and sanctifying a seventh Day from the beginning, *Gen. 2. 3.* so that this was not the enacting of a new Law, but the reviving of an old Law. 1. They are told what is the day they must religiously observe, a seventh, after six days labour; whether this was the seventh by Computation from the first seventh, or from the day of their coming out of Egypt, or both, is not certain. Now the precise day was notified to them, *chap. 16. 23.* and from this they were to observe the seventh. 2. How it must be observed, (1.) As a day of Rest, they were to do no manner of Work on this day, in their Callings or worldly Business. (2.) As a holy day, set apart to the Honour of the holy God, and to be spent in holy Exercises. God, by his blessing it, had made it holy; they, by solemn blessing him, must keep it holy, and not alienate it to any other purpose than that for which the difference between it and other days was instituted. 3. Who must observe it, *Thou, and thy Son, and thy Daughter*: The Wife is not mentioned, because she is supposed to be one with the Husband, and present with him, and if he sanctify the Sabbath, 'tis taken for granted she will join with him; but the rest of the Family is instanced in, Children and Servants must keep the Sabbath, according to their Age, and Capacity: In this, as in other Instances of Religion, 'tis expected that Masters of Families should take care not only to serve the Lord themselves, but that their Houses also should serve him, at least that it may not be through their neglect if they do not, *Josh. 24. 15.* Even the proselyted Strangers must observe a difference between this day and other days, which if it laid some restraint upon them then, yet proved a happy Indication of God's gracious Design in process of time to bring

bring the *Gentiles* in to the Church, that they might share in the Benefit of Sabbaths. Compare *Isa.* 56. 6, 7. God takes notice what we do, particularly what we do on Sabbath-days, tho' we be where we are Strangers. 4. A particular Memorandum put upon this Duty, *Remember it.* 'Tis intimated that the Sabbath was instituted and observed before, but in their Bondage in *Egypt* they had either lost their Computation, or were restrained by their Task-masters, or through a great Degeneracy and Indifferency in Religion, they had let fall the Observance of it, and therefore 'twas requisite they should be minded of it. Note, Neglected Duties remain Duties still, notwithstanding our Neglect; it also intimates, that we are both apt to forget it, and concerned to remember it: Some think it notes the Preparation we are to make for the Sabbath; we must think of it before it comes, that when it doth come, we may keep it holy, and do the Duty of it.

(2.) The Reasons of this Command: 1. We have time enough for ourselves on the other six Days; *six Days must thou labour.* Time enough we have to serve ourselves in those six Days, on the seventh Day let us serve God; and time enough to tire ourselves, on the seventh it will be a kindness to us to be obliged to rest. 2. This is God's Day, it is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God, not only instituted by him, but consecrated to him, 'tis Sacrilege to alienate it, 'tis a due Debt to sanctify it. 3. It is designed for a Memorial of the Creation of the World, and therefore to be observed to the Glory of the Creator, as an Engagement upon ourselves to serve him, and an Encouragement to us to trust in him, who made Heaven and Earth. By the Sanctification of the Sabbath the Jews declared that they worshipped the God that made the World, and so distinguished themselves from all other Nations, who worshipped Gods which they themselves made. 4. God has given us an example of Rest after six Days Work; he rested the seventh Day, took a Complacency in himself, and rejoiced in the Work of his Hand, to teach us on that Day to take a Complacency in him, and to give him the Glory of his Works, *Ps.* 92. 4. The Sabbath began in the finishing of the Work of Creation, so will the everlasting Sabbath in the finishing of the Work of Providence and Redemption; and we observe the weekly Sabbath in expectation of that, as well as in remembrance of the former, in both conforming ourselves to him we worship. 5. He hath himself blessed the Sabbath-day, and sanctified it: He hath put an Honour upon it, by setting it apart for himself, it is holy of the Lord, and honourable, and he hath put Blessings into it, which he hath encouraged us to expect from him in the religious Observation of that Day; it is the Day which the Lord has made, let not us do what we can to unmake it; he hath blessed, honoured, and sanctified it, let us not profane it, dishonour it, and level that with common Time, which God's Blessing has thus dignified and distinguished.

12 Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land, which the LORD thy God giveth thee. 13 Thou shalt not kill. 14 Thou shalt not commit adultery. 15 Thou shalt not steal. 16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. 17 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

We have here the Laws of the second Table, as they are commonly called, the six last of the ten Commandments, which concern our Duty to ourselves, and one to another, and are a Comment upon the second great Commandment, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself.* As Religion towards God is an essential Branch of universal Righteousness, so Righteousness towards Men is an essential Branch of true Religion: Godliness and Honesty must go together.

1. The fifth Commandment is concerning the Duties we owe to our Relations; that of Children to their Parents is only instanced in, *Honour thy Father and thy Mother:* which includes, (1.) A decent Respect to their Persons, an inward Esteem of them, outwardly expressed upon all occasions, in our Carriage towards them; *Lev.* 19. 3. *give them reverence, Heb.* 21. 9. The contrary to this is mocking at them, and despising them, *Prov.* 30. 17. (2.) Obedience to their lawful Commands; so 'tis expounded, *Eph.* 6. 1, 2, 3. *Children obey your Parents, come when they call you, go where they send you, do what they bid you, do not what they forbid you, and this as Children, cheerfully, and from a Principle of Love.* Tho' you have said you will not, yet afterwards repent and obey, *Mat.* 21. 31. (3.) Submission to their Rebukes, Instructions, and Corrections, not only to the Good and Gentle, but also to the Froward, out of Conscience to-

wards God. (4.) Disposing of themselves with the Advice, Direction, and Consent of Parents, not alienating their Property, but with their Approbation. (5.) Endeavouring in every thing to be the Comfort of their Parents, and to make their old Age easy to them; maintaining them if they stand in need of Support, which our Saviour makes to be particularly intended in this Commandment, *Mat.* 15. 4, 5, 6.

The Reason annexed to this Commandment is a Promise, that *thy Days may be long in the Land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee.* Having mentioned, in the Preface to the Commandments, his bringing them out of *Egypt* as a reason for their Obedience, he here, in the beginning of the second Table, mentions his bringing them into *Canaan* as another reason; that good Land they must have upon their Thoughts, and in their Eye, now they were in the Wilderness. They must also remember, when they come to that Land, that they were upon their good Behaviour, and if they did not carry themselves well, their Days should be shortened in that Land; both the Days of particular Persons that should be cut off from it, and the Days of their Nation that should be removed out of it. But here a long Life in that good Land is promised particularly to obedient Children. They that do their Duty to their Parents, are most likely to have the Comfort of that which their Parents gather for them, and leave to them: They that support their Parents, God, the common Father, will support them. This Promise is expounded, *Eph.* 6. 3. *That it may be well with thee, and thou mayst live long on the Earth.* Those that in Conscience towards God keep this and other of God's Commandments, may be sure it shall be well with them, and they shall live as long on Earth as infinite Wisdom seems good for them; and what they may seem to be cut short of on Earth, shall be abundantly made up in eternal Life, the heavenly *Canaan* which God will give them.

2. The sixth Concernment concerns our own and our Neighbour's Life, *v.* 13. *Thou shalt not kill:* Thou shalt not do any thing hurtful or injurious to the Health, Ease, and Life of thy own Body, or any others, unjustly. This is one of the Laws of Nature, and was strongly enforced by the Precepts given to Noah and his Sons, *Gen.* 9. 5, 6. It doth not forbid killing in lawful War, or in our own necessary Defence, or the Magistrates putting Offenders to death; for those are really in order to the preserving of Life; but it forbids all Malice and Hatred to the Person of any, for he that hateth his Brother is a Murderer, and all personal Revenge arising therefrom: also all rash Anger upon sudden Provocations, and Hurt said or done, or aimed to be done in Passion; of this our Saviour expounds this Commandment, *Mat.* 5. 22. and as that which is worst of all, it forbids Persecution, laying wait for the Blood of the innocent, and excelsent ones of the Earth.

3. The seventh Commandment concerns our own and our Neighbour's Chastity, *v.* 14. *Thou shalt not commit Adultery:* This is put before the sixth by our Saviour, *Mark* 10. 19. *Do not commit Adultery, do not kill,* for our Chastity should be as dear to us as our Lives, and we should be as much afraid of that which defiles the Body, as of that which destroys it. This Commandment forbids all Acts Uncleanliness, with all those fleshly Lusts, which produce those Acts and war against the Soul, and all those Practices which cherish and excite those fleshly Lusts, as looking to Lust, which Christ tells us is forbidden in this Commandment, *Mat.* 5. 28.

4. The eighth Commandment concerns our own and our Neighbour's Wealth, Estate, and Goods, *v.* 15. *Thou shalt not steal:* Tho' God had lately allowed and appointed them to spoil the Egyptians, in a way of just Reprisal, yet he did not intend it should be drawn into a Precedent, and that they should be allowed thus to spoil one another. This Command forbids us to rob ourselves of what we have, by sinful spending, or of the Use and Comfort of it, by sinful sparing; and to rob others, by removing the ancient Land-marks, invading our Neighbour's Rights, taking his Goods from his Person, or House, or Field, forcibly or clandestinely, over-reaching in Bargains, not restoring what is borrowed or found, withholding just Debts, Rents, or Wages; and, which is worst of all, to rob the Publick in the Coin or Revenue, or that which is dedicated to the Service of Religion.

5. The ninth Commandment concerns our own and our Neighbour's good Name, *v.* 16. *Thou shalt not bear false Witness:* This forbids, 1. Speaking falsely in any matter, lying, equivocating, and any way devising and designing to deceive our Neighbour. 2. Speaking unjustly against our Neighbour, to the prejudice of his Reputation. And, 3. (which is the highest Offence of both these kinds put together) bearing false Witness against him, laying to his charge things that he knows not either judicially upon Oath, by which the third Commandment, and the sixth or eighth, as well as this, are broken; or extrajudicially, in common Converse, Slandering, Backbiting, Tale-bearing, aggravating what is done amiss, and making it worse than it is, and any way endeavouring

o raise our own Reputation upon the Ruin of our Neighbours.

6. The tenth Commandment strikes at the Root, v. 17. *Thou shalt not covet*: The foregoing Commands implicitly forbid all Desire of doing that which will be an Injury to our Neighbour, this forbids all inordinate Desire of having that which will be a Gratification to ourselves. O that such a Man's House were mine! Such a Man's Wife mine! Such a Man's Estate mine! This is certainly the Language of Discontent at our own Lot, and Envy at our Neighbour's; and these are the Sins principally forbidden here. St. Paul, when the Grace of God caused the Scales to fall from his Eyes, perceived that this Law, *Thou shalt not covet*, forbids all those irregular Appetites and Desires, which are the First-born of the corrupt Nature, the first Risings of the Sin that dwelleth in us, and the first Beginnings of all the Sin that is committed by us: This is that Lust which he saith he had not known the Evil of, if this Commandment, when it came to his Conscience in the Power of it, had not shew'd it him, Rom. 7. 7. God give us all to see our Face in the Glass of this Law, and to lay our Hearts under the government of it.

18 And all the people saw the thundrings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. 19 And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die. 20 And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not. 21 And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was.

Observe, 1. The extraordinary Terror with which the Law was given; never was any thing delivered with such an awful Pomp, every Word was accented, and every Sentence paused with Thunder and Lightning, much louder and brighter, no doubt, than ordinary. And why was the Law given in this dreadful manner, and with all this tremendous Ceremony? (1.) 'Twas designed (once for all) to give a sensible Discovery of the glorious Majesty of God, for the Assistance of our Faith concerning it, that knowing the Terror of the Lord, we may be persuaded to live in his Fear. (2.) 'Twas a Specimen of the Terrors of the general Judgment, in which Sinners will be called to an account for the Breach of this Law; the Archangel's Trumpet will then sound an Alarm, to give notice of the Judge's coming, and a Fire shall devour before him. (3.) 'Twas an Indication of the Terror of those Convictions which the Law gives to Conscience, to prepare the Soul for the Comforts of the Gospel. Thus was the Law given by Moses, in such a way, as might startle, affright, and humble Men, that the Grace and Truth, which come by Jesus Christ, might be the more welcome. The Apostle largely describes this Instance of the Terror of that Dispensation, as a Foil to set off our Privileges, as Christians, in the Light, Liberty, and Joy of the New-Testament Dispensation, Heb. 12. 18, &c.

2. The Impression which this made for the present upon the People; they must have had stupid Hearts indeed, if this had not affected them. (1.) They removed, and stood afar off, v. 18. Before God began to speak, they were thrusting forward to gaze, Chap. 19. 21. but now they were effectually cured of their Presumption, and taught to keep their distance. (2.) They intreated that the Word should not be so spoken to them any more, (Heb. 12. 19.) but begged that God would speak to them by Moses, v. 19. Hereby they obliged themselves to acquiesce in the Mediation of Moses, they themselves nominating him as a fit Person to deal between them and God, and promising to hearken to him, as to God's Messenger; they have also obliged us to acquiesce in that Method which infinite Wisdom takes, of speaking to us by Men like ourselves, whose Terror shall not make us afraid, nor their Hand be heavy upon us. Once God tried the Expedient of speaking to the Children of Men immediately, but it was found they could not bear it, it rather drove Men from God, than brought them to him, and as it proved in the issue, tho' it terrified them, it did not deter them from Idolatry, for soon after this they worshipped the golden Calf: Let us, therefore, rest satisfied with the Instructions given us by the Scriptures and the Ministry: for if we believe not them, neither would we be persuaded, though God should speak to us in Thunder and Lightning, as he did from Mount Sinai. Here that Matter was determined.

3. The Encouragement Moses gave them, by explaining the Design of God in this Terror, v. 20. Fear not, i. a think not that this Thunder and Fire is designed to consume you, which was the thing they feared, v. 19. lest we die; Thunder and

Lightning was one of the Plagues of Egypt, but Moses would not have them think it was sent to them on the same Errand on which it was sent to the Egyptians: No, it was intended, (1.) To prove them, to try how they could like dealing with God immediately, without a Mediator, and so to convince them how admirably well God had chosen for them, in putting Moses into that Office. Ever since Adam fled, upon hearing God's Voice in the Garden, sinful Man could not bear either to speak to God, or hear from him immediately. (2.) To keep them to their Duty, and prevent their sinning against God. He bids them fear not, and yet tells them that God thus spake to them, that his Fear might be before their faces. We must not fear with Amazement, that Fear which hath Torment, and which only works upon the Fancy for the present, and sets us a trembling, that genders to Bondage, betrays us to Satan, and alienates us from God; but we must always have in our Minds a Reverence of God's Majesty, a Dread of his Displeasure, and an obedient Regard to his sovereign Authority over us: This Fear will quicken us to our Duty, and make us circumspect in our Walking; thus stand in awe, and sin not, Psal. 4. 4.

4. The Progress of their Communion with God by the Mediation of Moses, v. 21. While the People continued to stand afar off, conscious of Guilt, and afraid of God's Wrath, Moses drew near unto the thick Darkness, he was made to draw near, so the word is: Moses of himself durst not have ventured into the thick Darkness, if God had not called him, and encouraged him, and, as some of the Rabbins suppose, sent an Angel to take him by the hand, and lead him up. Thus it is said of the great Mediator, I will cause him to draw near, Jer. 30. 21. and by him it is that we also are introduced, Eph. 3. 12.

22 And the LORD said unto Moses, Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven: 23 Ye shall not make with me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold. 24 An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt-offerings, and thy peace-offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen; In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee. 25 And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it. 26 Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon.

Moses being gone into the thick Darkness, where God was, God there spoke in his hearing only, privately and without Terror, all that which follows from hence to the end of Chap. 25. which is mostly an Exposition of the ten Commandments; and he was to transmit it by word of mouth first, and afterwards in writing to the People. The Laws in these Verses relate to God's Worship.

1. They are here forbidden to make Images for Worship, v. 22, 23. Ye have seen that I have talked with you from Heaven, such was his wonderful Condescension, much more than for some mighty Prince to talk familiarly with a Company of poor Beggars; now ye shall not make Gods of Silver. This Reiteration of the second Commandment comes in here, either, (1.) As that which God had chiefly in his eye in giving them this Law thus, because they were more addicted to Idolatry than to any other Sin forbidden by the ten Commandments, and because that is a Sin, of all other, most provoking to God. Ten Commandments God had given them, but Moses is ordered to inculcate especially the two first upon them. They must not forget any of them, but they must be sure to remember those. Or, (2.) As that which might properly be infer'd from God's speaking to them as he had done. He had given them sufficient Demonstration of his Presence among them, they needed not make Images of him, as if he were absent. Besides, they had only seen that he talked with them, they had seen no manner of Similitude, so that they could not make any Image of God; and his manifesting himself to them only by a Voice, plainly shewed them that they must not make any such Image, but keep up their Communion with God by his Word, and not otherwise.

Two Arguments are here hinted against Image-worship:

(1.) That thereby they would affront God, intimated in that, thou shalt not make them with me; tho' they pretended to worship them but as Representations of God, yet really they made them Rivals with God, which he would not endure.

(2.) That thereby they would abuse themselves, intimated in that, ye shall not make them unto you; while you think by them to assist your Devotion, you will really corrupt it, and put

put a Cheat upon yourselves. At first it should seem they made their Images for Worship of Gold and Silver, pretending by the Richness of those Metals to honour God, and by the Brightness of them, to affect themselves with his Glory; but even in these they changed the Truth of God into a Lye, and so by degrees were justly given up to such strong Delusions, as to worship Images of Wood and Stone.

2. They are here directed in making Altars for Worship; 'tis meant of occasional Altars, such as they reared now in the Wilderness before the Tabernacle was erected, and afterwards, upon special Emergencies, for present Use; such as Gideon built, Judges 6. 24. ad Manoah, Judges 13. 19. and Samuel, 1 Sam. 7. 17. and many others. We may suppose now the People of Israel were so much affected, as it appears they were with this glorious Discovery God had made of himself to them, many of them would incline in this Pang of Devotion to offer Sacrifices to God; and it being necessary to a Sacrifice that there be an Altar, they are here appointed,

(1.) To make their Altars very plain, either of Earth, or of unhewn Stone, v. 24, 25. That they might not be tempted to think of a graven Image, they must not so much as hew the Stones into shape that they made their Altars of, but pile them up as they were in the rough. This Rule being prescribed before the Ceremonial Law was given, which appointed Altars much more costly, intimates, that after the Period of that Law, Plainness should be accepted, as the best Ornament of the external Services of Religion, and that Gospel-Worship should not be performed with external Pomp and Gaiety. The Beauty of Holiness needs no Paint, nor do those do any service to the Spouse of Christ, that dress her in the Attire of a Harlot, as the Church of Rome doth: An Altar of Earth doth best.

(2.) To make their Altars very low, v. 26. so as that they might not go up by steps to it. That the higher the Altar was, and the nearer Heaven, the more acceptable the Sacrifice was, was a foolish Fancy of the Heathen, who therefore chose high Places, in opposition to which, and to shew that 'tis the Elevation of the Heart, not of the Sacrifice, that God looks at, they were here ordered to make their Altars low. We may suppose, that the Altars they reared in the Wilderness, and other occasional Altars, were designed only for the Sacrifice of one Beast at a time; but the Altar in Solomon's Temple, which was to be made much longer and broader, that it might contain many Sacrifices at once, was made ten Cubits high, that the height might bear a decent Proportion to the length and breadth; and to that it was requisite they should go up by steps, which yet, no doubt, were so contrived, as to prevent the Inconvenience here spoken of, the discovering of their Nakedness thereon.

3. They are here assured of God's gracious Acceptance of their Devotions, wherever they were paid, according to his Will, v. 24. In all places where I record my Name, or where my Name is recorded, i. e. where I am worshipped in Sincerity, I will come unto thee, and will bless thee. Afterwards God chose one particular Place wherein to record his Name, but that being taken away now under the Gospel, when Men are willed to pray every where, this Promise revives in its full extent, that wherever God's People meet in his Name to worship him, he will be in the midst of them: He will honour them with his Presence, and reward them with the Gifts of his Grace, there he will come unto them, and will bless them, and more than this we need not desire for the beautifying of our solemn Assemblies,

CHAP. XXI.

The Laws recorded in this Chapter relate to the fifth and sixth Commandments; and tho' not accommodated to our Constitution, especially in point of Servitude, nor the Penalties annexed binding to us now, yet they are of great Use for the Explanation of the Moral Law, and the Rules of Natural Justice. 1. Here are several Enlargements upon the fifth Commandment, which concerns particular Relations. (1.) The Duty of Masters towards their Servants, their Men-servants, v. 2--6. and Maid-servants, v. 7--11. (2.) The Punishment of disobedient Children, that strike their Parents, v. 15. or curse them, v. 17. 2. Upon the sixth Commandment, which forbids all Violence offered to the Person of a Man. Here's, 1. Concerning Murder, v. 12--14. 2. Man-stealing, v. 16. 3. Assault and Battery, v. 18, 19. 4. Correcting a Servant, v. 20, 21. 5. Hurting a Woman with Child, v. 22, 23. 6. The Law of Retaliation, v. 24, 25. 7. Maiming a Servant, v. 26, 27. 8. An Ox goring, v. 26--32. 9. Damage by opening a Pit, v. 33, 34. 10. Cattle fighting, v. 35, 36.

NOW these are the judgments which thou shalt set before them. 2 If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. 3 If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if

he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. 4 If his master have given him a wife, and she have born him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. 5 And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children, I will not go out free: 6 Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door-post: and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever. 7 And if a man sell his daughter to be a maid-servant, she shall not go out as the men-servants do. 8 If she please not her master, who hath betrothed her to himself, then shall he let her be redeemed: To sell her unto a strange nation he shall have no power, seeing he hath dealt deceitfully with her. 9 And if he have betrothed her unto his son, he shall deal with her after the manner of daughters. 10 If he take him another wife; her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage shall he not diminish. 11 And if he do not these three unto her, then shall she go out free without money.

The first Verse is the general Title of the Laws contained in this and the two following Chapters; some of them relating to the religious Worship of God, but most of them relating to Matters between Man and Man. Their Government being purely a Theocracy, that which in other States is to be settled by human Prudence, was directed among them by a Divine Appointment, so that happy was the Constitution of their Government. These Laws are called *Judgments*, because they are framed in infinite Wisdom and Equity, and because their Magistrates were to give Judgment according to them. God delivered them privately to Moses, and he was to communicate them to the People: In the doubtful Cases that had hitherto occurred, Moses had particularly enquired of God for them, as appeared Chap. 18. 15. But now God gave him *Statutes in general*, by which to determine *particular Cases*, which likewise he must apply to other like Cases that might happen; which, falling under the same Reason, fell under the same Rule.

He begins with the Laws concerning Servants, commanding Mercy and Moderation towards them. The Israelites had lately been Servants themselves, and now they were become not only their own Masters, but Masters of Servants too; lest they should abuse their Servants, as they themselves had been abused, and ruled with Rigour by the Egyptian Task-masters, provision was made by these Laws for the mild and gentle Usage of Servants. Note, If those that have had power over us, have been injurious to us, that will not in the least excuse us, if we be in like manner injurious to those that are under our power, but will rather aggravate it, because in that case we may the easier put our Soul into their Soul's stead.

Here's, 1. A Law concerning Men-Servants, either sold by themselves, or their Parents through Poverty, or by the Judges for their Crimes; yet even such (if Hebrews) were to continue in Slavery but seven Years at the most, in which time 'twas taken for granted they had sufficiently smarted for their Folly or Offence. At the seven Years end the Servant should either go out free, v. 2, 3. or his Servitude should from thenceforward be his choice, v. 5, 6. If he had a Wife given him by his Master, and Children, he might either leave them, and go out free himself, or if he had such a kindness for them, that he would rather tarry with them in Bondage, than go out at liberty without them, he was to have his Ear bored through to the Door-post, and serve till the Death of his Master, or the Year of Jubilee. By this Law God taught, (1.) The Hebrew Servants Generosity, and a noble Love of Liberty, for they were the Lord's Freeman; and he must have a Mark of Disgrace put upon him who refused Liberty when he might have it, tho' upon Considerations otherwise laudable enough. Thus Christians being bought with a Price, and called unto Liberty, must not be the Servants of Men, not of the Lusts of Men, 1 Cor. 7. 23. There is a free and princely Spirit, that much helps to uphold a Christian, Ps. 51. 12. He likewise taught, (2.) The Hebrew Masters not to trample upon their poor Servants, knowing not only that they had been by Birth upon the Level with them, but that in a few Years they would be so again: Thus Christian Masters must look with respect on believing Servants, Philom. 16. This Law will be further useful to us, (1.) To illustrate the Right God hath to the Children of believing Parents, as such,

such, and the Place they have in his Church. They are by Baptism enrolled among his Servants, because they are born in his House, for they are therefore born unto him, Ezek. 16. 20. David owns himself God's Servant, as he was the Son of his Hand-maid, Psal. 116. 16, and therefore entitled to Protection, Psal. 86. 16. (2.) To explain the Obligation which the great Redeemer laid upon himself to prosecute the Work of our Salvation, for he saith, Psal. 40. 6. Mine Ears hast thou opened; which seems to allude to this Law. He loved his Father, even his Captive Spouse, and the Children that were given him, and would not go out free from his Undertaking, but engaged to serve in it for ever, Isa. 42. 1. Much more reason have we thus to engage ourselves to serve God for ever, we have all the reason in the World to love our Master and his Work, and to have our Ears bored to his Door-posts, as those who desire not to go out free from his Service, but to be found more and more free to it and in it, Psal. 84. 10.

2. Concerning Maid-Servants, whom their Parents, thro' extreme Poverty, had sold when they were very young, to such as they hoped would marry them when they grew up; if they did not, yet they must not sell them to Strangers, but rather study how to make them amends for the Disappointment; if they did, they must maintain them handsomely, v. 7--11. Thus did God provide for the Comfort and Reputation of the Daughters of Israel, and has taught Husbands to give Honour to their Wives, tho' their Extraction were ever so mean, as to the weaker Vessels, 1 Pet. 3. 7.

12 He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall surely be put to death. 13 And if a man lie not in wait, but God deliver him into his hand; then I will appoint thee a place whither he shall flee. 14 But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die. 15 And he that smiteth his father, or his mother, shall be surely put to death. 16 And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death. 17 And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death. 18 And if men strive together, and one smite another with a stone, or with his fist, and he die not, but keepeth his bed: 19 If he rise again, and walk abroad upon his staff, then shall he that smote him be quit: only he shall pay for the loss of his time, and shall cause him to be thoroughly healed. 20 And if a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand; he shall be surely punished. 21 Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished: for he is his money.

Here's, 1. A Law concerning Murder; he had lately said, Thou shalt not kill: here he provides, (1.) For the punishing of wilful Murder, v. 12. He that smiteth a Man, whether upon a sudden Passion, or in Malice premeditated, so that he die, the Government must take care that the Murderer be put to death, according to that ancient Law, Gen. 9. 6. Whoso sheddeth Man's Blood, by Man shall his Blood be shed. God, that by his Providence gives and maintains Life, thus by his Law protects it; so that Mercy shewed to a wilful Murderer is real Cruelty to all Mankind beside; such a one God here saith should be taken even from his Altar, v. 14. to which he fled for Protection; and if God will not shelter him, let him flee to the Pit, and let no Man stay him. (2.) For the Relief of such as killed by accident, per infortunium, as our Law expresseth it, which also calls it Chance-medley, when a Man in doing a lawful Act, without intent of hurt to any, happens to kill another, or as it is here described, God delivers them into his hand; nothing comes to pass by chance, but what seems to us purely casual, is order'd by the Divine Providence for wife and holy Ends, secret to us: In this case God provided Cities of Refuge for the Protection of those, whose Infelicity it was, but not their Fault, to occasion the Death of another, v. 13. With us, who know no Avengers of Blood but the Magistrates, the Law itself is a sufficient Sanctuary for those whose Minds are innocent, tho' their Hands be guilty, and there needs no other.

2. Concerning rebellious Children; 'tis here made a capital Crime, and to be punished with Death, for Children either, (1.) To strike their Parents, v. 15. so as either to draw Blood, or to make the place struck black and blue. Or, (2.) To curse their Parents, v. 17. if they profaned any Name of God in doing it, as the Rabbins say. Note, The undutiful Behaviour of Children towards their Parents is a very great Pro-

vocation to God, our common Father; and if Men do not punish it, he will. Those are perfectly lost to all Vertue, and abandoned to all Wickedness, that have broke thro' the Bonds of filial Reverence and Duty to such a degree, as in Word or Action to abuse their own Parents. What Yoke will they bear, that have shaken off this? Let Children take heed of entertaining in their Minds any such Thought or Passions towards their Parents, as favour of Undutifulness and Contempt, for the righteous God searcheth the Heart.

3. Here's a Law against Man-stealing, v. 16. He that steals a Man, Woman, or Child, with design to sell them to the Gentiles, for no Israel would buy them, 'twas Death by this Statute; which is ratified by the Apostle, 1 Tim. 1. 10. where Men-stealers are reckoned among those wicked ones, against whom Laws must be made by Christian Princes.

4. Care is here taken that Satisfaction be made for Hurt done to a Person, tho' Death do not ensue, v. 18, 19. He that did the Hurt must be accountable for Damages, and pay not only for the Cure, but for the Loss of Time: To which the Jews add, that he must likewise give some recompence both for the Pain, and for the Blemish, if there were any.

5. Direction is given what should be done, if a Servant died by his Master's Correction. This Servant must not be an Israelite, but a Gentile Slave, as the Negroes to our Planters, and 'tis supposed that he smite him with a Rod, and not with any thing that was likely to give a mortal Wound; yet if he died under his Hand, he should be punished for his Cruelty at the Discretion of the Judges, upon consideration of Circumstances, v. 20. But if he continued a day or two after the Correction given, the Master was supposed to suffer enough by losing his Servant, v. 21. Our Law makes the Death of a Servant, by his Master's reasonable beating of him, but Chance-medley. Yet let all Masters take heed of tyrannizing over their Servants, the Gospel teaches them even to forbear and moderate Thrawings, Eph. 6. 9. considering with holy Job, What shall I do when God riseth up? Job 31. 13, 14, 15.

22 If men strive, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart from her, and yet no mischief follow: he shall be surely punished, according as the woman's husband will lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. 23 And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life, 24 Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, 25 Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe. 26 And if a man smite the eye of his servant, or the eye of his maid, that it perish; he shall let him go free for his eye's sake. 27 And if he smite out his man-servant's tooth, or his maid-servant's tooth; he shall let him go free for his tooth's sake. 28 If an ox gore a man or a woman, that they die; then the ox shall be surely stoned, and his flesh shall not be eaten: but the owner of the ox shall be quit. 29 But if the ox were wont to push with his horn in time past, and it hath been testified to his owner, and he hath not kept him in, but that he hath killed a man or a woman; the ox shall be stoned, and his owner also shall be put to death. 30 If there be laid upon him a sum of money, then he shall give for the ransom of his life, whatsoever is laid upon him. 31 Whether he had gored a son, or have gored a daughter, according to this judgment shall it be done unto him. 32 If the ox shall push a man-servant, or maid-servant: he shall give unto their master thirty shekels, and the ox shall be stoned. 33 And if a man shall open a pit, or if a man shall dig a pit, and not cover it, and an ox or an ass fall therein; 34 The owner of the pit shall make it good, and give money unto the owner of them, and the dead beast shall be his. 35 And if one man's ox hurt another's, that he die, then they shall sell the live ox, and divide the money of it, and the dead ox also they shall divide. 36 Or if it be known that the ox hath used to push in time past, and his owner hath not kept him in; he shall surely pay ox for ox, and the dead shall be his own.

Observe here, 1. The particular Care which the Law took of Women with Child, that no hurt should be done them, which

which might occasion their miscarrying. The Law of Nature obligeth us to be very tender in that Case, lest the Tree and Fruit be destroyed together, *v. 22, 23.* Women with Child, who were thus taken under the special Protection of the Law of God, if they live in his Fear, may still believe themselves under the special Protection of the Providence of God, and hope that they shall be saved in Child-bearing. On this occasion comes in that general Law of Retaliation, which our Saviour refers to, *Mat. 5. 38. An Eye for an Eye.* Now, (1.) The Execution of this Law is not hereby put into the hands of private Persons, as if every Man might avenge himself; which would introduce universal Confusion, and make Men like the Fishes of the Sea. The Tradition of the Elders seems to have put this corrupt Gloss upon it, in opposition to which our Saviour commands us to forgive Injuries, and not to meditate Revenge, *Mat. 5. 39.* (2.) God often executes it in the course of his Providence, making the Punishment in many Cases to answer the Sin, as *Judges 1. 7. Isa. 33. 1. Hab. 2. 13. Mat. 26. 52.* (3.) Magistrates ought to have an eye to this Rule in punishing Offenders, and doing right to those that are injured. Consideration must be had of the nature, quality, and degree of the wrong done, that reparation may be made to the Party injured, and others deterred from doing the like; either an Eye shall go for an Eye, or the forfeited Eye shall be redeemed by a Sum of Money, *Note.* He that doth wrong, must expect, one way or other, to receive according to the wrong he has done, *Col. 3. 25.* God sometimes brings Mens violent dealing upon their own Heads, *Psal. 7. 16.* and Magistrates are in this the Ministers of his Justice, that they are Avengers, *Rom. 13. 4.* and they shall not bear the Sword in vain. 2. The care God took of Servants, if their Master maimed them, tho' it were but so much as striking out a Tooth, that should be their Discharge, *v. 26, 27.* This was intended, (1.) To prevent their being abused; Masters would be careful not to offer them any Violence, lest they should lose their Service. (2.) To comfort them if they were abused; the loss of a Limb should be the gaining of their Liberty, which would do something towards ballancing both the Pain and Disgrace they underwent.

Nay, 3. Doth God take care for Oxen? Yes, it appears by the following Laws in this Chapter that he doth, for our sakes, *1 Cor. 9. 9.* Orders are here given what should be done, (1.) In case of hurt done by Oxen, or any other brute Creature, for the Law doubtless was designed to extend to all parallel Cases: [1.] As an Instance of God's care of the Life of Man (tho' forfeited a thousand times into the hands of Divine Justice) and in token of his detestation of the Sin of Murder, if an Ox killed any Man, Woman, or Child, the Ox was to be stoned, *v. 28.* And because the greatest Honour of the inferior Creature is to be serviceable to Man, the Criminal is denied that Honour, his Flesh shall not be eaten. Thus God would keep up, in the minds of his People, a rooted Abhorrence of the Sin of Murder, and every thing that was barbarous. [2.] To make Men careful that none of their Cattle might do hurt, but that by all means possible Mischief might be prevented; if the Owner of the Beast knew that he was mischievous, he must answer for the hurt done, and, according as the Circumstances of the Case proved him to be more or less accessory, he must either be put to death, or ransom his Life with a Sum of Money, *v. 29, 30, 31, 32.* Some of our antient Books make this Felony by the Common Law of England, and give this reason, The Owner, by suffering his Beast to go at liberty, which he knew to be mischievous, shews he was very willing hurt should be done. *Note.* It is not enough for us not to do mischief ourselves, but we must take care that no mischief be done by those whom it is in our power to restrain, whether Man or Beast. (2.) In case of hurt done to Oxen, or other Cattle; if they fall into a Pit, and perish there, he that opened the Pit must make good the loss, *v. 33, 34.* *Note.* We must take heed not only of doing that which will be hurtful, but of doing that which may be so: It is not enough not to design and devise mischief, but we must contrive to prevent mischief, else we become accessory to our Neighbours Damage: Mischief done in Malice is the great Transgression, but mischief done through Negligence, and for want of due Care and Consideration, is not without fault, but ought to be reflected upon with great regret, according as the degree of the mischief is; especially we must be careful that we do nothing to make ourselves accessory to the Sins of others, by laying an occasion of Offence in our Brother's way, *Rom. 14. 13.*

If Cattle fight, and one kill another, the Owners shall equally share in the loss, *v. 35.* only if the Beast, that had done the harm, was known by his Owner to have been mischievous, because he ought either to have killed him, or kept him up, he shall answer for the Damage, *v. 36.* The Determinations of these Cases carry with them the Evidence of their own Equity, and give such Rules of Justice as were

then, and are still of use for the deciding of other like Controversies that arise between Man and Man. But I conjecture that these Cases might be instanced in rather than others (tho' some of them might seem minute) because they were then cases in fact actually depending before Moses; for in the Wilderness, where they lay closely encamped, and had their Flocks and Herds among them, such mischiefs as these last mentioned were likely enough to occur. That which we are taught by these Laws, is, that we be very careful to do no wrong either directly or indirectly; but if we have done wrong, we must be very willing to make satisfaction, and desirous that nobody may lose by us.

C H A P. XXII.

The Laws of this Chapter relate, 1. To the eighth Commandment, concerning Theft, *v. 1—4.* Trespas by Castle, *v. 5.* Damage by Fire, *v. 6.* Trusts, *v. 7—13.* Borrowing Cattle, *v. 14, 15.* or Money, *v. 25—27.* 2. To the seventh Commandment, Against Fornication, *v. 16, 17.* Bestiality, *v. 19.* 3. To the first Table, forbidding Witchcraft, *v. 18.* Idolatry, *v. 20.* commanding to offer the First-Fruits, *v. 29, 30.* 4. To the Poor, *v. 21—24.* 5. To the Civil Government, *v. 28.* 6. To the Peculiarity of the Jewish Nation, *v. 31.*

IF a man shall steal an ox or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep. 2 If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him. 3 If the sun be risen upon him, there shall be blood shed for him: for he should make full restitution; if he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft. 4 If the theft be certainly found in his hand alive, whether it be ox, or ass, or sheep, he shall restore double. 5 If a man shall cause a field or a vineyard to be eaten, and shall put in his beast, and shall feed in another man's field; of the best of his own field, and of the best of his own vineyard, shall he make restitution. 6 If fire break out, and catch in thorns, so that the stacks of Corn, or the standing Corn, or the field be consumed therewith; he that kindled the fire, shall surely make restitution.

Here's, 1. The Laws concerning Theft, which are these; (1.) If a Man steal any Cattle (in which the Wealth of those times mainly consisted) and they be found in his Custody, he must restore double, *v. 4.* Thus he must both satisfy for the Wrong, and suffer for the Crime. But it was afterwards provided, that if the Thief were touched in Conscience, and voluntarily confessed it, before it was discovered or enquired into by any other, then he should only make restitution of what he had stolen, and add to it a fifth part, *Lev. 6. 4, 5.* (2.) If he had killed or sold the Sheep or Ox he had stolen, and thereby persisted in his Crime, he must restore five Oxen for an Ox, and four Sheep for a Sheep, *v. 1.* more for an Ox than for a Sheep, because the Owner, besides all the other Profit, lost the daily Labour of his Ox. This Law teacheth us, that Fraud and Injustice will not only not enrich Men, but it will impoverish them; if we unjustly get and keep that which is another's, it will not only waste itself, but it will consume that which is our own. (3.) If he were not able to make restitution, he must be sold for a Slave, *v. 3.* The Court of Judgment was to do it, and 'tis likely the Person robbed had the Money. Thus with us, in some Cases, Felons are transported into the Plantations, where only Englishmen know what Slavery is. (4.) If a Thief break a House in the night, and was killed in the doing of it, his Blood was upon his own Head, and should not be required at the hand of him that shed it, *v. 2.* As he that doth an unlawful Act bears the blame of the mischief that follows to others, so likewise of that which follows to himself. A Man's House is his Castle, and God's Law, as well as Man's, sets a Guard upon it, he that assaults it is at his peril; yet if it were in the day-time that the Thief was killed, he that killed him must be accountable for it, *v. 3.* unless it were in the necessary Defence of his own Life. *Note.* We ought to be tender of the Lives even of bad Men, the Magistrate must right us, and we must not revenge ourselves.

2. Concerning Trespas, *v. 4.* he that wilfully puts his Cattle into his Neighbour's Field, must make restitution of the best of his own. Our Law makes a much greater difference between this and other Thefts than the Law of Moses did. The Jews hence observed it as a general Rule, that Restitution must always be made of the best; and that no Man

Man should keep any Cattle that were likely to trespass on his Neighbours, or to do them any damage: We should be more careful not to *do wrong*, than not to *suffer wrong*, because to suffer wrong is only an Affliction, but to do wrong is a Sin, and Sin is always worse than Affliction.

3. Concerning damage done by Fire, v. 6. He that designed only the burning of *Thorns*, might become accessory to the burning of Corn, and should not be *held guiltless*. Men of hot and eager Spirits should take heed, lest while they pretend only to pluck up the Tares, they root out the Wheat also. If the Fire *did mischief*, he that kindled it must answer for it, tho' it could not be proved he *designed the mischief*. Men must suffer for their *Carelessness*, as well as for their *Malice*. We must take heed of *beginning Strife*, for tho' it seem but little, we know not *how great a Matter it may kindle*, which we must bear the blame of, if, with the Madman, we cast Firebrands, Arrows, and Death, and pretend we mean no harm. 'Twill make us very careful of ourselves, if we consider that we are accountable not only for the hurt we *do*, but for the hurt we *occasion* thro' Inadvertency.

7. If a man shall deliver unto his neighbour money or stuff to keep, and it be stolen out of the man's house; if the thief be found, let him pay double. 8. If the thief be not found, then the master of the house shall be brought unto the judges, to see whether he hath put his hand unto his neighbours goods. 9. For all manner of trespass, *whether it be for ox, for ass, for sheep, for raiment, or for any manner of lost thing, which another challengeth to be his*: the cause of both parties shall come before the judges; and whom the judges shall condemn, he shall pay double unto his neighbour. 10. If a man deliver unto his neighbour an ass, or an ox, or a sheep, or any beast to keep; and it die, or be hurt, or driven away, no man seeing it: 11. Then shall an oath of the LORD be between them both, that he hath not put his hand unto his neighbours goods: and the owner of it shall accept thereof, and he shall not make it good. 12. And if it be stolen from him, he shall make restitution unto the owner thereof. 13. If it be torn in pieces; then let him bring it for witness, and he shall not make good that which was torn. 14. And if a man borrow *ought* of his neighbour, and it be hurt, or die, the owner thereof not being with it: he shall surely make it good. 15. But if the owner thereof be with it, he shall not make it good; if it be an hired thing, it came for his hire.

These Laws are, 1. Concerning *Trusts*, v. 7—13. If a Man deliver Goods, suppose to a Carrier, to be conveyed, or to a Ware-house-keeper to be preserved, or Cattle to a Farmer to be fed upon a valuable Consideration, and a special Confidence reposed in the Person they are lodged with, in case these Goods be stolen or lost, perished or be damaged, if it appear that it was not by any fault of the Trustee, the Owner must stand to the loss, otherwise he that has been false to his Trust must be compelled to make Satisfaction. The Trustee must aver his Innocency upon Oath before the Judges, if the Case were such as afforded no other proof, and they were to determine the matter according as it appeared. This teaches us, (1.) That we ought to be very careful of every thing we are intrusted with, as careful of it, tho' it be another's, as if it were our own. 'Tis unjust and base, and that which all the World cries shame on, to betray a Trust. (2.) That there is such a general failing of Truth and Justice upon Earth, as gives too much occasion to suspect Mens Honesty, whenever it is their Interest to be dishonest. (3.) That *an Oath for Confirmation is the end of Strife*, Heb. 6. 16. 'Tis called *an Oath of the Lord*, v. 11. because to him the Appeal is made, not only as to a Witness of Truth, but as to an Avenger of Wrong and Falshood. Those that had offered Injury to their Neighbour, by doing any unjust thing, yet it might be hoped had not so far debauched their Consciences as to profane an Oath of the Lord, and call the God of Truth to be witness to a Lye: Perjury is a Sin which natural Conscience startles at as much as any other. The Religion of an Oath is very ancient, and a plain Indication of the universal Belief of a God, and a Providence, and a Judgment to come. (4.) That Magistracy is an Ordinance of God, designed, among other Intentions, to assist Men both in *discovering Rights disputed*, and *recovering Rights denied*, and great Respect ought to be paid to the De-

termination of the Judges. (5.) That there's no reason a Man should suffer for that which he could not help: Masters should consider this in dealing with their Servants, and not rebuke that as a Fault which was a Mischance, and which they themselves, had they been in their Servants Places, could not have prevented. 2. Concerning *Loans*, v. 14, 15. If a Man (suppose) lent his Team to his Neighbour, if the Owner were with it, or were to receive Profit for the Loan of it, whatever harm befel the Cattle, the Owner must stand to the loss of: But if the Owner were so kind to the Borrower, as to lend it him *gratis*, and put such a Confidence in him as to trust it from under his own Eye, then if any harm happened, the Borrower must make it good. Learn hence to be very careful not to abuse any thing that's lent us; 'tis not only unjust, but base and disingenuous, by rendering *Evil for Good*; we should much rather chuse to lose ourselves, than that any should sustain loss by their kindness to us; *Alas, Master, for it was borrowed*, 2 Kings 6. 5.

16 And if a man entice a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her; he shall surely endow her to be his wife. 17 If her father utterly refuse to give her unto him, he shall pay money, according to the dowry of virgins. 18 Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live. 19 Whosoever lieth with a beast, shall surely be put to death. 20 He that sacrificeth unto any god, save unto the LORD only, he shall be utterly destroyed. 21 Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. 22 Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. 23 If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry. 24 And my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless.

Here's, 1. A Law, that he that debauched a young Woman shall be obliged to marry her, v. 16, 17. If she were espoused to another, 'twas Death to lie with her, but this is in case she was single: But if the Father refused her to him, he was to give satisfaction in Money for the Injury and Disgrace he had done her. This Law puts an Honour upon Marriage, and shews likewise how ill a thing it is, and by no means to be allowed, that Children should marry without their Parents Consent; even here where the Divine Law appointed the Marriage, both as a Punishment to him that had done wrong, and a Recompence to her that had suffered wrong; yet there was an express Reservation for the Father's Power, if he denied his Consent, it must be no Marriage.

2. A Law which makes Witchcraft a capital Crime, v. 18. Witchcraft not only gives that Honour to the Devil which is due to God alone, but bids defiance to the Divine Providence, wages war with God's Government, puts his Work into the Devil's hand, expecting him to do Good and Evil, and so making him indeed the *God of this World*; justly therefore was it punished with Death, especially among a People that were blessed with a Divine Revelation, and cared for by Divine Providence above any People under the Sun. By our Law, consulting, covenanting with, invoking or employing any evil Spirit to any intent whatsoever, and exercising any Incantment, Charm, or Sorcery whereby hurt shall be done to any Person whatsoever, is made Felony without benefit of Clergy; also pretending to tell where Goods lost or stolen may be found, or the like, is an Iniquity punishable by the Judge, and the second Offence with Death. The Justice of our Law herein is supported by the Law of God here.

3. The unnatural and abominable Sin of Buggery is here made capital; such Beasts, in the shape of Men, are unfit to live, v. 19. *Whosoever lies with a Beast, shall die*.

4. Idolatry is also made capital, v. 20. God having declared himself *jealous* in this matter, the Civil Powers must be jealous in it too, and utterly destroy those Persons, Families and Places of *Israel*, that worshipped any God *save the Lord*; this Law might have prevented the woful Apostacies of the Jewish Nation in after-times, if those that should have executed it had not been Ringleaders in the breach of it.

5. A Caution against Oppression; because those who were empowered to punish other Crimes, were themselves most in danger of this, God takes the punishing of it into his own hands. (1.) *Strangers* must not be abused, ver. 21. not wronged in Judgment by the Magistrates, nor imposed upon in Contracts, nor any Advantage taken of his Ignorance or Necessity; no, nor must he be taunted, trampled upon, treated with contempt, or upbraided with his being a Stranger; for

for all these were *Vexations*, and would discourage Strangers from coming to live among them, or strengthen their Prejudices against their Religion, to which by all kind and gentle Methods they should endeavour to proselyte them. The reason given why they should be kind to Strangers, is, *ye were Strangers in Egypt*, and knew what it was to be *vexed and oppressed* there. *Note* 1. Humanity is one of the Laws of Religion, and obligeth us particularly to be tender of those that lie most under Disadvantages and Discouragements; and extend our compassionate Concern to Strangers, and those that we are not obliged to by Alliance or Acquaintance. Those that are Strangers to us are known to God, and he preserves them, *Psal.* 146. 9. 2. Those that profess Religion should study to oblige Strangers, that they may thereby recommend Religion to their good Opinion, and take heed of doing any thing that may tempt them to think ill of it, or its Professors, *1 Pet.* 2. 12. 3. Those that have themselves been in Poverty and Distress, if Providence *enrich and enlarge* them, ought to shew a particular Tenderness towards those that are now in such Circumstances as they were in formerly, doing now to them as they then wished to be done by. (2.) *Widows and Fatherless* must not be abused, *v.* 22. *Ye shall not afflict them*; that is, ye shall comfort and assist them, and be ready upon all occasions to shew them kindness. In making just Demands from them, their Condition must be considered, who have lost those that should deal for them, and protect them; they are supposed to be unversed in Business, destitute of Advice, timorous, and of a tender Spirit, and therefore must be treated with Kindness and Compassion, and no Advantage taken against them, nor any Hardship put upon them, which a Husband or a Father would have sheltered them from. For, (1.) God takes particular cognizance of their Case, *v.* 23. having no one else to complain to, and appeal to, they will *cry unto God*, and he will be sure to *hear them*, for his Law and his Providence are Guardians to the Widows and Fatherless; and if Men do not pity them, and will not hear them, he will. *Note*, It is a great Comfort to those who are injured and oppressed by Men, that they have a God to go to, who will do more than *give them the hearing*; and it ought to be a Terror to those who are oppressive, that they have the Cry of the Poor against them, which God will hear. Nay, (2.) He will severely reckon with those that do oppress them; tho' they escape Punishment from Men, God's righteous Judgments will pursue and overtake them, *v.* 24. Men that have a sense of Justice and Honour, will espouse the injured Cause of the Weak and Helpless, and shall not the righteous God do it? Observe the Equity of the Sentence here passed upon those that oppress the *Widows and Fatherless*, their Wives shall become *Widows*, and their Children *Fatherless*; and the Lord is known by these Judgments which sometimes he executeth.

25 If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury. 26 If thou at all take thy neighbour's raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it unto him by that the sun goeth down: 27 For that is his covering only, it is his raiment for his skin: wherein shall he sleep? And it shall come to pass, when he crieth unto me, that I will hear: for I am gracious. 28 Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people. 29 Thou shalt not delay to offer the first of thy ripe fruits and of thy liquors: the first-born of thy sons shalt thou give unto me. 30 Likewise shalt thou do with thine oxen, and with thy sheep; seven days it shall be with his dam; on the eighth day thou shalt give it me. 31 And ye shall be holy men unto me: neither shall ye eat any flesh that is torn of beasts in the field: ye shall cast it to the dogs.

Here's, 1. A Law against Extortion, in lending: (1.) They must not receive use for Money from any that borrowed for necessity, *v.* 25. as in that case, *Neh.* 5. 5, 7. And such Provision the Law made for the preserving of Estates to their Families by the Year of Jubilee, that a People that had little concern in Trade, could not be supposed to borrow Money but for necessity, and therefore 'tis generally forbidden among themselves, but to a Stranger they were allowed to lend upon Usury, whom yet they might not oppress. This Law therefore, in the strictness of it, seems to have been peculiar to the Jewish State; but, in the Equity of it, it obligeth us to shew mercy to those we have advantage against, and to be content to share with those we lend to in Loss as well as Profit, if Providence cross them: and upon this Condition it seems as lawful to receive Interest for my Money, which another takes pains with, im-

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proves, but runs the hazard of in Trade, as it is to receive Rent for my Land, which another takes pains with, improves, but runs the hazard of in Husbandry. (2.) They must not take a poor Man's Bed-clothes in Pawn, but if they did, must restore them by Bed-time, *v.* 26, 27. Those who lie soft and warm themselves, should consider the hard and cold Lodging of many poor People, and not do any thing to make ill worse, or to add Affliction to the Afflicted.

2. A Law against the Contempt of Authority, *v.* 28. *Thou shalt not revile the Gods*, i. e. the Judges and Magistrates, for their executing of these Laws; they must do their Duty, whoever suffer by it: Magistrates ought not to fear the Reproach of Men, or their Revilings, but to despise them as long as they keep a good Conscience; but they that do revile them, for their being a Terror to evil Works and Workers, reflect upon God himself, and will have a great deal to answer for another day. We find those under a black Character, and a heavy Doom, that *despise Dominion, and speak evil of Dignities*, *Jude* 8. Princes and Magistrates are our Fathers, whom the fifth Commandment obligeth us to honour, and forbids to revile. St. Paul applies this Law to himself, and owns, that he ought not to *speak evil of the Ruler of his People*, no, not tho' he was then his most unrighteous Persecutor, *Acts* 23. 5. See *Ecd.* 10. 20.

3. A Law concerning the offering of their First-Fruits to God, *v.* 29, 30. 'Twas appointed before, *chap.* 13. and 'tis here repeated, *The First-born of thy Sons shalt thou give unto me*; and much more reason have we to give ourselves and all we have to God, who *spared not his own Son*, but delivered him up for us all. The first ripe of their Corn they must not delay to offer; there is danger, if we delay our Duty, lest we wholly omit it; and by slipping the first opportunity, in expectation of another, we suffer Satan to cheat us of all our time. Let not young People delay to offer to God the First-Fruits of their Time and Strength, lest their Delays come at last to be Denials thro' the Deceitfulness of Sin, and the more convenient Season they promise themselves never comes. Yet 'tis provided, that the Firstlings of their Cattle should not be dedicated to God, till they were past seven days old, for then they began to be good for something. *Note*, God is the first and best, and therefore must have the first and best.

4. A Distinction put between the Jews and all other People, *Ye shall be holy Men unto me*, and one mark of that honourable Distinction appointed in their Diet, which was, that they should not eat any Flesh that was torn of Beasts, *v.* 31. not only because it was unwholesome, but because it was paltry, and base, and covetous, and a thing below those who were Holy Men unto God, to eat the leavings of the Beasts of Prey. We that are sanctified to God must not be curious in our Diet, but we must be conscientious, not feeding ourselves without Fear, but eating and drinking by Rule, the Rule of Sobriety, to the Glory of God.

CHAP. XXIII.

This Chapter continues and concludes the Acts that passed in the first Session (if I may so call it) upon Mount Sinai. Here's, 1. Some Laws of universal Obligation to all, relating especially to the ninth Commandment, against bearing false Witness, *v.* 1. and giving false Judgment, *v.* 2, 3, 6, 7, 8. Also a Law of doing good to our Enemies, *v.* 4, 5. and not oppressing Strangers, *v.* 9. 2. Some Laws peculiar to the Jews: The Sabbatical Year, *v.* 10, 11, the three annual Feasts, *v.* 14—17. with some Laws pertaining thereto. 3. Gracious Promises of the completing of the Mercy God had begun for them, upon condition of their Obedience, that God would conduct them through the Wilderness, *v.* 20—24. That he would prosper all they had, *v.* 25, 26. That he would put them in possession of Canaan, *v.* 27—31. But they must not mingle themselves with the Nations, *v.* 32, 33.

THOU shalt not raise a false report: put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness. 2 Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause, to decline after many, to wrest judgment: 3 Neither shalt thou countenance a poor man in his cause. 4 If thou meet thine enemies ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. 5 If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee, lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him; thou shalt surely help with him. 6 Thou shalt not wrest the judgment of thy poor in his cause. 7 Keep thee far from a false matter: and the innocent and righteous slay thou not; for I

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will

will not justify the wicked. 8 And thou shalt take no gift : for the gift blindeth the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous. 9 Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger : for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Here are, 1. Cautions concerning judicial Proceedings; it was not enough that they had good Laws, better than ever any Nation had, but care must be taken for the due Administration of Justice according to those Laws.

(1.) The Witnesses are here caution'd, that they neither occasion an innocent Man to be indicted, by raising a false Report of him, and setting common Fame against him, nor assist in the Prosecution of an innocent Man, or one whom they do not know to be guilty, by putting their Hand in swearing as Witnesses against him, v. 1. Bearing false Witness against a Man in a Matter that toucheth his Life, hath in it all the Guilt of Lying, Perjury, Malice, Theft, Murder, with the additional Stains of colouring all with a pretence of Justice, and involving many others in the same Guilt. There is scarce any one Act of Wickedness that a Man can possibly be guilty of, which has in it a greater Complication of Villanies than this hath. Yet the former part of this Caution is to be extended to common Conversation, and not only to judicial Proceedings; so that slandering and back-biting is a degree of false Witness-bearing; a Man's Reputation lies as much at the mercy of every Company, as his Estate or Life doth at the mercy of a Judge or Jury: so that he who raiseth, or knowingly spreads a false Report against his Neighbour, especially if the Report be made to wife and good Men, whose Opinion one would desire to stand right in, sins as much against the Laws of Truth, Justice, and Charity, as a false Witness doth; with this further mischief, that he leaves it not in the power of the Person injured to right himself. That which we translate, *Thou shalt not raise*, the Margin reads, *Thou shalt not receive a false Report*; for sometimes the Receiver in this case is as bad as the Thief, and a back-biting Tongue would not do so much mischief as it doth, if it were not countenanced. Sometimes we cannot avoid hearing a false Report, but we must not receive it, i. e. we must not hear it with pleasure and delight, as those that rejoice in Iniquity, nor give credit to it, as long as there remains any cause to question the Truth of it: This is Charity to our Neighbours good Name, and doing as we would be done by.

(2.) The Judges are here cautioned not to pervert Judgment.

1. They must not be over-ruled either by *Might* or *Multitude* to go against their Consciences in giving Judgment, v. 2. With them Causes were tried by a Bench of Justices, and Judgment given by the major Vote; in which case every particular Justice must go according to Truth, as it appeared to him upon the strictest and most impartial Enquiry, tho' the Multitude of the People, and their Outcries, or the Sentence of the Rabbim, (we translate it *many*) the more antient and honourable of the Justices, went the other way: Therefore (as with us) among the Jews, the Junior upon the Bench voted first, that he might not be sway'd or over-ruled by the Authority of the Senior. Judges must not respect the Persons either of the Parties, or of their Fellow-Judges. The former part of this Verse also gives a general Rule for all, as well as Judges, not to follow a Multitude to do Evil: General Usage will never excuse us in an ill Practice, nor is the broad Way ever the better or safer for its being tracked and crowded. We must enquire what we ought to do, not what the most do, because we must be judged by our Master, not by our Fellow-Servants, and it's too great a Compliment to be willing to go to Hell for Company.

2. They must not pervert Judgment, no not in favour of a poor Man, v. 3. Right must in all cases take place, and Wrong must be punished, and Justice never byassed, nor Injury connived at, under pretence of Charity and Compassion. If a poor Man be an ill Man, and do an ill thing, it is foolish Pity to let him fare the better for his Poverty, Deut. 1. 16, 17.

3. Neither must they pervert Judgment in prejudice to a poor Man, nor suffer him to be wronged, because he had not wherewithal to right himself; in such cases the Judges themselves must become Advocates for the Poor, as far as their Cause was good and honest, v. 6. *Thou shalt not wrest the Judgment of thy Poor*: Remember he is thy Poor, Bone of thy Bone, thy poor Neighbour, thy poor Brother, let him not therefore fare the worse for his being poor.

4. They must dread the Thoughts of assisting or abetting an ill thing, v. 7. *Keep thee far from a false Matter*: Do not only keep thee free from it, nor think it enough to say thou art unconcerned in it; but keep thee far from it, dread it as a dangerous Snare. The Innocent and Righteous thou wouldst not for all the World say with thine own hands, keep thee there-

fore from a false Matter, for thou knowest not but it may end in that, and the righteous God will not leave such Wickedness unpunished. *I will not justify the Wicked*, i. e. I will condemn him that unjustly condemns others. Judges themselves are accountable to the great Judge.

5. They must not take Bribes, v. 8. They must not only not be swayed by a Gift to give an unjust Judgment, either to condemn the Innocent, or acquit the Guilty, or adjudge a Man's Right from him; but they must not so much as take a Gift, lest it should have an ill Influence upon them, and over-rule them contrary to their Intentions, for it hath a strange Tendency to blind those, who otherwise would do well.

6. They must not oppress a Stranger, v. 9. Tho' Aliens might not inherit Lands among them, yet they must have Justice done them, must peaceably enjoy their own, and be righted if they were wronged, tho' they were Strangers to the Commonwealth of Israel. It was an Instance of the Equity and Goodness of our Law, that if an Alien be tried for any Crime, except Treason, the one half of his Jury, if he desire it, shall be Foreigners; they call it a *Trial per medietatem Lingua*, a kind of Provision that Strangers may not be oppressed. The Reason here given is the same with that, Chap. 22. 21. *Ye were Strangers*, which is here elegantly enforced, *Ye know the Heart of a Stranger*, you know something of the Grievances and Fears of a Stranger by sad Experience, and therefore being delivered, can the easier put your Souls into their Souls stead.

2. Commands concerning Neighbourly Kindnesses: we must be ready to do all good Offices, as there is occasion, for any body, yea even for those that have done us ill Offices, v. 4, 5. The Command of loving our Enemies, and doing good to them that hate us, is not only a new, but an old Commandment, Prov. 25. 21, 22. Infer from hence, (1.) If we must do this Kindness for an Enemy, much more for a Friend, tho' an Enemy only is mentioned, because it is supposed a Man would not be unneighbourly to any, unless such as he has a particular Spleen against. (2.) If it be an ill thing not to prevent our Enemy's Loss and Damage, how ill a thing is it to occasion Harm and Loss to him, or any thing he has? (3.) If we must bring back our Neighbour's Cattle when they go astray, much more must we endeavour, by prudent Admonitions and Instructions, to bring back our Neighbours themselves, when they go astray in any sinful Path; see James 5. 19. And if we must endeavour to help up a fallen Ass, much more should we endeavour, by Comforts and Encouragements, to help up a sinking Spirit, saying to them that are of a fearful Heart, *Be strong*. We must seek the Relief and Welfare of others as our own: Phil. 2. 4. *If thou sayest, Behold we know it not, doth not he that pondereth the Heart consider it?* See Prov. 24. 11, 12.

10 And six years thou shalt sow thy land, and shalt gather in the fruits thereof: 11 But the seventh year thou shalt let it rest, and lie still; that the poor of thy people may eat: and what they leave, the beasts of the field shall eat. In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard, and with thy olive-yard. 12 Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest: that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger may be refreshed. 13 And in all things that I have said unto you, be circumspect: and make no mention of the names of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth. 14 Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year. 15 Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread: thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee in the time appointed of the month Abib; for in it thou camest out from Egypt; and none shall appear before me empty: 16 And the feast of harvest, the first-fruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of in-gathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field. 17 Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the LORD God. 18 Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leavened bread, neither shall the fat of my sacrifice remain until the morning. 19 The first of the first-fruits of thy land thou shalt bring into the house of the LORD thy God. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk.

Here's

Here's, 1. The Institution of the Sabbatical Year, v. 10, 11. every seventh Year their Land was to rest, they must not plough or sow it at the beginning of the Year, and then they could not expect any great Harvest at the end of the Year. But what the Earth did produce of itself should be eaten from hand to mouth, and *not laid up*. Now this was designed, (1.) To shew what a plentiful Land that was into which God was bringing them, that so numerous a People could have rich Maintenance out of the Products of so small a Country, without foreign Trade, and yet could spare the Increase of every seventh Year. (2.) To mind them of their Dependence upon God, their great Landlord, and their Obligation to use the Fruit of their Land as he should direct. Thus he would try their Obedience in a Matter that nearly touched their Interest: Afterwards we find, that their Disobedience to this Command was a Forfeiture of the Premises, 2 *Chron.* 36. 21. (3.) To teach them a Confidence in the Divine Providence, while they did their Duty, That as the sixth Day's Manna served for two Days Meat; so the sixth Year's Increase should serve for two Years Subsistence. Thus they must learn not to *take thought for their Life*, Mat. 6. 25. If we be prudent and diligent in our Affairs, we may trust Providence to furnish us with the *Bread of the Day in its Day*.

2. The Repetition of the Law of the fourth Commandment, concerning the weekly Sabbath, v. 12. Even in the Year of Rest they must not think the Sabbath-day was laid in common with the other Days, but even that Year it must be religiously observed; yet thus some have endeavoured to take away the Observation of the Sabbath, by pretending that every Day must be a Sabbath-day.

3. All manner of Respect to the Gods of the Heathen is here strictly forbidden, v. 13. A general Caution is prefixed to this, which hath reference to all these Precepts, *In all things that I have said unto you be circumspect*. We are in danger of missing our Way on the right-hand, and on the left, and 'tis at our peril if we do, therefore we have need to look about us. A Man may ruin himself through mere Carelessness, but he cannot save himself without great Care and Circumspection; particularly, since Idolatry was a Sin they were much addicted to, and would be greatly tempted to, they must endeavour to blot out the Remembrance of the Gods of the Heathen, and must disuse and forget all their superstitious Forms of Speech, and never mention them but with Detestation. In Christian Schools and Academies (for 'tis in vain to think of reforming the Play-houses) it were to be wished that the Names and Stories of the Heathen Deities, or Demons rather, were not so commonly and familiarly used as they are, even with Shews of Respect, and sometimes with Forms of Invocation. Surely we have *not so learned Christ*.

4. Their solemn religious Attendance on God, in the place which he should chuse, is here strictly required, v. 14-17. (1.) Thrice a Year *all their Males* must come together in a holy Convocation, that they might the better know and love one another, and keep up their Communion as a dignified and peculiar People. (2.) They must come together *before the Lord*, v. 17. to present themselves before him, looking towards the Place where his Honour dwelt, and to pay their Homage to him as their great Lord, from and under whom they held all their Enjoyments. (3.) They must *feast together* before the Lord, eating and drinking together, in token of their Joy in God, and their grateful Sense of his Goodness to them; for a *Feast is made for Laughter*, Eccles. 10. 19. O what a good Master do we serve, who has made it our Duty to *rejoice before him*, who feasts his Servants when they are in *waiting*! Never let Religion be called a melancholy thing, when its solemn Services are solemn Feasts. (4.) They must not *appear before God empty*, v. 15. some Free-will Offering or other they must bring, in token of their Respect and Gratitude to their great Benefactor. As then they must not come *empty-handed*, so we now must not come to worship God *empty-hearted*; our Souls must be filled with Grace, with pious and devout Affections, holy Desires towards him, and Dedications of ourselves to him, for *with such Sacrifices God is well-pleased*. (5.) The Passover, Pentecost, and Feast of Tabernacles, in Spring, Summer, and Autumn, were the three times appointed for their Attendance; not in Winter, because Travelling was then uncomfortable; not in the midst of their Harvest, because then they were otherwise employed: so that they had no reason to say, that he *made them to serve with an Offering, or wearied them with Incense*.

5. Some particular Directions are here given about the three Feasts, tho' not so fully as afterwards. (1.) As to the Passover, it was not to be offered *with leavened Bread*, for at that Feast all Leaven was to be cast out; nor was the Fat of it to remain until the Morning, lest it should smell ill, v. 18. (2.) At the Feast of Pentecost, when they were to begin their Harvest, they must bring the *first of their First-Fruits* to God, by the pious presenting of which the whole Harvest was sanctified, v. 19. (3.) At the Feast of ingathering, as 'tis call'd,

v. 16. they must give God Thanks for the Harvest-Mercies they had received, and must depend upon him for the next Harvest, and must not think to receive Benefit by that superstitious Usage of some of the *Gentiles*, who ('tis said) at the end of their Harvest, *seethed a Kid in its Dam's Milk*, and sprinkled that *Milk-pottage*, in a magical way, upon their Garments and Fields, to make them more fruitful the next Year. But *Israel* must abhor such foolish Customs.

20 Behold, I send an angel before thee to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. 21 Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not: for he will not pardon your transgressions; for my name is in him. 22 But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries. 23 For mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and I will cut them off. 24 Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do their works: but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images. 25 And ye shall serve the LORD your God, and he shall bless thy bread, and thy water: and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee. 26 There shall nothing cast their young, nor be barren in thy land: the number of thy days I will fulfil. 27 I will send my fear before thee, and will destroy all the people to whom thou shalt come, and I will make all thine enemies turn their backs unto thee. 28 And I will send hornets before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite from before thee. 29 I will not drive them out from before thee in one year; lest the land become desolate, and the beasts of the field multiply against thee. 30 By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land. 31 And I will set thy bounds from the red sea even unto the sea of the Philistines, and from the desert unto the river: for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand; and thou shalt drive them out before thee. 32 Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. 33 They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me: for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee.

Three gracious Promises are here made to *Israel*, to engage them to their Duty, and encourage them in it; and each of the Promises hath some needful Precepts and Cautions joined to it.

1. It is here promised that they should be *guided and kept in their Way* through the Wilderness to the Land of Promise; Behold, I send an Angel before thee, v. 20. mine Angel, v. 23. a created Angel, say some, a Minister of God's Providence, employed in conducting and protecting the Camp of *Israel*: that it might appear God took a particular care of them, he appointed one of his chief Servants to make it his business to attend them, and see that they wanted for nothing. Others suppose it to be the Son of God, the Angel of the Covenant, for the *Israelites* in the Wilderness are said to tempt Christ, and we may as well suppose him God's Messenger, and the Church's Redeemer, before his Incarnation, as the *Lamb slain from the Foundation of the World*. And we may the rather think he was pleased to undertake the Deliverance and Conduct of *Israel*; because they were typical of his great Undertaking. 'Tis promised that this blessed Angel should *keep them in the way*, though it lay through a Wilderness first, and afterwards through their Enemies Country; thus God's spiritual *Israel* shall be kept through the Wilderness of this Earth, and from the Insults of the Gates of Hell; and that he should bring them *into the place*, which God had not only designed, but prepared for them. And thus Christ has prepared a place for his Followers, and will preserve them to it; for he is faithful to him that appointed him.

The Precept joined with this Promise, is, that they be obedient of, and obedient to this Angel, whom God would send before them, v. 21. Beware of him, and obey his Voice in every thing;

thing, *provoke him* not in any thing, for it is at your peril if you do, he will visit your iniquity. *Note*, 1. Christ is the Author of Salvation to those only that obey him; the word of Command is, *Hear ye him*, Mat. 17. 5. Observe what he hath commanded, Mat. 23. 26. 2. Our necessary Dependence upon the Divine Power and Goodness should awe us into Obedience. We had best take heed of provoking our Protector and Benefactor, because if our Defence depart from us, and the Streams of his Goodness be cut off, we are undone; therefore beware of him, and carry it towards him with all possible Reverence and Caution, fear the Lord and his Goodness. 3. Christ will be faithful to those that are faithful to him, and will espouse their Cause who adhere to his; v. 22. *I will be an Adversary to thine Adversaries*: The League shall be offensive and defensive, like that with Abraham, *I will bless him that blest thee, and curse him that curseth thee*. Thus is God pleased to twist Interests and Friendships with his People.

2. It is promised that they should have a comfortable Settlement in the Land of Canaan, which they hoped now (though it proved otherwise) within a few Months to be in the possession of, v. 24, 25, 26. Observe, (1.) How reasonable the Conditions of this Promise are, only that they should serve their God, who was indeed the only true God, and not the Gods of the Nations, which were no Gods at all, and which they had no reason at all to have any respect for. They must not only not worship their Gods, but they must utterly overthrow them, in token of their great Abhorrence of Idolatry, their Resolution never to worship Idols themselves, and their Care to prevent any other from worshipping them; as the converted Conjurers burnt their Books, Acts 19. 19. (2.) How rich the Particulars of this Promise are: 1. The Comfort of their Food, he shall bless thy Bread and thy Water, and God's Blessing will make Bread and Water more refreshing and nourishing, than a Feast of fat Things, and Wines on the Lees, without that Blessing. 2. The Continuance of their Health; *I will take Sickness away*, either prevent it, or remove it. Thy Land shall not be visited with Epidemical Diseases, which are very dreadful, and sometimes have laid Countries waste. 3. The Increase of their Wealth, their Cattle should not be barren, nor cast their Young; which is mentioned as an Instance of Prosperity, Job 21. 10. 4. The prolonging of their Lives to old Age; *The number of thy days I will fulfil*, and they shall not be cut off in the midst by untimely Deaths. Thus hath Godliness the Promise of the Life that now is.

3. It is promised that they should conquer and subdue their Enemies, the present Occupants of the Land of Canaan, who must be driven out, to make room for them. This God would do, (1.) Effectually, by his Power, v. 27, 28. not so much by the Sword and Bow of Israel, as by the Terrors which he would strike the Canaanites with. Tho' they were so obstinate, as not to be willing to submit to Israel, resign their Country, and retire elsewhere, which they might have done; yet they were so dispirited, that they were not able to stand before them. This completed their Ruin; such power had the Devil in them, that they would resist, but such power had God over them, that they could not: *I will send my Fear before thee*; and they that fear, will soon flee. Hosts of Hornets made way for the Hosts of Israel, such mean Creatures can God make use of for the chastising of his People's Enemies, as in the Plagues of Egypt. When God pleases, Hornets can drive out Canaanites, as well as Lions could, Josh. 24. 12. (2.) He would do it gradually, in Wisdom, v. 29, 30. not all at once, but by little and little. As the Canaanites had kept possession till Israel was grown into a People, so there should still be some Remains of them, till Israel should grow so numerous as to replenish the whole. *Note*, The Wisdom of God is to be observ'd in the gradual Advances of the Church's Interests. 'Tis in real kindness to the Church, that its Enemies are subdued by little and little, for thus we are kept upon our Guard, and in a continual Dependence upon God. Corruptions are thus driven out of the Hearts of God's People, not all at once, lest they should grow proud and secure, but by little and little, the Old Man is crucified, and therefore dies slowly. God in his Providence oft delays Mercy, because we are not ready for it. Canaan has room enough to receive Israel, but Israel is not numerous enough to occupy Canaan; we are not straitened in God, if we are straitened, 'tis in ourselves. The Land of Canaan is promised them, v. 31. in its utmost Extent, which yet they were not possessed of till the Days of David, and by their Sins they soon lost possession.

The Precept annexed to this Promise, is, That they should not make any Friendship, nor have any Familiarity with Idolaters, v. 32, 33. They must not so much as sojourn in their Land, unless they renounced their Idolatry. Thus they must avoid the Reproach of Intimacy with the Worshipers of false Gods, and the Danger of being drawn to worship with them. By familiar converse with Idolaters, their Dread and Detestation of the Sin would wear off, they would think it no harm, in compliment to their Friends, to pay some re-

spect to their Gods, and so by degrees would be drawn into the fatal Snare. *Note*, Those that would be kept from ill Courses, must keep from ill Company; it's dangerous living in a bad Neighbourhood: others Sins will be our Snare, if we look not well to ourselves. We must always look upon our greatest Danger to be from those that would make us sin against God. Whatever Friendship is pretended, that's really our worst Enemy, that draws us from our Duty.

C H A P. XXIV.

Moses, as Mediator between God and Israel, having received divers Laws and Ordinances from God privately in the three foregoing Chapters, in this Chapter, 1. Comes down to the People, acquaints them with the Laws he had received, and takes their Consent to those Laws, v. 3. writes the Laws, and reads them to the People, who repeat their Consent, v. 4, 7. and then by Sacrifice, and the sprinkling of Blood, ratifies the Covenant between them and God, v. 5, 6, 8. 2. He returns to God again, to receive further Directions, When he was dismissed from his former Attendance, he was ordered to attend again, v. 1, 2. He did so with Seventy of the Elders, to whom God made a Discovery of his Glory, v. 9—11. Moses is ordered up into the Mount, v. 12, 13. the rest are ordered down to the People, v. 14. The Cloud of Glory is seen by all the People on the top of Mount Sinai, v. 15—17, and Moses is there with God forty Days and forty Nights, v. 18.

1 AND he said unto Moses, Come up unto the LORD, thou and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: and worship ye afar off. 2 And Moses alone shall come near the LORD; but they shall not come nigh, neither shall the people go up with him. 3 And Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words, which the LORD hath said, will we do. 4 And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. 5 And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt-offerings, and sacrificed peace-offerings of oxen unto the LORD. 6 And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basons; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. 7 And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said, will we do, and be obedient. 8 And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words.

The two first Verses are the Appointment of a second Session upon Mount Sinai, for the making of Laws, when an end was put to the first. When a Communion is begun between God and us, it shall never fail on his side, if it do not first fail on ours. Moses is directed to bring Aaron and his Sons, and the seventy Elders of Israel, that they might be Witnesses of the Glory of God, and that Communion with him, to which Moses was admitted, and that their Testimony might confirm the People's Faith. In this Approach, 1. They must all be very reverent, *Worship ye afar off*, v. 1. before they came near they must worship. Thus we must enter into God's Gates with humble and solemn Adorations, and draw near as those that know our distance, and admire the Condescensions of God's Grace, in admitting us to draw near. Are great Princes approached with the profound Reverences of the Body? And shall not the Soul that draws near to God be bowed before him? 2. They must none of them come so near as Moses, v. 2. they must come up to the Lord, (and those that would approach to God must ascend) but Moses must come near alone, therein a Type of Christ, who as the High Priest entered alone into the most holy Place.

In the following Verses we have the solemn Covenant made between God and Israel, and the exchanging of the Ratifications; and a very solemn Transaction it was, typifying the Covenant of Grace between God and Believers thro' Christ.

1. Moses told the People the Words of the Lord, v. 3. He did not lead them blindfold into the Covenant, nor teach them a Devotion that was the Daughter of Ignorance, but laid before

before them all the Precepts, general and particular, in the foregoing Chapters, and fairly put it to them, Whether they were willing to submit to these Laws or no?

2. The People unanimously consented to the Terms proposed, without Reservation or Exception, *All the Words which the Lord hath said will we do.* They had before consented in general to be under God's Government, Chap. 19. 8. here they consent in particular to these Laws now given: *O that there had been such a Heart in them!* How well were it, if People would but be always in the same good Mind that sometimes they seem to be in! Many consent to the Law, and yet do not live up to it; they have nothing to except against it, and yet will not persuade themselves to be ruled by it.

This is the Tenour of the Covenant, That if they would observe the foregoing Precepts, God would perform the foregoing Promises, Obey and be happy. Here's the Bargain made: Observe, 1. How it was engrossed in the Book of the Covenant; Moses wrote the Words of the Lord, v. 4. that there might be no mistake: probably he had written them as God dictated them on the Mount. As soon as ever God had separated to himself a peculiar People in the World, he governed them by a written Word, as he has done ever since, and will do while the World stands, and the Church in it. Moses having engrossed the Articles of Agreement concluded upon between God and Israel, read them in the Audience of the People, v. 7. that they might be perfectly apprized of the thing, and might try whether their second Thoughts were the same with their first, upon the whole Matter. And we may suppose they were so, for their Words, v. 7. are the same with what they were, v. 3. but something stronger; *All that the Lord hath said (be it good, or be it evil, to Flesh and Blood, Jer. 42. 6) we will do:* so they had said before, but now they add, *and will be obedient, not only we will do what hath been commanded, but in every thing which shall further be ordained, we will be obedient.* Bravely resolved! if they had but stuck to their Resolution. See here, That God's Covenants and Commands are so uncontestably equitable in themselves, and so highly advantageous to us, that the more we think of them, and the more plainly and fully they are set before us, the more reason we shall see to comply with them.

2. How it was sealed by the Blood of the Covenant, that Israel might receive strong Consolations from the ratifying of God's Promises to them, and might lie under strong Obligations from the ratifying of their Promises to God. Thus hath infinite Wisdom devised Means, that we may be confirmed both in our Faith, and in our Obedience, may be both encouraged in our Duty, and engaged to it. The Covenant must be made by Sacrifice, Ps. 50. 5. because since Man hath sinned, and forfeited his Creator's Favour, there can be no Fellowship by Covenant, till there is first Friendship and Atonement by Sacrifice. (1.) In preparation therefore for the Parties interchangeably putting their Seals to this Covenant, 1. *Moses builds an Altar to the Honour of God, which was principally intended in all the Altars that were built, and which was the first thing to be looked at in the Covenant they were now to seal.* No Addition to the Perfections of the Divine Nature can be made by any of his Dealings with the Children of Men, but in them his Perfections are manifested and magnified, and his Honour shewed forth; therefore he will now be represented by an Altar, to signify, that all he expected from them was, that they should do him honour, and that being his People, they should be to him for a Name and a Praise. 2. He erects twelve Pillars, according to the number of the Tribes; these were to represent the People, the other Party to the Covenant, and we may suppose they were set up over-against the Altar, and that Moses, as Mediator, passed to and fro between them. Probably each Tribe set up and knew its own Pillar, and their Elders stood by it. 3. He appointed Sacrifices to be offered upon the Altar, v. 5. Burnt-Offerings and Peace-Offerings, which yet were designed to be expiatory. We are not concerned to enquire who these Young Men were, that were employed in offering these Sacrifices, for Moses was himself the Priest, and what they did was purely as his Servants, by his Order and Appointment. No doubt they were Men, who by their bodily Strength were qualified for the Service, and by their Station among the People, were fittest for the Honour. (2.) Preparation being thus made, the Ratifications were very solemnly exchanged.

1. The Blood of the Sacrifice, which the People offered, was (part of it) sprinkled upon the Altar, v. 6. which signified the People's dedicating themselves, their Lives and Beings, to God, and to his Honour. In the Blood (which is the Life) of the dead Sacrifices, all the Israelites were presented unto God as living Sacrifices, Rom. 12. 1.

2. The Blood of the Sacrifice, which God had owned and accepted, was (the Remainder of it) sprinkled, either upon the People themselves, v. 8. or upon the Pillars that represented them, which signified God's gracious conferring his Favour upon them, and all the Fruits of that Favour, and his giving

them all the Gifts they could expect or desire from a God reconciled to them, and in Covenant with them by Sacrifice. This part of the Ceremony was thus explained, *Behold the Blood of the Covenant;* see here how God sealed to you to be a God, and you seal to him, to be to him a People; his Promises to you, and yours to him, are both *Yea and Amen.*

Thus our Lord Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant, (of whom Moses was a Type) having offered up himself a Sacrifice upon the Cross, that his Blood might be indeed the Blood of the Covenant, he sprinkled it upon the Altar in his Intercession, (Heb. 9. 12.) and sprinkles it upon his Church by his Word and Ordinances, and the Influences and Operations of the Spirit of Promise, by whom we are sealed. He himself seemed to allude to this Solemnity, when in the Institution of the Lord's Supper, he said, *This Cup is the New-Testament, or Covenant, in my Blood.* Compare with this, Heb. 9. 19, 20.

9 Then went up Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. 10 And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet, as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. 11 And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink.

The People having, besides their Submission to the Ceremony of the Sprinkling of Blood, declared their Well-pleasedness in their God and his Law, again and again, God here gives to their Representatives some special Tokens of his Favour to them; for God meeteth him that rejoiceth and worketh Righteousness, and admits them nearer to him than they could have expected. Thus in the New-Testament Church we find the four living Creatures, and the four and twenty Elders honoured with Places round the Throne, being redeemed unto God by the Blood of the Lamb, which is in the midst of the Throne, Rev. 4. 4, 7—9, 8, 9.

Observe, 1. They saw the God of Israel, v. 10. i. e. they had some glimpse of his Glory in Light and Fire, tho' they saw no manner of Similitude, and his Being no Man hath seen or can see, 1 Tim. 6. 16. They saw the Place where the God of Israel stood; so the Seventy, something that came near the Similitude, but was not: whatever they saw, it was certainly something, of which no Image or Picture could be made, and yet enough to satisfy them, that God was with them of a truth.

Nothing is described but that which was under his feet, for our Conceptions of God are all below him, and fall infinitely short of being adequate. They saw not so much as God's feet, but at the bottom of the Brightness they saw, (such as they never saw before or after) and as the Foot-stool or Pedestal of it was a most rich and splendid Pavement, as it had been of Sapphires, Azure, or Sky-colour'd. The Heavens themselves are the Pavement of God's Palace, and his Throne is above the Firmament: See how much better Wisdom is than the precious Onyx, or the Sapphires, for Wisdom was from Eternity God's Delight, (Prov. 8. 30.) and lay in his Bosom; but the Sapphires are the Pavement under his feet, there let us put all the Wealth of this World, and not in our Hearts.

2. Upon the Nobles, or Elders, of Israel he laid not his hand, v. 11. Tho' they were Men, the dazzling Splendor of his Glory did not overwhelm them, but it was so moderated, (Job 26. 9.) and they were so strengthened, (Dan. 10. 19.) that they were able to bear it; nay, tho' they were sinful Men, and obnoxious to God's Justice, yet he did not lay his punishing avenging Hand upon them, as they feared he would. When we consider what a consuming Fire God is, and what Scrubbe we are before him, we shall have reason to say in all our Approaches to him, *It is of the Lord's Mercies that we are not consumed.*

3. They saw God, and did eat and drink; they had not only their Lives preserved, but their Vigour, Courage, and Comfort, it cast no damp upon their Joy, but rather increased and elevated it. They feasted upon the Sacrifice before God, in token of their cheerful Consent to the Covenant now made, their grateful Acceptance of the Benefits of it, and their Communion with God, in pursuance of that Covenant. Thus Believers eat and drink with Christ at his Table, Luke 22. 30. Blessed are they that shall eat Bread in the Kingdom of our Father, and drink of the Wine new there.

12 And the LORD said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them. 13 And Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua: and Moses went up into the mount of God. 14 And he

he said unto the elders, Tarry ye here for us, until we come again unto you: and behold, Aaron and Hur are with you: If a man have any matters to do, let him come unto them. 15 And Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount. 16 And the glory of the LORD abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud. 17 And the sight of the glory of the LORD was like devouring fire on the top of the mount, in the eyes of the children of Israel. 18 And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.

The publick Ceremony of sealing the Covenant being over, Moses is called up to receive further Instructions, which we have in the following Chapters.

1. He is called up into the Mount, and there he remains six Days at some distance; Orders are given him, v. 12. Come up to the Mount, and be there, i. e. expect to continue there for some considerable time. Those that would have Communion with God, must not only come to Ordinances, but they must abide by them: Blessed are they that dwell in his House, not that only call there; come up, and I will give thee a Law, that thou mayest teach them. Moses taught them nothing but what he had received from the Lord, and he received nothing from the Lord but what he taught them, for he was faithful both to God and Israel, and did neither add nor diminish, but kept close to his Instructions.

Having received these Orders, (1.) He appointed Aaron and Hur to be as Lords Justices in his absence, to keep the Peace and good Order in the Congregation, v. 14. The Care of his Government he would leave behind him, when he went up into the Mount, that he might not have that to distract his Mind; and yet he would not leave the People as Sheep having no Shepherd, no, not for a few days: Good Princes find their Government a constant Care, and their People find it a constant Blessing. (2.) He took Joshua up with him into the Mount, v. 13. Joshua was his Minister, and it would be a Satisfaction to him, to have him with him as a Companion during the six Days that he tarried in the Mount, before God called to him. Joshua was to be his Successor, and therefore thus he was honoured before the People above the rest of the Elders, that they might afterwards the more readily take him for their Governor; and thus he was prepared for Service, by being trained up in Communion with God. Joshua was a Type of Christ, and (as the learned Bishop Pearson well observes) Moses takes him with him into the Mount, because without Jesus, in whom are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge, there is no looking into the Secrets of Heaven, nor approaching the glorious Presence of God. (3.) A Cloud covered the Mount six Days; a visible Token of God's special Presence there, for he so shews himself to us, as at the same time to conceal himself from us: He lets us know so much as to assure us of his Presence, Power, and Grace, but intimates to us, that we cannot find him out to Perfection. During these six Days, Moses staid waiting upon the Mountain, for a Call into the Presence-Chamber, v. 15, 16. God thus tried the Patience of Moses, and his Obedience to that Command, v. 12. be there. If Moses had been tried before the seventh Day, (as Saul, 1 Sam. 13. 8.) and had said, What should I wait for the Lord any longer? he had lost the Honour of entering into the Cloud; but Communion with God is worth waiting for. And 'tis fit we should address ourselves to solemn Ordinances with a solemn Pause, taking time to compose ourselves. Psal. 108. 1.

2. He is called up into the Cloud, on the seventh Day, probably the Sabbath-day, v. 16. Now the thick Cloud opened in the sight of all Israel, and the Glory of the Lord broke forth like devouring Fire, v. 17. God, even our God, is a consuming Fire, and so he was pleased to manifest himself in the giving the Law, that knowing the Terrors of the Lord, we may be persuaded to obey, and may by them be prepared for the Comforts of the Gospel, and that the Grace and Truth, which come by Jesus Christ, may be the more acceptable.

Now, (1.) The Entrance of Moses into the Cloud was very wonderful; Moses went into the midst of the Cloud, v. 18. 'Twas an extraordinary Presence of Mind, which the Grace of God furnished him with, by his six Days Preparation, else he durst not have ventured into the Cloud, especially when it broke out in devouring Fire. Moses was sure he that called him would protect him, and even those glorious Attributes of God, which are most terrible to the Wicked, the Saints with a humble Reverence rejoice in. He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly, is able to dwell even with this devouring Fire, as we are told, Isa. 33. 14, 15. There are Persons and Works that

will abide the Fire, 1 Cor. 3. 12, &c. and some that will have Confidence before God.

(2.) His Continuance in the Cloud was no less wonderful, he was there forty Days and forty Nights. It should seem the six Days, v. 16. were not part of the Forty, for during those six Days, Joshua was with Moses, who did eat of the Manna, and drink of the Brook, mentioned Deut. 9. 21. and while they were together, 'tis probable Moses did eat and drink with him; but when Moses was called into the midst of the Cloud, he left Joshua without, who continued to eat and drink daily while he waited for Moses's Return, but from thenceforward Moses fasted. Doubtless God could have said, what he had now to say to Moses, in one day; but for the greater Solemnity of the thing, he kept him with him in the Mount forty Days and forty Nights. We are hereby taught to spend much time in Communion with God, and to think that time best spent, which is so spent. They that would get the Knowledge of God's Will, must meditate thereon Day and Night.

C H A P. XXV.

At this Chapter begins an Account of the Orders and Instructions God gave to Moses upon the Mount, for the erecting and furnishing of a Tabernacle to the Honour of God. Here, 1. Orders given for a Collection to be made among the People for this purpose, v. 1—9. 2. Particular Instructions, (1.) Concerning the Ark of the Covenant, v. 10—22. (2.) The Table of Shew-bread, v. 23—30. (3.) The Golden Candlestick, v. 31. ad fin.

1 AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart, ye shall take my offering. 3 And this is the offering which ye shall take of them: gold, and silver, and brasse, 4 And blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats hair, 5 And rams skins died red, and badgers skins, and shittim-wood, 6 Oil for the light, spices for anointing oil, and for sweet incense, 7 Onyx-stones, and stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breast-plate. 8 And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell amongst them. 9 According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.

We may suppose, that when Moses went into the midst of the Cloud, and abode there so long, where the Holy Angels attended the Shechinah, or Divine Majesty, he saw and heard very glorious things relating to the upper World, but they were things which it was not lawful or possible to utter; and therefore in the Records he kept, of the Transactions there, he saith nothing to satisfy the Curiosity of those, who would intrude into the things which they have not seen, but writes that only which he was to speak to the Children of Israel: For the Scripture is designed to direct us in our Duty, not to fill our Heads with Speculations, or to please our Fancies.

In these Verses God tells Moses his Intention in general, that the Children of Israel should build him a Sanctuary, for he designed to dwell among them, v. 8. And some think, that tho' there were Altars and Groves used for religious Worship before this, yet there never was any House or Temple built for Sacred Uses in any Nation, before this Tabernacle was erected by Moses; and that all the Temples, which were afterwards so much celebrated among the Heathen, took rise from this, and pattern by it. God had chosen the People of Israel to be a peculiar People to himself, above all People, among whom Divine Revelation, and a Religion according to it, should be lodged and established: He himself would be their King. As their King, he had already given them Laws for the Government of themselves and their Dealings one with another, with some general Rules for religious Worship, according to the Light of Reason, and the Law of Nature, in the ten Commandments, and the following Comments upon them. But this was not thought sufficient to distinguish them from other Nations, or to answer the Extent of that Covenant God would make with them, to be their God, and therefore he orders a Royal Palace to be set up among them for himself, here called a Sanctuary, or Holy Place, or Habitation; of which it is said, Jer. 17. 12. A glorious high Throne from the beginning, is the place of our Sanctuary. This Sanctuary is to be considered,

1. As Ceremonial, consonant to the other Institutions of that Dispensation, which consisted in carnal Ordinances, Heb. 9. 10. hence it is called a worldly Sanctuary, Heb. 9. 1. God in

in it kept his Court, as Israel's King. (1.) There he manifested his Presence among them, and it was intended for a Sign or Token of his Presence, that while they had that in the midst of them, they might never again ask, *Is the Lord among us or not?* And because in the Wilderness they dwelt in Tents, even this Royal Palace was ordered to be a Tabernacle too, that it might move with them, and might be an Instance of the Condescensions of the Divine Favour. (2.) There he ordered his Subjects to attend him with their Homage and Tribute. Thither they must come to consult his Oracles, thither they must bring their Sacrifices, and there all Israel must meet to pay their joint Respects to the God of Israel.

2. As Typical; the holy Places made with hands were the Figures of the true, Heb. 9. 24. The Gospel-Church is the true Tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not Man, Heb. 8. 2. The Body of Christ, in and by which he made Atonement, was the greater and more perfect Tabernacle, Heb. 9. 11. The Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us, as in a Tabernacle.

Now when Moses was to erect this Palace, 'twas requisite he should first be instructed where he must have the Materials, and where he must have the Model; for he could neither contrive it by his own Ingenuity, nor build it at his own Charge. He is therefore directed here concerning both.

1. The People must furnish him with the Materials, not by a Tax imposed upon them, but by a voluntary Contribution. This is the first thing concerning which Orders are here given, v. 2. *Speak unto the children of Israel that they bring me an Offering*, and all the reason in the World they should; for, (1.) 'Twas God himself that had not only enlarged them, but enriched them with the Spoils of the Egyptians; he had instructed them to borrow, and he had inclined the Egyptians to lend, so that from him they had their Wealth, and therefore 'twas fit they should devote it to him, and use it for him, and thus make a grateful Acknowledgment of the Favours they had received. Note 1. The best use we can make of our worldly Wealth, is, to honour God with it in Works of Piety and Charity. 2. When we have been blessed with some remarkable Success in our Affairs, and have had, as we say, a good Hit, it may be justly expected that we should do something more than ordinary for the Glory of God, consecrating our Gain in some reasonable proportion of it to the Lord of the whole Earth, Mic. 4. 13. (2.) The Sanctuary that was to be built, was intended for their Benefit and Comfort, and therefore they must be at the expence of it. They had been unworthy of the Privilege, if they had grugged at the Charge. They might well afford to offer liberally for the Honour of God, while they lived upon Free-Quarter, having Food for themselves and their Families rained upon them daily from Heaven. We also must own that we have our All from God's Bounty, and therefore ought to use all for his Glory. Since we live upon him, we must live to him.

This Offering must be given willingly, and with the Heart; that is, 1. It was not prescribed to them what, or how much they must give, but it was left to their Generosity, that they might shew their Good-will to the House of God, and the Offices thereof, and might do it with an Holy Emulation, the Zeal of a few provoking many, 2 Cor. 9. 2. We should ask not only what we must do, but what may we do for God. 2. Whatever they gave they must give it cheerfully, and not grudgingly, and with reluctance; for God loves a cheerful Giver, 2 Cor. 9. 7. What is laid out in the service of God, we must reckon well bestowed.

The Particulars are here mentioned which they must offer, v. 3—7. all of them things that there would be occasion for in the Tabernacle, or the Service of it. Some observe that here was Gold, Silver, and Brass provided, but no Iron, that's the military Metal, and this was to be a House of Peace. Every thing that was provided was very rich and fine, and the best of the sort; for God, who is the best, should have the best.

2. God himself would furnish him with the Model, v. 9. according to all that I shew thee. God shewed him an exact Plan of it, in little, which he must conform to in all Points. Thus Ezekiel saw, in Vision, the Form of the House, and the Fashion thereof, Ezek. 43. 11. Note, Whatever is done in God's Service, must be done by his Direction, and not otherwise; yet God did not only shew him the Model, but gave him also particular Directions how to frame the Tabernacle, according to that Model, in all the Parts of it, which he goes over distinctly in this and the following Chapters. When Moses, in the beginning of Genesis, was to describe the Creation of the World, tho' it be such a stately and curious Fabrick, and made up of such a variety and vast number of Particulars, yet he gave a very short and general account of it, and nothing to what the Wisdom of this World would have desired and expected from one that wrote by Divine Revelation; but when he comes to describe the Tabernacle, he doth it with the greatest niceness and accuracy imaginable. He thus gave us no account of the Lines and Circles

of the Globe, the Diameter of the Earth, or the Height and Magnitude of the Stars, has told us particularly the Measure of every Board and Curtain of the Tabernacle; for God's Church and instituted Religion is more precious to him, and more considerable, than all the rest of the World. And the Scriptures were written, not to describe to us the Works of Nature, a general View of which is sufficient to lead us to the Knowledge and Service of the Creator; but to acquaint us with the Methods of Grace, and those things which are purely matters of Divine Revelation. The Blessedness of the future State is more fully represented under the notion of a New Jerusalem, than under the notion of New Heavens, and a New Earth.

10 And they shall make an ark of shittim-wood: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. 11 And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, within and without shalt thou overlay it: and shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about. 12 And thou shalt cast four rings of gold for it, and put them in the four corners thereof: and two rings shall be in the one side of it, and two rings in the other side of it. 13 And thou shalt make staves of shittim-wood, and overlay them with gold. 14 And thou shalt put the staves into the rings, by the sides of the ark, that the ark may be born with them. 15 The staves shall be in the rings of the ark: they shall not be taken from it. 16 And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee. 17 And thou shalt make a mercy-seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. 18 And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold: of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy-seat. 19 And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the mercy-seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. 20 And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy-seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another: toward the mercy-seat shall the faces of the cherubims be. 21 And thou shalt put the mercy-seat above upon the ark, and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. 22 And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee, from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.

The first thing which is here ordered to be made is the Ark, and its Appurtenances, the Furniture of the most Holy Place, and the special Token of God's Presence; the Tabernacle was erected to be the Receptacle of that.

1. The Ark itself was a Chest or Coffin, in which the two Tables of the Law, written with the Finger of God, were to be honourably deposited, and carefully kept. The Dimensions of it are exactly ordered; if the Jewish Cubit was, as some learned Men compute, three Inches longer than our half-yard (twenty-one Inches in all) this Chest or Cabinet was about fifty-two Inches long, thirty-one broad, and thirty-one deep. 'Twas overlaid within and without with thin Plates of Gold. It had a Crown, or Cornish of Gold round it, Rings and Staves to carry it with, and in it he must put the Testimony, v. 10—16. The Tables of the Law are called the Testimony, because God did in them testify his Will; his giving them that Law was in token of his Favour to them, and their Acceptance of it was in token of their Subjection and Obedience to him. This Law was a Testimony to them to direct them in their Duty, and would be a Testimony against them if they did transgress. The Ark is called the Ark of the Testimony, Exod. 30. 6. and the Tabernacle, the Tabernacle of Testimony, Numb. 10. 11. or Witness, Acts 7. 44. The Gospel of Christ is also called a Testimony, or Witness, Mar. 24. 14. It is observable,

(1.) That the Tables of the Law were carefully preserved in the Ark for the purpose, to teach us to make much of the Word of God, and to hide it in our Hearts, in our innermost Thoughts, as the Ark was placed in the Holy of Holies.

It intimates likewise the Care which Divine Providence ever did, and ever will take to preserve the Records of Divine Revelation in the Church, so that even in the latter days there shall be *seen in his Temple the Ark of his Testament*. See Rev. 11. 19.

(2.) That this Ark was the chief Token of God's Presence, which teacheth us, that the first and great Evidence and Assurance of God's Favour, is the putting of his Law in the Heart. God dwells where that rules, Heb. 8. 10.

(3.) That Provision was made for the carrying of this Ark about with them in all their Removes; which intimates to us, that wherever we go, we should take our Religion along with us, *always bearing about with us the Love of the Lord Jesus, and his Law*.

2. The Mercy-seat was the Covering of the Ark or Chest, made of *solid Gold*, exactly to fit the Dimensions of the Ark, v. 17, 21. This propitiatory Covering, as it might well be translated, was a Type of Christ, the great Propitiation, whose Satisfaction fully answers the Demands of the Law, covers our Transgressions, and comes between us and the Curse we deserve. Thus he is the *End of the Law for Righteousness*.

3. The Cherubims of Gold were fixed to the Mercy-seat, and of a piece with it, and spread their Wings over it, v. 18. 'Tis supposed these Cherubims were designed to represent the Holy Angels, who always attended the Shechinah, or Divine Majesty, particularly at the giving of the Law, not by any Effigies of an Angel, but some Emblem of the Angelical Nature, probably some one of those *four Faces* spoken of, Ezek. 1. 10. Whatever the Faces were, they looked *one towards another*, and both downwards towards the Ark, while their Wings were stretched out so as to touch one another. The Apostle calls them, *Cherubims of Glory shadowing the Mercy-seat*, Heb. 9. 5. It notes their Attendance upon the Redeemer, to whom they were ministering Spirits, their Readiness to do his Will, their special Presence in the Assemblies of Saints, Psal. 68. 17. 1 Cor. 11. 10. and their Desire to look into the Mysteries of the Gospel, which they diligently contemplate, 1 Pet. 1. 12. God is said to dwell or sit between the Cherubims, on the Mercy-seat, Psal. 80. 2. and from thence he here promiseth, for the future, to meet with Moses, and to commune with him, v. 22. There he would give Law, and there he would give Audience, as a Prince on his Throne; and thus he manifests himself willing to be reconciled to us, and keep up Communion with us in and by the Mediation of Christ. In allusion to this Mercy-seat, we are said to come boldly to the Throne of Grace, Heb. 4. 16. for we are not under the Law that's covered, but under Grace that's displayed, its Wings are stretched out, and we are invited to come under the shadow of them, Ruth. 2. 12.

23 Thou shalt also make a table of shittim-wood: two cubits shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. 24 And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, and make thereto a crown of gold round about. 25 And thou shalt make unto it a border of an hand-breadth round about, and thou shalt make a golden crown to the border thereof round about. 26 And thou shalt make for it four rings of gold, and put the rings in the four corners that are on the four feet thereof. 27 Over against the border shall the rings be for places of the staves to bear the table. 28 And thou shalt make the staves of shittim-wood, and overlay them with gold, that the table may be born with them. 29 And thou shalt make the dishes thereof, and spoons thereof, and covers thereof, and bowls thereof, to cover withal: of pure gold shalt thou make them. 30 And thou shalt set upon the table shew-bread before me alway.

Here's, 1. A Table ordered to be made of Wood overlaid with Gold, which was to stand not in the Holy of Holies (nothing was in that but the Ark only with its Appurtenances) but in the outer part of the Tabernacle, called the Sanctuary, or Holy Place, Heb. 9. 2. v. 23, &c. There must also be the usual Furniture of the Side-board, Dishes, and Spoons, &c. and all of Gold, v. 29.

2. This Table was to be always spread, and furnished with the Shew-Bread, v. 30. or Bread of Faces, twelve Loaves, one for each Tribe, set in two Rows, six in a Row; see the Law concerning them, Lev. 24. 5, &c. The Tabernacle being God's House, in which he was pleased to say, he would dwell among them, he would shew that he kept a good House. In the Royal Palace, 'twas fit there should be a Royal Table. Some make the twelve Loaves to represent the twelve Tribes, set before God as his People, and the Corn of his Floor,

as they are call'd, Isa. 21. 10. As the Ark signified God's being present with them, so the twelve Loaves signified their being presented to God. This Bread was designed to be,

1. A thankful Acknowledgment of God's Goodness to them, in giving them their daily Bread, Manna in the Wilderness, where he prepared a Table for them, and in Canaan the Corn of the Land. Hereby they owned their Dependence upon Providence, not only for the Corn in the Field, which they gave Thanks for in offering the Sheaf of First-Fruits, but for the Bread in their Houses, that when it was brought home, God did not blow upon it, Hag. 1. 9. Christ has taught us to pray every Day for the Bread of the Day. 2. A Token of their Communion with God, this Bread on God's Table being made of the same Corn with the Bread on their own Tables, God and Israel did as it were eat together, as a Pledge of Friendship and Fellowship, he sup'd with them, and they with him. 3. A Type of the spiritual Provision which is made in the Church, by the Gospel of Christ, for all that are made Priests to our God. In our Father's House there is Bread enough and to spare, a Loaf for every Tribe. All that attend in God's House, shall be abundantly satisfied with the Goodness of it, Psal. 36. 8. Divine consolations are the continual Feasts of Holy Souls, however there are those to whom the Table of the Lord, and the Meat thereof, because it is plain Bread, is contemptible, Mal. 1. 12. Christ hath a Table in his Kingdom, at which all his Saints shall for ever eat and drink with him, Luke 22. 29.

31 And thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold: of beaten work shall the candlestick be made; his shaft, and his branches, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers shall be of the same. 32 And six branches shall come out of the sides of it; three branches of the candlestick out of the one side, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side. 33 Three bowls made like unto almonds, with a knop and a flower in one branch; and three bowls made like almonds in the other branch, with a knop and a flower: so in the six branches that come out of the candlestick. 34 And in the candlestick shall be four bowls made like unto almonds, with their knops and their flowers. 35 And there shall be a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, according to the six branches that proceed out of the candlestick. 36 Their knops and their branches shall be of the same; all it shall be one beaten work of pure gold. 37 And thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof; and they shall light the lamps thereof, that they may give light over against it. 38 And the tongs thereof, and the snuff-dishes thereof, shall be of pure gold. 39 Of a talent of pure gold shall he make it, with all these vessels. 40 And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount.

The next thing ordered to be made for the furnishing of God's Palace, was a rich stately Candlestick, all of pure Gold, not hollow, but solid. The particular Directions here given concerning it, shew, (1.) That it was very magnificent, and a great Ornament to the Place; it had many Branches drawn from the main Shaft, which had not only their Bowls to put the Oil and the kindled Wick in for Necessity, but they had Knops and Flowers for Ornament. (2.) That it was very convenient, and admirably well contrived, both to scatter the Light, and to keep the Tabernacle clean from Smoak and Snuffs. (3.) It was very significant. The Tabernacle had no Windows, by which to let in the Light of the Day, all its Light was Candle-Light, which notes the comparative Darkeness of that Dispensation, while the Sun of Righteousness was not as yet risen, nor had the Day-star from on high yet visited his Church; yet God left not himself without Witness, nor them without Instruction, the Commandment was a Lamp, and the Law a Light, and the Prophets were Branches from that Lamp, which gave Light in their several Ages to the Old-Testament Church. The Church is still dark, as the Tabernacle was, in comparison with what it will be in Heaven; but the Word of God is the Candlestick, a Light shining in a dark Place, 2 Pet. 1. 19. and a dark Place indeed the World would be without it. The Spirit of God, in his various Gifts and Graces, is compared to the seven Lamps which burn before the Throne, Rev. 4. 5. The Churches are Golden Candlesticks, the Lights of the World, holding forth the Word of Life, as the Candlestick doth the

the Light, *Phil.* 2. 15, 16. Ministers are to light the Lamps, and snuff them, *v.* 37. by opening the Scriptures. The Treasure of this Light is now put into *earthen Vessels*, *2 Cor.* 4. 6, 7. The Branches of the Candlestick spread every way, to note the diffusing of the Light of the Gospel into all Parts, by the Ministry, *Mat.* 5. 14, 15. There is a *Diversity of Gifts*, but the same Spirit gives to each to profit withal.

Lastly, There is, in the midst of these Instructions, an express Caution given to *Moses*, to take heed of varying from his Model, *v.* 40. *make them after the Pattern shewed thee*. Nothing was left to his own Invention, or the Fancy of the Workmen, or the People's Humour, but the Will of God must be religiously observed in every particular. Thus, (1.) All God's Providences are exactly according to his Counsels, and the Copy never varies from the Original. Infinite Wisdom never changeth its Measures; whatever is purposed, shall undoubtedly be performed. (2.) All his Ordinances must be administered according to his Institutions. Christ's Instruction to his Disciples, *Mat.* 28. 20. is like this here, *Observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you*.

CHAP. XXVI.

Moses here receives Instructions, (1.) Concerning the inner Curtains of the Tent or Tabernacle, and the coupling of those Curtains, v. 1—6. (2.) Concerning the outer Curtains, which were of Goats Hair, to strengthen the former, v. 7—13. (3.) Concerning the Case or Cover which was to secure it from the Weather, v. 14. (4.) Concerning the Boards which were to be reared up to support the Curtains, with their Bars and Sockets, v. 15—30. (5.) The Partition between the Holy Place, and the most Holy, v. 31—33. (6.) The Veil for the Door, v. 36, 37. These Particulars thus largely recorded seem of little use to us now, yet having been of great use to Moses and Israel, and God having thought fit to preserve down to us the Remembrance of them, we ought not to overlook them. Even the Antiquity renders this Account venerable.

Moreover, thou shalt make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet: with cherubims of cunning work shalt thou make them. 2 The length of one curtain shall be eight and twenty cubits, and the breadth of one curtain four cubits: and every one of the curtains shall have one measure. 3 The five curtains shall be coupled together one to another: and other five curtains shall be coupled one to another. 4 And thou shalt make loops of blue upon the edge of the one curtain, from the selvedge in the coupling: and likewise thou shalt make in the uttermost edge of another curtain, in the coupling of the second. 5 Fifty loops shalt thou make in the one curtain, and fifty loops shalt thou make in the edge of the curtain, that is in the coupling of the second; that the loops may take hold one of another. 6 And thou shalt make fifty taches of gold, and couple the curtains together with the taches, and it shall be one tabernacle.

The House must be a *Tabernacle*, or *Tent*, such as Soldiers now use in the Camp, which was both a *mean Dwelling*, and a *movable one*; and yet the Ark of God had no better, till *Solomon* built the Temple four hundred and eighty Years after this, *1 Kings* 6. 1. God manifested his Preference among them thus in a *Tabernacle*, (1.) In compliance with their present Condition in the Wilderness, that they might have him with them wherever they went. *Note*, God suits the Tokens of his Favour, and the Gifts of his Grace, to his People's Wants and Necessities, according as they are, accommodating his Mercy to their State, prosperous or adverse, settled or unsettled: *When thou passest through the Waters, I will be with thee*, *Isa.* 43. 2. (2.) That it might represent the State of God's Church in this World, 'tis a *Tabernacle-state*, *Psal.* 15. 1. *We have here no continuing City*, being Strangers in this World, and Travellers towards a better, we shall never be fixed till we come to Heaven. Church-Privileges are *movable Goods* from one Place to another, the Gospel is not tied to any place; the Candlestick is in a Tent, and may easily be taken away, *Rev.* 2. 5. If we make much of the Tabernacle, and improve the Privilege of it, wherever we go it will accompany us; but if we neglect and disgrace it, wherever we stay, it will forsake us: *What hath my Beloved to do in my House?* *Jer.* 11. 15.

Now, 1. The Curtains of the Tabernacle were to be very rich, the best of the kind, *fine twined Linen*, and Colours *v.* O L. 1.

ry pleasing, blue, and purple, and scarlet. 2. They were to be embroidered with *Cherubims*, *v.* 1. to intimate that the Angels of God pitched their Tents round about the Church, *Pf.* 34. 7. As there were Cherubims over the Mercy-seat, so there were round the Tabernacle; for we find the Angels compassing not only the Throne, but the Elders, see *Rev.* 5. 11. 3. There were to be two Hangings, five Breadths in each, sewn together, and the two Hangings coupled together with Golden Clasps, or Tacks, so that it might be all *one Tabernacle*, *v.* 6. Thus the Churches of Christ and the Saints, tho' they are many, yet they are *one*, being *fastly joined together* in Holy Love, and by the *Unity of the Spirit*, so growing into one Holy Temple in the Lord, *Eph.* 2. 21, 22.—4. 16. This Tabernacle was very strait and narrow, but at the preaching of the Gospel, the Church is bid to *enlarge the place of her Tent*, and to *stretch forth her Curtains*, *Isa.* 54. 2.

7 And thou shalt make curtains of goats hair to be a covering upon the tabernacle: eleven curtains shalt thou make. 8 The length of one curtain shall be thirty cubits, and the breadth of one curtain, four cubits: and the eleven curtains shall be all of one measure. 9 And thou shalt couple five curtains by themselves, and six curtains by themselves, and shalt double the sixth curtain in the fore-front of the tabernacle. 10 And thou shalt make fifty loops on the edge of the one curtain that is outmost in the coupling, and fifty loops in the edge of the curtain which coupleth the second. 11 And thou shalt make fifty taches of brass, and put the taches into the loops, and couple the tent together that it may be one. 12 And the remnant that remaineth of the curtains of the tent, the half-curtain that remaineth, shall hang over the back-side of the tabernacle. 13 And a cubit on the one side, and a cubit on the other side of that which remaineth in the length of the curtains of the tent, it shall hang over the sides of the tabernacle, on this side, and on that side, to cover it. 14 And thou shalt make a covering for the tent, of rams skins dyed red, and a covering above of badgers skins.

Moses is here ordered to make a double Covering for the Tabernacle, that it might not rain, and that the Beauty of those fine Curtains might not be damaged.

1. There was to be a Covering of Hair Camlet Curtains, which were somewhat larger every way than the inner Curtains, because they were to inclose them, and probably were stretched out at some little distance from them, *v.* 7, *etc.* These were coupled together with Brass Clasps. The stuff being less valuable, the Tacks were so, but the Brass Tacks would answer the Intention as effectually as the Golden ones. The Bonds of Unity may be as strong between Curtains of Goats Hair, as between those of Purple and Scarlet.

2. Over this there was to be another Covering, and that a double one, *v.* 14. one of Rams Skins dyed red, probably dressed with the Wool on, another of Badgers Skins, so we translate it, but it should rather seem to have been some strong sort of Leather (but very fine) for we read of the best sort of Shoes made of it, *Ezek.* 16. 10. Now observe here, 1. That the outside of the Tabernacle was coarse and rough, the Beauty of it was in the inner Curtains. Those in whom God dwells must labour to be better than they seem to be; Hypocrites put the best side outward, like *whited Sepulchres*, but the King's Daughter is all glorious within, *Psal.* 45. 13. in the eye of the World, black as the Tents of Kedar, but in the eye of God, comely as the Curtains of Solomon, *Cant.* 1. 5. Let our adorning be that of the hidden Man of the Heart, which God values, *1 Pet.* 3. 4. 2. That where God placeth his Glory, he will create a Defence upon it, even upon the Habitations of the Righteous there shall be a Court, *Isa.* 4. 5, 6. The Protection of Providence shall always be upon the Beauty of Holiness. God's Tent will be a Pavilion, *Psal.* 27. 5.

15 And thou shalt make boards for the tabernacle, of shittim-wood, standing up. 16 Ten cubits shall be the length of a board, and a cubit and a half shall be the breadth of one board. 17 Two tenons shall there be in one board, set in order one against another: thus shalt thou make for all the boards of the tabernacle. 18 And thou shalt make the boards for the tabernacle, twenty boards on the south-side, south-ward. 19 And thou shalt make

forty sockets of silver, under the twenty boards : two sockets under one board for his two tenons, and two sockets under another board for his two tenons. 20 And for the second side of the tabernacle on the north-side, *there shall be twenty boards,* 21 And their forty sockets of silver : two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board. 22 And for the sides of the tabernacle west-ward, thou shalt make six boards. 23 And two boards shalt thou make for the corners of the tabernacle in the two sides. 24 And they shall be coupled together beneath, and they shall be coupled together above the head of it unto one ring : thus shall it be for them both ; they shall be for the two corners. 25 And they shall be eight boards, and their sockets of silver, sixteen sockets : two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board. 26 And thou shalt make bars of shittim-wood : five for the boards of the one side of the tabernacle, 27 And five bars for the boards of the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the side of the tabernacle for the two sides west-ward. 28 And the middle bar in the midst of the boards shall reach from end to end. 29 And thou shalt overlay the boards with gold, and make their rings of gold for places for the bars : and thou shalt overlay the bars with gold. 30 And thou shalt rear up the tabernacle according to the fashion thereof, which was shewed thee in the mount.

Very particular Directions are here given about the *Boards of the Tabernacle*, which were to bear up the Curtains, as the *Stakes of a Tent*, which had need to be strong, *Isa. 54. 2.* These Boards had Tenons, which fell into the Mortaises that were made for them in silver Bases : God took care to have every thing strong as well as fine in his Tabernacle. Curtains without Boards would have been shaken by every Wind, but it is a good thing to have the Heart established with Grace ; that is, as the Boards to support the Curtains of Profession, which otherwise would not hold out long. The Boards were coupled together with Gold Rings at top and bottom, *v. 24.* and kept firm with Bars, that run thro' Golden Staples in every Board, *v. 26.* And the Boards and Bars were all richly gilded, *v. 29.* Thus every thing in the Tabernacle was very splendid, agreeable to that Infant-State of the Church, when such things were proper enough to please Children, and to possess the Minds of the Worshipers with a Reverence of the Divine Glory, and to affect them with the Greatness of that Prince, who said, *Here will I dwell ;* in allusion to this, the new *Jerusalem* is said to be of pure Gold, *Rev. 21. 18.* But the Builders of the Gospel-Church said, *Silver and Gold have we none,* and yet the Glory of their Building far exceeded that of the Tabernacle, *2 Cor. 3. 10, 11.* *How much better is Wisdom than Gold !* No Orders are given here about the Floor of the Tabernacle, probably that also was boarded, for we cannot think that within all these fine Curtains they trod upon the cold or wet Ground ; if it were so left, it may mind us of *Exodus 20. 24.* *An Altar of Earth shalt thou make unto me.*

13 And thou shalt make a veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work : with cherubims shall it be made. 32 And thou shalt hang it upon four pillars of shittim-wood, overlaid with gold : their hooks shall be of gold, upon the four sockets of silver. 33 And thou shalt hang up the veil under the taches, that thou mayest bring in thither within the veil, the ark of the testimony : and the veil shall divide unto you, between the holy place and the most holy. 34 And thou shalt put the mercy-seat upon the ark of the testimony, in the most holy place. 35 And thou shalt set the table without the veil, and the candlestick over against the table, on the side of the tabernacle towards the south : and thou shalt put the table on the north-side. 36 And thou shalt make an hanging for the door of the tent, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needle-work. 37 And thou shalt make for the hanging five pillars

of shittim-wood, and overlay them with gold, and their hooks shall be of gold : and thou shalt cast five sockets of bras for them.

Two Veils are here ordered to be made : (1.) One for a Partition between the Holy Place and the Most Holy, which not only forbid any to enter, but forbid them so much as to look into the Holiest of all, *v. 31, 33.* under that Dispensation Divine Grace was veiled, but now we behold it with open face, *2 Cor. 3. 18.* The Apostle tells us, *Heb. 9. 8.* what was the meaning of this Veil ; it intimated, that the Ceremonial Law could not make the *Comers thereunto perfect*, nor would the Observance of it bring Men to Heaven ; the way into the Holiest of all was not made manifest while the first Tabernacle was standing, Life and Immortality lay concealed till they were brought to light by the Gospel, which was therefore signified by the rending of this Veil at the Death of Christ, *Mat. 27. 51.* We have now Boldness to enter into the Holiest ; in all Acts of Devotion, by the Blood of Jesus ; yet such as obliges us to a holy Reverence, and a humble Sense of our distance.

(2.) Another Veil was for the outer Door of the Tabernacle, *v. 36, 37.* Thro' this first Veil the Priests went in every day to minister in the Holy Place, but not the People, *Heb. 9. 6.* This Veil was all the Defence the Tabernacle had against Thieves and Robbers, which might easily be broken thro', for it could be neither locked nor barred, and the abundance of Wealth in the Tabernacle one would think might be a Temptation ; but by leaving it thus exposed, 1. The Priests and Levites would be so much the more obliged to keep a strict watch upon it : And, 2. God would shew his Care of his Church on Earth, tho' it be weak and defenceless, and continually exposed. A Curtain shall be (if God please to make it so) as strong a Defence to his House, as Gates of Bras, and Bars of Iron.

C H A P. XXVII.

In this Chapter Directions are given, 1. Concerning the brazen Altar for Burnt-Offerings, *v. 1—8.* 2. Concerning the Court of the Tabernacle, with the Hangings of it, *v. 9—19.* 3. Concerning Oil for the Lamp, *v. 20, 21.*

1 AND thou shalt make an altar of shittim-wood five cubits long, and five cubits broad : the altar shall be four-square, and the height thereof shall be three cubits. 2 And thou shalt make the horns of it upon the four corners thereof : his horns shall be of the same ; and thou shalt overlay it with bras. 3 And thou shalt make his pans to receive his ashes, and his shovels, and his basons, and his flesh-hooks, and his fire-pans : all the vessels thereof thou shalt make of bras. 4 And thou shalt make for it a grate of network of bras ; and upon the net shalt thou make four brazen-rings in the four corners thereof. 5 And thou shalt put it under the compass of the altar beneath, that the net may be even to the midst of the altar. 6 And thou shalt make staves for the altar, staves of shittim-wood, and overlay them with bras. 7 And the staves shall be put into the rings, and the staves shall be upon the two sides of the altar to bear it. 8 Hollow with boards shalt thou make it : as it was shewed thee in the mount, so shall they make it.

As God intended in the Tabernacle to manifest his Presence among his People, so there they were to pay their Devotions to him, not in the Tabernacle itself, into that only the Priests entered as God's domestick Servants, but in the Court before the Tabernacle, where, as common Subjects, they attended : There an Altar was ordered to be set up, to which they must bring their Sacrifices, and on which their Priests must offer them to God, and this Altar was to sanctify their Gifts ; from hence they were to present their Services to God, as from the Mercy-Seat he gave his Oracles to them, and thus a Communion was settled between God and Israel. Moses is here directed about the Dimensions of it, 'twas four-square, *v. 1.* The Horns of it, *v. 2.* which were for Ornament, and for Use, the Sacrifices were bound with Cords to the Horns of the Altar, and to them Malefactors fled for Refuge ; the Materials, 'twas of Wood overlaid with Bras, *v. 1, 2.* the Appurtenances of it, *v. 3.* which were all of Bras ; the Grate, which was let into the hollow of the Altar, about the middle of it, in which the Fire was kept, and the Sacrifice burnt ; 'twas made of Net-work, like a Sieve, and hung hollow,

low, that the Fire might burn the better, and that the Ashes might fall thro' into the hollow of the Altar, v. 4, 5. Also concerning the Staves with which it must be carried, v. 6, 7. And lastly, he is referred to the Pattern shewed him, v. 9.

Now this brazen Altar was a Type of Christ dying to make atonement for our Sins; the Wood had been consumed by the Fire from Heaven, if it had not been secured by the Brass, nor could the human Nature of Christ have borne the Wrath of God, if it had not been supported by a Divine Power: Christ sanctified himself for his Church, as their Altar, John 17. 19. and by his Mediation sanctifies the daily Services of his People, who also have a right to eat of this Altar, Heb. 13. 10. for they serve at it as spiritual Priests. To the Horns of this Altar poor Sinners fly for Refuge when Justice pursues them, and there they are safe in the virtue of the Sacrifice there offered.

9 And thou shalt make the court of the tabernacle for the south-side, southward: there shall be hangings for the court of fine twined linen of an hundred cubits long, for one side. 10 And the twenty pillars thereof, and their twenty sockets, shall be of brass: the hooks of the pillars, and their fillets, shall be of silver. 11 And likewise for the north-side in length, there shall be hangings of an hundred cubits long, and his twenty pillars, and their twenty sockets of brass: the hooks of the pillars, and their fillets, of silver. 12 And for the breadth of the court, on the west-side, shall be hangings of fifty cubits: their pillars ten, and their sockets ten. 13 And the breadth of the court on the east-side, eastward, shall be fifty cubits. 14 The hangings of one side of the gate shall be fifteen cubits: their pillars three, and their sockets three. 15 And on the other side shall be hangings, fifteen cubits: their pillars three, and their sockets three. 16 And for the gate of the court, shall be an hanging of twenty cubits, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needle-work: and their pillars shall be four, and their sockets four. 17 All the pillars round about the court shall be filleted with silver, their hooks shall be of silver, and their sockets of brass. 18 The length of the court shall be an hundred cubits, and the breadth fifty every where, and the height five cubits of fine twined linen, and their sockets of brass. 19 All the vessels of the tabernacle in all the service thereof, and all the pins thereof, and all the pins of the court shall be of brass.

Before the Tabernacle there was to be a Court or Yard, inclosed with Hangings of the finest Linen that was used for Tents: This Court, according to the common Computation of Cubits, was 50 Yards long, and 25 broad. Pillars were setup at convenient Distances, in Sockets of Brass, the Pillars filleted with Silver, and Silver Tenter-hooks in them, on which the linen Hangings were fastened: The Hanging which served for the Gate was finer than the rest, v. 16. This Court was a Type of the Church, inclosed and distinguished from the rest of the World. The Inclosure, supported by Pillars, noting the Stability of the Church, hung with the clean Linen, which is said to be the Righteousness of Saints, Rev. 19. 8. These were the Courts David longed for, and covered to reside in, Psal. 84. 2, 10. and into which the People of God entered with Praise and Thanksgiving, Psal. 100. 4. yet this Court would contain but a few Worshipers; thanks be to God now under the Gospel, the Inclosure is taken down, God's Will is, that Men pray every where, and there is room for all that in every Place call on the Name of Jesus Christ.

20 And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oil-olive beaten, for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always. 21 In the tabernacle of the congregation without the veil, which is before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall order it from evening to morning before the LORD: It shall be a statute for ever unto their generations, on the behalf of the children of Israel.

We read of the Candlestick in the 25th Chapter, here is order given for the keeping of the Lamps constantly burning

V O L I.

in it, else it was useless; in every Candlestick there should be a burning and shining Light: Candlesticks without Candles, are as Wells without Water, or as Clouds without Rain. Now, 1. The People were to provide the Oil; from them the Lord's Ministers must have their Maintenance. Or rather, the pure Oil signified the Gifts and Graces of the Spirit, which are communicated to all Believers from Christ, the good Olive, of whose Fulness we receive, Zach. 4. 11, 12. and without which our Light cannot shine before Men. 2. The Priests were to light the Lamps, and to tend them; 'twas part of their daily Service to cause the Lamp to burn always, night and day: Thus it is the Work of Ministers by the preaching and expounding of the Scriptures, which are as a Lamp to enlighten the Church, God's Tabernacle upon Earth, and to direct the spiritual Priests in his Service. This is to be a Statute for ever, that the Lamps of the Word be lighted as duly as the Incense of Prayer and Praise is offered.

C H A P. XXVIII.

Orders being given for the fitting up of the Place of Worship; in this and the following Chapter care is taken about the Priests that were to minister in this Holy Place, as the menial Servants of the God of Israel. He hired Servants, as a token of his purpose to reside among them. In this Chapter, 1. He pitcheth upon the Persons who should be his Servants, v. 1. 2. He appoints their Livery; their Work was holy, and so must their Garments be, and answerable to the Glory of the House which was now to be erected, v. 2-5. (1.) He appoints the Garments of his Head-Servant, the High Priest, which were very rich: 1. An Ephod and Girdle, v. 6-14. 2. A Breast-plate of Judgment, v. 15-29, in which must be put the Urim and Thummim, v. 30. 3. The Robe of the Ephod, v. 31-35. 4. The Mitre, v. 36-39. (2.) The Garments of the inferior Priests, v. 40-43. And these also were Shadows of good things to come.

1 AND take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ichamar, Aaron's sons. 2 And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, for glory and for beauty. 3 And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise-hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. 4 And these are the garments which they shall make; a breast-plate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a broidered coat, a mitre, and a girdle: and they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and his sons, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. 5 And they shall take gold, and blue, and purple and scarlet, and fine linen.

Here's, 1. The Priests nominated Aaron and his Sons, v. 1. Hitherto every Master of a Family was Priest to his own Family, and offered, as they saw cause, upon Altars of Earth; but now the Families of Israel began to be incorporated into a Nation, and a Tabernacle of the Congregation was to be erected, as a visible Centre of their Unity, 'twas requisite there should be a publick Priesthood instituted. Moses, who had hitherto officiated, and is therefore reckoned among the Priests of the Lord, Psal. 99. 6. had enough to do as their Prophet, to consult the Oracle for them, and as their Prince, to judge among them; nor was he desirous to engross all the Honours to himself, or to entail that of the Priesthood, which alone was hereditary, upon his own Family, but was very well pleased to see his Brother Aaron invested in this Office, and his Sons after him, while (how great soever he was) his Sons after him would be but common Levites. 'Tis an Instance of the Humility of that great Man, and an Evidence of his sincere Regard to the Glory of God, that he had so little regard to the Preferment of his own Family. Aaron, that had humbly served as a Prophet to his younger Brother Moses, and did not decline the Office, Chap. 7. 1. is now advanced to be a Priest, a High Priest to God; for he will exalt those that abase themselves. Nor could any Man have taken this Honour to himself, but he that was called of God to it, Heb. 5. 4. God had said of Israel in general, that they should be to him a Kingdom of Priests, Chap. 19. 6. but because it was requisite that those who ministered at the Altar should give themselves wholly to the Service, and because that which is every body's Work will soon come to be no body's Work, God here chose from among them one to be a Family

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of Priests, the Father of his four Sons; and from Aaron's Loins descended all the Priests of the Jewish Church, whom we read so often of, both in the Old Testament, and in the New: And a blessed thing it is, when real Holiness goes as this ceremonial Holiness did, by Succession in a Family.

2. The Priests' Garments, appointed for *Glory and Beauty*, v. 2. Some of the richest Materials were to be provided, v. 3. and the best Artists employed in the making of them, whose Skill, God by a *special Gift* for this purpose, would improve to a very high degree, v. 3. *Note*, Eminency even in common Arts is a Gift of God, it comes *from him*, and as there is occasion, it ought to be used for *him*. He that teacheth the Husbandman Discretion, teacheth the Tradesman also, both therefore ought to honour God with their Gain. Human Learning ought particularly to be consecrated to the Service of the Priesthood, and employed for the adorning of those that minister about *Holy Things*.

The Garments appointed were, (1.) Four, which both the High Priest and the Inferior Priests wore, viz. the linen Breeches, the linen Coat, and the linen Girdle, which fastened it to them, and the Bonnet or Turban; that which the High Priest wore, is called a *Mitre*. (2.) Four more, which were peculiar to the High Priest, viz. the Ephod, with the curious Girdle of it, the Breast-plate of Judgment, the long Robe, with the Bells and Pomegranates at the bottom of it, and the Golden Plate on his Forehead. These glorious Garments were appointed, 1. That the Priests themselves might be minded of the Dignity of their Office, and might behave themselves with a due Decorum. 2. That the People might thereby be possessed with a holy Reverence of that God, whose Ministers appeared in such Grandeur. 3. That the Priests might be Types of Christ, who should offer himself without spot to God, and of all Christians who have the Beauty of Holiness put upon them, in which they are consecrated to God. Our adorning now under the Gospel, both that of Ministers and Christians, is not to be of Gold, and Pearl, and costly Array, but the *Garments of Salvation*, and the *Robe of Righteousness*, Isa. 61. 10. *Psal.* 132. 9. 16. As the filthy Garments wherewith *Jehovah* the High Priest was clothed, signified the Iniquity which cleaved to his Priesthood, from which care was taken that it should be *purged*, Zech. 3. 3. 4. so those *Holy Garments* signified the perfect Purity that there is in the Priesthood of Christ, he is *holy, harmless, and undefiled*.

6. And they shall make the ephod of gold, of blue, and of purple, of scarlet and fine twined linen, with cunning work. 7 It shall have the two shoulder-pieces thereof joined at the two edges thereof; and so it shall be joined together. 8 And the curious girdle of the ephod, which is upon it, shall be of the same, according to the work thereof; even of gold, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen. 9 And thou shalt take two onyx stones, and grave on them the names of the children of Israel: 10 Six of their names on one stone, and the other six names of the rest on the other stone, according to their birth. 11 With the work of an engraver in stone, like the engravings of a signet, shalt thou engrave the two stones, with the names of the children of Israel: thou shalt make them to be set in ouches of gold. 12 And thou shalt put the two stones upon the shoulders of the ephod, for stones of memorial unto the children of Israel. And Aaron shall bear their names before the LORD, upon his two shoulders, for a memorial. 13 And thou shalt make ouches of gold; 14 And two chains of pure gold at the ends: of wreathen works shalt thou make them, and fasten the wreathen chains to the ouches.

Directions are here given concerning the Ephod, which was the utmost Garment of the High Priest: Linen Ephods were worn by the Inferior Priests, 1 Sam. 22. 18. Samuel wore one when he was a Child, 1 Sam. 2. 18. and David when he danced before the Ark, 2 Sam. 6. 14. but this which the High Priest only wore was called a *Golden Ephod*, because there was a great deal of Gold woven into it: It was a short Coat without Sleeves, button'd close to him with a *curious Girdle* of the same Stuff, v. 6, 7, 8. The Shoulder-pieces were button'd together with two precious Stones set in Gold, one on each Shoulder, on which were graven the Names of the Children of Israel, v. 6—12. In allusion to this, 1. Christ our High Priest appeared to John, girt about the Paps with a golden Girdle, such as was the curious Girdle of the Ephod, Rev. 1. 13.

Righteousness is the Girdle of his Loins, Isa. 11. 5. and should be of ours, Eph. 6. 14. He is girt with Strength for the Work of our Salvation, and is ready to it. 2. The Government is said to be upon his Shoulders, Isa. 9. 6. as Aaron had the Names of all Israel upon his Shoulders in precious Stones. He represents to himself and to his Father a glorious Church, Eph. 5. 27. He hath Power to support them, Interest to recommend them, and 'tis in him that they are remembered with Honour and Favour: He bears them before the Lord for a Memorial, v. 12. in token of his appearing before God as a Representative of all Israel, and an Advocate for them.

15 And thou shalt make the breast-plate of judgment, with cunning work after the work of the ephod thou shalt make it; of gold, of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine twined linen shalt thou make it. 16 Four-square it shall be, being doubled; a span shall be the length thereof, and a span shall be the breadth thereof. 17 And thou shalt set it in settings of stones, even four rows of stones; the first row shall be a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle: this shall be the first row. 18 And the second row shall be an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. 19 And the third row a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst. 20 And the fourth row a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper: they shall be set in gold in their enclosings. 21 And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names: like the engravings of a signet, every one with his name shall they be, according to the twelve tribes. 22 And thou shalt make upon the breast-plate chains at the ends, of wreathen work, of pure gold. 23 And thou shalt make upon the breast-plate two rings of gold, and shalt put the two rings on the two ends of the breast-plate. 24 And thou shalt put the two wreathen chains of gold in the two rings, which are on the ends of the breast-plate. 25 And the other two ends of the two wreathen chains, thou shalt fasten in the two ouches, and put them on the shoulder-pieces of the ephod before it. 26 And thou shalt make two rings of gold, and thou shalt put them upon the two ends of the breast-plate, in the border thereof, which is in the side of the ephod inward. 27 And two other rings of gold thou shalt make, and shalt put them on the two sides of the ephod, underneath towards the fore-part thereof, over against the other coupling thereof, above the curious girdle of the ephod. 28 And they shall bind the breast-plate by the rings thereof, unto the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, that it may be above the curious girdle of the ephod, and that the breast-plate be not loosed from the ephod. 29 And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breast-plate of judgment, upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the LORD continually. 30 And thou shalt put in the breast-plate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before the LORD: and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart, before the LORD continually.

The most considerable of the Ornaments of the High Priest was this Breast-plate, a rich piece of Cloth, curiously wrought with Gold and Purple, &c. two spans long, and a span broad, so that being doubled, 'twas a span square, v. 16. This was fastened to the Ephod with wreathen Chains of Gold, (v. 13, 14. and v. 22, &c.) both at top and bottom, so that the Breast-plate might not be loosed from the Ephod, v. 28. The Ephod was the Garment of Service, the Breast-plate of Judgment was an Emblem of Honour; these two must by no means be separated. If any Man will minister unto the Lord, and do his Will, he shall know his Doctrine. In this Breast-plate, 1. The Tribes of Israel were recommended to God's Favour in twelve precious Stones, v. 17—21. and v. 29. Some question whether Levi had a precious Stone with his Name on or no; if

not, Ephraim and Manasseh were reckoned distinct, as Jacob had said they should be, and the High Priest himself, being Head of the Tribe of Levi, sufficiently represented that Tribe. If there was a Stone for Levi, as is intimated by that, that they were engraven according to their Birth, v. 10. Ephraim and Manasseh were one in Joseph; Aaron was to bear their Names for a Memorial before the Lord continually, being ordained for Men, to represent them in things pertaining to God; herein typifying our great High Priest, who always appears in the Presence of God for us. (1.) Tho' the People were forbidden to come near, and obliged to keep their distance, yet by the High Priest, who had their Names on his Breast-plate, they entered into the Holiest; so Believers, even while they are here on this Earth, not only enter into the Holiest, but by Faith are made to sit with Christ in heavenly Places, Eph. 2. 6. (2.) The Name of each Tribe was engraven in a precious Stone, to signify how precious in God's sight Believers are, and how honourable, Isa. 43. 4. They shall be his in the day he makes up his Jewels, Mal. 3. 17. How small and poor soever the Tribe was, it was a precious Stone in the Breast-plate of the High Priest; thus are all the Saints dear to Christ, and his Delight is in them as the excellent ones of the Earth, however Men esteem them as earthen Pitchers, Lam. 4. 2. (3.) The High Priest had the Names of the Tribes both on his Shoulders and on his Breast, noting both the Power and the Love with which our Lord Jesus intercedes for those who are his. He not only bears them up in his Arms with an Almighty Strength, but he bears them upon his Heart, as the Expression here is, v. 29. carries them into his Bosom, Isa. 40. 11. with the most tender Affection. How near should Christ's Name lie to our Hearts, since he is pleased to lay our Names so near his? And what a Comfort is it to us in all our Addresses to God, that the great High Priest of our Profession has the Names of all his Israel upon his Breast before the Lord for a Memorial, presenting them to God, as the People of his Choice, who were to be made accepted in the Beloved! Let not any good Christians fear that God hath forgotten them, nor question his being mindful to them upon all occasions, when they are not only graven upon the Palms of his Hands, Isa. 49. 16. but graven upon the Heart of the great Intercessor: See Cant. 8. 6. 2. The Urim and Thummim, by which the Will of God was made known in doubtful Cases, was put in this Breast-plate, which is therefore called the Breast-plate of Judgment, v. 30. Urim and Thummim signifies Light and Integrity, many Conjectures there are among the Learned what they were; we have no reason to think they were any thing that Moses was to make, more than what was before ordered: so that either God made them himself, and gave them to Moses, for him to put into the Breast-plate, when other things were prepared, Lev. 8. 8. or, no more is meant but a Declaration of the further Use of what was already ordered to be made. I think the words may be read thus, *And thou shalt give, or add, or deliver to the Breast-plate of Judgment, the illuminations and Perfections, and they shall be upon the Heart of Aaron, i. e.* He shall be endued with a Power of knowing and making known the Mind of God in all difficult doubtful Cases, relating either to the Civil or Ecclesiastical State of that Nation. Their Government was a Theocracy, God was their King, the High Priest was under God their Ruler, this Urim and Thummim were his Cabinet Council; probably Moses wrote upon the Breast-plate, or wove into it these words, Urim and Thummim, to signify that the High Priest having on him this Breast-plate, and asking Counsel of God in any Emergency relating to the Publick, he should be directed to take those Measures, and give that Advice which God would own. If he were standing before the Ark, (but without the Veil) probably he received Instructions from off the Mercy-Seat, as Moses did, Chap. 25. 22. thus it should seem Phinehas did, Judg. 20. 27. If he were at a distance from the Ark, as Abiathar was when he enquired of the Lord for David, 1 Sam. 23. 6. then the Answer was given either by a Voice from Heaven, or rather by an Impulse upon the Mind of the High Priest; which last is perhaps intimated in that Expression, he shall bear the Judgment of the Children of Israel upon his Heart. This Oracle was of great use to Israel, Joshua consulted it, Numb. 27. 21. and 'tis likely the Judges after him. 'Twas lost in the Captivity, and never retrieved after, tho' it should seem it was expected, Ezra 2. 63. But it was a Shadow of good Things to come, and the Substance is Christ. He is our Oracle, by him God in these last Days makes known himself and his Mind to us, Heb. 1. 1. John 1. 18. Divine Revelation centers in him, and comes to us thro' him; he is the Light, the true Light, the faithful Witness, the Truth itself, and from him we receive the Spirit of Truth, who leads into all Truth. The joining of the Breast-plate to the Ephod, notes that his prophetic Office was founded in his Priesthood; and it was by the Merit of his Death that he purchased this Honour for himself, and this Favour for us. 'Twas the Lamb that had been slain, that was worthy to take the Book, and to open the Seals, Rev. 5. 9.

31 And thou shalt make the robe of the ephod all of blue. 32 And there shall be an hole in the top of it, in the midst thereof: it shall have a binding of woven work, round about the hole of it, as it were the hole of an habergeon, that it be not rent, 33 And beneath upon the hem of it thou shalt make pomegranates of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet round about the hem thereof, and bells of gold between them round about. 34 A golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the hem of the robe round about. 35 And it shall be upon Aaron, to minister: and his sound shall be heard when he goeth in unto the holy place before the LORD, and when he cometh out; that he die not. 36 And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. 37 And thou shalt put it on a blue lace, that it may be upon the mitre: upon the fore-front of the mitre it shall be. 38 And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts: and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD. 39 And thou shalt embroider the coat of fine linen, and thou shalt make the mitre of fine linen, and thou shalt make the girdle of needle-work.

Here's, 1. Direction given concerning the Robe of the Ephod, v. 31—35. This was next under the Ephod, and reached down to the Knees, without Sleeves, and was put on over their Heads, having Holes on the sides to put the Arms thro', or, as Maimonides describes it, was not sown together on the sides at all. The Hole on the top, thro' which the Head was put, was carefully bound about, that it might not tear in the putting on. In religious Worship, care must be taken to prevent every thing that may distract the Minds of the Worshipers, or render the Service despicable. Round the Skirt of this Robe were hung golden Bells, and the Representations of Pomegranates, made of Yarn, of divers Colours. The Pomegranates added to the Beauty of the Robe, and the Sound of the Bells gave notice to the People in the outer Court, when he went in to the Holy Place to burn Incense, that they might then apply themselves to their Devotions at the same time, Luke 1. 10. in token of their Concurrence with him in his Offering, and their Hopes of the Assent of their Prayers to God in the virtue of the Incense he offered. Aaron must come near to minister in the Garments that were appointed him, that he die not. 'Tis at his peril, if he attend otherwise than according to the Institution. This intimates that we must serve the Lord with Fear and holy Trembling, as those that know we deserve to die, and are in danger of making some fatal Mistake. Some make the Bells of the holy Robe to typify the Sound of the Gospel of Christ in the World, giving notice of his Entrance within the Veil for us: Blessed are they that hear this joyful Sound, Ps. 89. 15. The joining of the Pomegranates, which are a fragrant Fruit, notes the sweet Savour of the Gospel, as well as the joyful Sound of it, for it is a Saviour of Life unto Life. The Church is called an Orchard of Pomegranates.

2. Concerning the golden Plate fixed upon Aaron's Forehead, on which must be engraven Holiness to the Lord, v. 36, 37. or the Holiness of Jehovah. Aaron must hereby be minded, that God is holy, and that his Priests must be holy, Holiness becomes his House and Household. The High Priest must be sequestered from all Pollution, and consecrated to God, and to his Service and Honour, and so must all his Ministrations be. All that attend in God's House, must have Holiness to the Lord engraven upon their Foreheads, i. e. they must be holy, devoted to the Lord, and designing his Glory in all they do. This must appear in their Forehead, in an open Profession of their Relation to God, as those that are not ashamed to own it, and in a Conversation in the World answerable to it. It must likewise be engraven like the Engravings of a Signet, so deep, so durable, not painted to be washed off, but sincere and lasting, such must our Holiness to the Lord be. Aaron must have this upon his Forehead, that he may bear the Iniquity of the holy things, v. 38. and that they may be accepted before the Lord. Herein he was a Type of Christ, the great Mediator between God and Man, through whom it is that we have to do with God. (1.) Through him what is amiss in our Service is pardoned. The Divine Law is strict, in many things we

we come short of our Duty, so that we cannot but be conscious to ourselves of much Iniquity cleaving even to our holy things: when we would *do Good, Evil is present*; even this would be our Ruin, if God should enter into Judgment with us: But Christ, our High Priest, bears this Iniquity, bears it for us, so as to bear it from us, and through him it is forgiven to us, and not laid to our charge. (2.) Through him what is good is accepted, our Persons, our Performances are pleasing to God upon the account of Christ's Intercession, and not otherwise, 1 Pet. 2. 5. His being *Holiness to the Lord*, recommends all those to the Divine Favour that are interested in his Righteousness, and clothed with his Spirit. And therefore he hath said, 'twas for our sakes that he *sanctified himself*, John 17. 19. Having such a High Priest, we come boldly to the Throne of Grace, Heb. 4. 14, 16.

3. The rest of the Garments are but named, v. 39. because there was nothing extraordinary in them. The embroidered Coat of fine Linen was the innermost of the Priestly Garments, it reached to the Feet, and the Sleeves to the Wrists, and was bound to the Body with a Girdle or Sash of Needlework. The Mitre, or Diadem, was of Linen, such as Kings antiently wore in the East, typifying the Kingly Office of Christ. He is a Priest upon a Throne, Zech. 6. 13. a Priest with a Crown. These two God has joined, and we must not think to separate them.

40 And for Aaron's sons thou shalt make coats, and thou shalt make for them girdles, and bonnets shalt thou make for them, for glory and for beauty. 41 And thou shalt put them upon Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him: and shalt anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office. 42 And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness: from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach. 43 And they shall be upon Aaron, and upon his sons, when they come in unto the tabernacle of the congregation, or when they come near unto the altar to minister in the holy place; that they bear not iniquity, and die. It shall be a statute for ever unto him, and his seed after him.

Here's, 1. Particular Orders about the Vestments of the inferior Priests. They were to have Coats, and Girdles, and Bonnets, of the same Materials with those of the High Priest, but there was difference in shape between their Bonnets, and his Mitre; theirs, as his, were to be for *Glory and Beauty*, v. 40. that they might *look great* in their Ministration: yet all this *Glory* was nothing, compared with the *Glory of Grace*, this *Beauty* nothing to the *Beauty of Holiness*, of which these holy Garments were typical. They are particularly ordered in their Ministration to wear *Linen Breeches*, v. 42. This teacheth us Modesty, and Decency of Garb and Gesture, at all times, especially in publick Worship, in which a Veil is becoming, 1 Cor. 11. 10. It also intimates what need our Souls have of a Covering when we come before God, that the *Shame of their Nakedness may not appear*. 2. A general Rule concerning the Garments, both of the High Priest, and of the inferior Priests, that they were to be put upon them at first, when they were consecrated, in token of their being invested in the Office, v. 41. and then they were to wear them in all their Ministrations, (but not at other times) v. 43. and this at their peril, lest they bear Iniquity, and die. Omissions in Duty, as well as Omissions of Duty, are Sins, which they that are guilty of, shall bear their Iniquity. If the Priests perform the instituted Service, and do not do it in the appointed Garments, it is (say the Jewish Doctors) as if a Stranger did it, and the Stranger that comes nigh shall be put to death. Nor will God connive at the Presumptions and Irreverences even of those whom he causeth to draw most near to him; if Aaron himself put a slight upon the Divine Institution, he shall bear Iniquity, and die. To us these Garments typify, 1. The Righteousness of Christ; if we appear not before God in that, we shall bear Iniquity, and die. What have we to do at the Wedding Feast without a Wedding Garment, or at God's Altar without the Array of his Priests? Mat. 22. 12, 13. 2. The Armour of God, prescribed Eph. 6. 13. If we venture without that Armour, our spiritual Enemies will be the death of our Souls, and we shall bear the Iniquity, our Blood will be upon our own Heads. Blessed is he therefore that watcheth and keepeth his Garments, Rev. 16. 15. Lastly, This is said to be a Statute for ever, i. e. it is to continue as long as the Priesthood continues. But it is to have its Perpetuity in the Substance, of which these things were the Shadows.

C H A P. XXIX.

Particular Orders are given in this Chapter, 1. Concerning the Consecration of the Priests, and the Sanctification of the Altar, v. 1--37. 2. Concerning the daily Sacrifice, v. 38--41. To which gracious Promises are annexed, that God would own and bless them in all their Services, v. 42--46.

1 AND this is the thing that thou shalt do unto them to hallow them, to minister unto me in the priest's office: Take one young bullock, and two rams without blemish, 2 And unleavened bread, and cakes unleavened tempered with oil, and wafers unleavened anointed with oil: of wheaten flower shalt thou make them. 3 And thou shalt put them into one basket, and bring them in the basket, with the bullock and the two rams. 4 And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them with water. 5 And thou shalt take the garments, and put upon Aaron the coat, and the robe of the ephod, and the ephod, and the breast-plate, and gird him with the curious girdle of the ephod. 6 And thou shalt put the mitre upon his head, and put the holy crown upon the mitre. 7 Then shalt thou take the anointing oil, and pour it upon his head, and anoint him. 8 And thou shalt bring his sons, and put coats upon them. 9 And thou shalt gird them with girdles, (Aaron and his sons) and put the bonnets on them: and the priest's office shall be theirs for a perpetual statute: and thou shalt consecrate Aaron and his sons. 10 And thou shalt cause a bullock to be brought before the tabernacle of the congregation: and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the bullock. 11 And thou shalt kill the bullock before the LORD, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 12 And thou shalt take of the blood of the bullock, and put it upon the horns of the altar with thy finger, and pour all the blood beside the bottom of the altar. 13 And thou shalt take all the fat that covereth the inwards, and the caul that is above the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, and burn them upon the altar. 14 But the flesh of the bullock, and his skin, and his dung, shalt thou burn with fire without the camp: it is a sin-offering. 15 Thou shalt also take one ram, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the ram. 16 And thou shalt slay the ram, and thou shalt take his blood, and sprinkle it round about upon the altar. 17 And thou shalt cut the ram in pieces, and wash the inwards of him, and his legs, and put them unto his pieces, and unto his head. 18 And thou shalt burn the whole ram upon the altar: it is a burnt-offering unto the LORD; it is a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto the LORD. 19 And thou shalt take the other ram, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the ram. 20 Then shalt thou kill the ram, and take of his blood, and put it upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron, and upon the tip of the right ear of his sons, and upon the thumb of their right hand, and upon the great toe of the right foot, and sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about. 21 And thou shalt take of the blood that is upon the altar, and of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon the garments of his sons with him: and he shall be hallowed, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons garments with him.

22 Also thou shalt take of the ram the fat and the rump, and the fat that covereth the inwards, and the caul above the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, and the right shoulder; for it is a ram of consecration: 23 And one loaf of bread, and one cake of oiled bread, and one wafer out of the basket of the unleavened bread, that is before the LORD. 24 And thou shalt put all in the hands of Aaron, and in the hands of his sons, and shalt wave them for a wave-offering before the LORD. 25 And thou shalt receive them of their hands, and burn them upon the altar for a burnt-offering, for a sweet savour before the LORD: it is an offering made by fire unto the LORD. 26 And thou shalt take the breast of the ram of Aaron's consecrations, and wave it for a wave-offering before the LORD: and it shall be thy part. 27 And thou shalt sanctify the breast of the wave-offering, and the shoulder of the heave-offering, which is waved, and which is heaved up of the ram of the consecration, even of that which is for Aaron, and of that which is for his sons. 28 And it shall be Aaron's and his sons by a statute for ever, from the children of Israel; for it is an heave-offering: and it shall be an heave-offering from the children of Israel of the sacrifice of their peace offerings, even their heave-offering unto the LORD. 29 And the holy garments of Aaron shall be his sons after him, to be anointed therein, and to be consecrated in them. 30 And that son that is priest in his stead shall put them on seven days, when he cometh into the tabernacle of the congregation to minister in the holy place. 31 And thou shalt take the ram of the consecration, and seethe his flesh in the holy place. 32 And Aaron and his sons shall eat the flesh of the ram, and the bread that is in the basket, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 33 And they shall eat those things, wherewith the atonement was made, to consecrate and to sanctify them: but a stranger shall not eat thereof, because they are holy. 34 And if ought of the flesh of the consecrations, or of the bread remain unto the morning; then thou shalt burn the remainder with fire: it shall not be eaten, because it is holy. 35 And thus shalt thou do unto Aaron, and to his sons, according to all things which I have commanded thee: seven days shalt thou consecrate them. 36 And thou shalt offer every day a bullock for a sin-offering, for atonement: and thou shalt cleanse the altar, when thou hast made an atonement for it, and thou shalt anoint it to sanctify it. 37 Seven days thou shalt make an atonement for the altar, and sanctify it; and it shall be an altar most holy: whatsoever toucheth the altar shall be holy.

Here's, 1. The Law concerning the Consecration of Aaron and his Sons to the Priest's Office, which was to be done with a great deal of Ceremony and Solemnity, that they themselves might be duly affected with the Greatness of the Work to which they were called, and that the People also might learn to magnify the Office, and none might dare to invade it. The Ceremonies wherewith it was to be done were very fully and particularly appointed, because nothing of this kind had been done before, and because it was to be a Statute for ever, that the High Priest should be thus inaugurated. Now, [1.] The Work to be done was the consecrating of the Persons whom God had chosen to be Priests, by which they devoted and gave up themselves to the Service of God, and God declares his Acceptance of them, and the People were made to know that they glorified not themselves to be made Priests, but were called of God, Heb. 5. 4, 5. They were thus distinguished from common Men, sequestered from common Services, and set apart for God, and an immediate Attendance on him. Note, All that are to be employed for God, are to be sanctified to him; the Person must first be accepted, and then the Performance. The Hebrew Phrase for consecrating is filling the Hand, v. 9. Thou shalt fill the Hand of Aa-

ron and his Sons, and the Ram of Consecration is the Ram of Filling, v. 22, 26. The consecrating of them was the perfecting of them; Christ is said to be perfected, or consecrated, for evermore, Heb. 7. 28. Probably the Phrase here is borrowed from the putting of the Sacrifice into their hand, to be waved before the Lord, v. 24. but it intimates, (1.) That Ministers have their Hands full, they have no time to trifle, so great, so copious, so constant is their Work. (2.) That they must have their Hands filled. Of necessity they must have something to offer, and they cannot find it in themselves, it must be given them from above; they cannot fill the People's Hearts, unless God fill their Hands: to him therefore they must go, and receive from his Fulness. [2.] The Person to do it was Moses, by God's Appointment. Tho' he was ordained for Men, yet the People were not to consecrate him; Moses, the Servant of the Lord, and his Agents herein must do it. By God's special Appointment he now did the Priest's Work, and therefore that which was the Priest's part of the Sacrifice, was here ordered to be his, v. 26. [3.] The Place was at the Door of the Tabernacle of Meeting, v. 4. God was pleased to dwell in the Tabernacle, the People attending in the Courts, so that the Door between the Court and the Tabernacle was the fittest Place for them to be consecrated in, who were to mediate between God and Man, and so to stand between both, and lay their Hands (as it were) upon both. They were consecrated at the Door, for they were to be Door-keepers. [4.] 'Twas done with many Ceremonies.

1. They were to be washed, v. 4. signifying that they must be clean who bear the Vessels of the Lord, 1sa. 52. 11. They that would perfect Holiness, must cleanse themselves from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, 2 Cor. 7. 1. 1sa. 1. 16, 17, 18. They were now washed all over; but afterwards, when they went in to minister, they washed only their Hands and Feet, chap. 30. 19. for he that is washed needs no more, John 13. 10.

2. They were to be clothed with the Holy Garments, v. 5, 6, 8, 9. to signify that it was not sufficient for them to put away the Pollutions of Sin, but they must put on the Graces of the Spirit, be clothed with Righteousness, Psal. 132. 10. They must be girded, as Men prepared and strengthened for their Work, and they must be robed and crowned, as Men that counted their Work and Office their true Honour.

3. The High Priest was to be anointed with the holy anointing Oil, v. 7. that the Church might be filled, and delighted with the sweet Savour of his Administrations, for Ointment and Perfume rejoice the Heart, and in token of the pouring out of the Spirit upon him, to qualify him for his Work. Brotherly Love is compared to this Oil with which Aaron was anointed, Psal. 133. 2. The inferior Priests are said to be anointed, Chap. 30. 30. not on their Heads, as the High Priest, (Lev. 21. 10.) only the Oil was mingled with the Blood that was sprinkled upon their Garments.

4. Sacrifices were to be offered for them. The Covenant of Priesthood, as all other Covenants, must be made by Sacrifice.

(1.) There must be a Sin-Offering, to make Atonement for them, v. 10—14. The Law made them Priests that had Infirmary, and therefore they must first offer for their own Sin, before they could make Atonement for the People, Heb. 7. 27, 28. They were to put their Hand on the Head of their Sacrifice, v. 10. confessing that they deserved to die for their own Sin, and desiring that the killing of the Beast might expiate their Guilt, and be accepted as a vicarious Satisfaction. 'Twas used as other Sin-Offerings were, only, whereas the Flesh of other Sin Offerings was eaten by the Priests, Lev. 10. 18. in token of the Priests taking away the Sin of the People, this was appointed to be all burnt without the Camp, v. 14. to signify the Imperfection of the legal Dispensation, (as the learned Bishop Patrick notes:) For the Sins of the Priests themselves could not be taken away by those Sacrifices, but they must expect a better High-Priest, and a better Sacrifice.

(2.) There must be a Burnt-Offering, a Ram wholly burnt, to the Honour of God, in token of the Dedication of themselves wholly to God, and to his Service, as living Sacrifices, kindled with the Fire, and ascending in the Flame of Holy Love, v. 15—18. The Sin-Offering must first be offered, and then the Burnt-Offering; for till Guilt be removed, no acceptable Service can be performed, 1sa. 6. 7.

(3.) There must be a Peace-Offering, 'tis called the Ram of Consecration, because there was more in this, peculiar to the Occasion, than in the other two. In the Burnt-Offering God had the Glory of the Priesthood, in this they had the Comfort of it, and in token of a mutual Covenant between God and them. (1.) The Blood of this Sacrifice was divided between God and them, v. 20, 21. part of the Blood was sprinkled upon the Altar round about, and part put upon them, upon their Bodies, v. 10. and upon their Garments, v. 21. Thus the Benefit of the Expiation made by the Sacrifice, was applied and assured to them, and their whole selves, from Head to Foot, sanctified to the Service of God: The Blood was put upon the most extreme Parts of the Body, to signify, that

that it was all as it were inclosed, and taken in for God, the Tip of the Ear, and the great Toe not excepted. And the Blood and Oil sprinkled upon Garments, we reckon spot and stain them; yet the Holy Oil, and the Blood of the Sacrifice sprinkled upon their Garments, must be looked upon as the greatest adorning imaginable to them; for they signified the Blood of Christ, and the Graces of the Spirit, which constitute and compleat the Beauty of Holiness, and recommend us to God: we read of Robes made white with the Blood of the Lamb. (1.) The *Flesh of the Sacrifice*, with the Meat-Offering annexed to it, was likewise divided between God and them, that (to speak with reverence) God and they might feast together, in token of Friendship and Fellowship.

1. Part of it was to be first waved before the Lord, and then burnt upon the Altar, part of the *Flesh*, v. 22, part of the *Bread* (for Bread and *Flesh* must go together) v. 23, these were first put into the hands of Aaron to be waved to and fro, in token of their being offered to God, who tho' unseen, yet compasseth us round on every side, and then they were to be burnt upon the Altar, v. 24, 25. for the Altar was to devour God's part of the Sacrifice. Thus God admitted Aaron and his Sons to be his Servants, and wait at his Table, taking the Meat of his Altar from their hands. Here, in a Parenthesis, as it were, comes in the Law concerning the Priest's part of the Peace-Offerings afterwards, the *Breast* and *Shoulder*, which were now divided, Moses had the *Breast*, and the *Shoulder* was burnt on the Altar with God's Part, v. 26, 27, 28.

2. The other Part, both of the *Flesh* of the Ram, and of the *Bread*, Aaron and his Sons were to eat at the Door of the Tabernacle, v. 31, 32, 33. to signify that he not only called them *Servants*, but *Friends*, Job 13. 15. he *supped with them*, and they with him. Their eating of the things where-with the Atonement was made, signified their receiving the Atonement, as the Expression is, Rom. 5. 11. their thankful Acceptance of the Benefit of it, and their joyful Communion with God thereupon, which was the true intent and meaning of a Feast, upon a Sacrifice. If any of it were left, it must be burnt, that it might not be in any danger of putrefying, and to shew that it was an extraordinary Peace-Offering.

Lastly, The time that was to be spent in this Consecration, *Seven days shalt thou consecrate them*, v. 35. Tho' all the Ceremonies were performed on the first day, yet, 1. They were not to look upon their Consecration as compleated till the seven days end, which put a Solemnity upon their Admission, and a Distance between this and their former State, and obliged them to enter upon their Work with a pause, giving them time to consider the Weight and Seriousness of it. This was to be observed in After-Ages, v. 30. He that was to succeed Aaron in the High Priesthood, must put on the Holy Garments seven days together, in token of a deliberate and gradual Advance into his Office, and that one Sabbath might pass over him in his Consecration. 2. Every day of the seven, in this first Consecration, a *Bullock* was to be offered for a *Sin-Offering*, v. 36. which was to intimate to them, (1.) That it was of very great Concern to them to get their Sins pardoned, and that tho' Atonement was made, and they had had the Comfort of it, yet they must still keep up a penitent Sense of Sin, and oft repeat the Confession of it. (2.) That those Sacrifices, which were thus offered day by day to make Atonement, could not make the *Comers thereunto perfect*, for then they would have ceased to be offered, as the Apostle argues, Heb. 10. 1, 2. They must therefore expect the bringing in of a better Hope.

Now this Consecration of the Priests was a Shadow of good things to come. (1.) Our Lord Jesus is the Great High Priest of our Profession, called of God to be so consecrated for evermore, anointed with the Spirit above his Fellows, whence he is called *Messiah*, the *Christ*; clothed with the Holy Garments, even with *Glory and Beauty*; sanctified by his own Blood, nor that of *Bullocks and Rams*, Heb. 9. 12. made perfect, or consecrated thro' Sufferings, Heb. 2. 10. Thus in him this was a perpetual Statute, v. 9. (2.) All Believers are spiritual Priests, to offer spiritual Sacrifices, 1 Pet. 2. 5. washed in the Blood of Christ, and so made to our God Priests, Rev. 1. 5, 6. They also are clothed with the Beauty of Holiness, and have received the Anointing, 1 John 2. 27. Their Hands are filled with Work, which they must continually attend to: And it is thro' Christ, the great Sacrifice, that they are dedicated to this Service. His Blood, sprinkled upon the Conscience, purgeth us from dead Works, that they may as Priests serve the living God. The Spirit of God (as Ainsworth notes) is called the *Finger of God*, (Luke 11. 20. compare with Mat. 12. 28.) and by him the Merit of Christ is effectually applied to our Souls, as here Moses with his Finger was to put the Blood upon Aaron. It is likewise intimated, that Gospel-Ministers are to be solemnly set apart to the Work of the Ministry with great Deliberation and Seriousness, both in the Ordainers, and in the Ordained, as those that are to be employed in a great Work, and intrusted with a great Charge.

3. The Consecration of the Altar, which seems to have

been coincident with that of the Priests, and the Sin-Offerings which were offered every day for seven days together, had reference to the Altar, as well as the Priests, v. 36, 37. An Atonement was made for the Altar. Tho' that was not a Subject capable of Sin, nor having never yet been used, could it be said to be polluted with the Sins of the People; yet, since the Fall, there can be no Sanctification to God, but there must first be an Atonement for Sin, which renders us both unworthy and unfit to be employed for God. The Altar was also sanctified, not only set apart itself to a sacred Use, but made so holy as to sanctify the Gifts that were offered upon it, Mat. 23. 19. Christ is our Altar, for our sakes he sanctified himself, that we and our Performances might be sanctified and recommended to God, John 17. 19.

38 Now this is that which thou shalt offer upon the altar; two lambs of the first year, day by day continually. 39 The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning; and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even. 40 And with the one lamb a tenth-deal of flour mingled with the fourth part of an hin of beaten oil: and the fourth part of an hin of wine for a drink-offering. 41 And the other lamb thou shalt offer at even, and shalt do thereunto according to the meat-offering of the morning, and according to the drink-offering thereof, for a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto the LORD. 42 This shall be a continual burnt-offering throughout your generations, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, before the LORD: where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee. 43 And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory. 44 And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister unto me in the priest's office. 45 And I will dwell amongst the children of Israel, and will be their God. 46 And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell amongst them: I am the LORD their God.

Here's, 1. The daily Service appointed, a Lamb was to be offered upon the Altar every Morning, and a Lamb every Evening, each with a Meat-offering, both made by Fire as a continual Burnt-offering throughout their Generations, v. 38—41. Whether there were any other Sacrifices to be offered or no, these were sure to be offered, at the publick Charge, and for the Benefit and Comfort of all Israel, to make atonement for their daily Sins, and an acknowledgment to God of their daily Mercies. This was that which the Duty of every day required. The taking away of this daily Sacrifice by Antiochus for so many Evenings and Mornings, was that great Calamity of the Church which was foretold, Dan. 8. 11. Now, 1. This typified the continual Intercession which Christ ever lives to make in the virtue of his Satisfaction for the continual Sanctification of his Church: Tho' he offered himself once for all, yet that one Offering thus becomes a continual Offering. 2. This teacheth us to offer up to God the spiritual Sacrifices of Prayer and Praise every day, Morning and Evening, in humble Acknowledgment of our Dependence upon him, and our Obligations to him. Our daily Devotions must be looked upon as the most needful of our daily Works, and the most pleasant of our daily Comforts; whatever Business we have, this must never be omitted, either Morning or Evening: Prayer-time must be kept up as duly as Meas-time, the daily Sacrifices were as the daily Meals in God's House, and therefore they were always attended with Bread and Wine: those starve their own Souls, that keep not up a constant Attendance on the Throne of Grace.

2. Great and precious Promises made of God's Favour to Israel, and the Tokens of his special Presence with them, while they thus kept up his Institutions among them. He speaks as one well-pleased with the Appointments of the daily Sacrifice; for before he proceeds to the other Appointments that follow, he interposeth these Promises. 'Tis Constancy in Religion that brings in the Comfort of it. He promiset, (1.) That he would keep up Communion with them, that he would not only meet Moses, and speak to him, but that he would meet the Children of Israel, v. 43. to accept the daily Sacrifices offered up on their behalf. Note, God will not fail to give those the Meeting, who diligently and conscientiously attend upon him in the Ordinances of his own Appointment. (2.) That he would own his own Institutions, the

the Tabernacle, the Altar, the Priesthood, v. 43, 44. he would take possession of that which was consecrated to him. *Note*, What is sanctified to the Glory of God, shall be sanctified by his Glory. If we do our part, God will do his, and will mark and sit that for himself which is in Sincerity given up to him. (3.) That he would reside among them as a God in Covenant with them, and would give them sure and comfortable Tokens of his peculiar Favour to them, and his special Presence with them, v. 45, 46. *I will dwell among the Children of Israel.* *Note*, Where God sets up the Tabernacle of his Ordinances, he will himself dwell. *Lo, I am with you always*, Mat. 28. 20. Those that abide in God's House, he will abide with them; *I will be their God, and they shall know that I am so.* *Note*, Those are truly happy that have a Covenant-Interest in God as theirs, and the comfortable Evidence of that Interest: if we have this, we have enough, and need no more to make us happy.

C H A P. XXX.

Moses is in this Chapter further instructed, 1. Concerning the Altar of Incense, v. 1--10. 2. Concerning the Ransom-Money which the Israelites were to pay, when they were numbered, v. 11--16. 3. Concerning the Laver of Brass, which was set for the Priests to wash in, v. 17--21. 4. Concerning the making up of the anointing Oil, and the Use of it, v. 22--33. 5. Concerning the Incense and Perfume, which was to be burned on the Golden Altar, v. 34--38.

1 **A**ND thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon: of shittim-wood shalt thou make it. 2 A cubit shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof (four-square shall it be) and two cubits shall be the height thereof: the horns thereof shall be of the same. 3 And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, the top thereof, and the sides thereof round about, and the horns thereof: and thou shalt make unto it a crown of gold round about. 4 And two golden rings shalt thou make to it under the crown of it, by the two corners thereof, upon the two sides of it shalt thou make it: and they shall be for places for the staves to bear it withal. 5 And thou shalt make the staves of shittim-wood, and overlay them with gold. 6 And thou shalt put it before the veil, that is by the ark of the testimony; before the mercy-seat, that is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee. 7 And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps he shall burn incense upon it. 8 And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it; a perpetual incense before the LORD, throughout your generations. 9 Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt-sacrifice, nor meat-offering; neither shall ye pour drink-offering thereon. 10 And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year, with the blood of the sin-offering of atonements: once in the year shall he make atonement upon it, throughout your generations: it is most holy unto the LORD.

The Orders given concerning the Altar of Incense, are, (1.) That it was to be made of Wood, and covered with Gold, pure Gold, about a Yard high, and half a Yard square, with Horns at the Corners, a golden Cornish round it, with Rings and Staves of Gold for the convenience of carrying it, v. 1--5. It doth not appear that there was any Grate to this Altar, for the Ashes to fall into, that they might be taken away, but when they burnt Incense, a Golden Censer was brought with Coals in it, and placed upon the Altar, and in that Censer the Incense was burnt, and with it all the Coals were taken away, so that no Coals or Ashes fell upon the Altar. The Measure of the Altar of Incense in Ezekiel's Temple, is double to what it is here, Ezek. 41. 22. and it is there called an Altar of Wood, and there is no mention of Gold, to signify that the Incense in Gospel-times should be spiritual, the Worship plain, and the Service of God enlarged, for in every place Incense should be offered, Mal. 1. 11. (2.) That it was to be placed before the Veil, on the outside of that Partition, but before the Mercy-seat, which was within the Veil, v. 6. For tho' he that ministered at that Altar could not see the Mercy-seat, the Veil interposing, yet he must look

towards it, and direct his Incense that way, to teach us, that tho' we cannot with our bodily Eyes see the Throne of Grace, that blessed Mercy-seat, for it is such a Throne of Glory, that God, in compassion to us, holdeth back the Face of it, and spreadeth a Cloud upon it; yet we must in Prayer by Faith set ourselves before it, direct our Prayer, and look up. (3.) That Aaron was to burn sweet Incense upon this Altar every Morning, and every Evening, about half a pound at a time; which was intended not only to take away the ill Smell of the Flesh that was burnt daily on the brazen Altar, but for the Honour of God, and to shew the Acceptableness of his People's Services to him, and the Pleasure which they should take in ministering to him, v. 7, 8. As by the Offerings on the brazen Altar Satisfaction was made for what had been done displeasing to God, so by the offering on this, what they did well, was as it were recommended to the Divine Acceptance; for our two great Concerns with God are to be acquitted from Guilt, and accepted as righteous in his sight. (4.) That nothing was to be offered upon it but Incense, nor any Incense but that which was appointed, v. 9. God will have his own Service done according to his own Appointment, and not otherwise. (5.) That this Altar should be purified with the Blood of the Sin-Offering put upon the Horns of it, every Year upon the Day of Atonement, v. 10. See Lev. 16. 18, 19. The High Priest was to take this in his way, as he came out from the Holy of Holies. This was to intimate to them, that the Sins of the Priests, that ministered at this Altar, and of the People for whom they ministered, put a ceremonial Impurity upon it, from which it must be cleansed by the Blood of Atonement.

This Incense-Altar typified, (1.) The Mediation of Christ. The brazen Altar in the Court was a Type of Christ's dying on Earth, the Golden Altar in the Sanctuary was a Type of Christ's interceding in Heaven, in the virtue of his Satisfaction. This Altar was before the Mercy-seat, for Christ always appears in the Presence of God for us; he is our Advocate with the Father, 1 John 2. 1. and his Intercession is unto God of a sweet-smelling Savour. This Altar had a Crown fixed to it, for Christ intercedes as a King, Father, I will, John 17. 24. (2.) The Devotions of the Saints, whose Prayers are said to be set forth before God as Incense, Psal. 141. 2. As the Smoke of the Incense ascended, so must our Desires towards God rise in Prayer, being kindled with the Fire of Holy Love; and other pious Affections. When the Priest was burning Incense, the People were praying, Luke 1. 10, to signify that Prayer is the true Incense. This Incense was offered daily, 'twas a perpetual Incense, v. 8, for we must pray always, i. e. we must keep up stated times for Prayer every day, Morning and Evening at least, and never omit it, but thus pray without ceasing. The Lamps were dressed or lighted, at the same time that the Incense was burnt, to teach us that the reading of the Scriptures (which are our Light and Lamp) is a part of our daily Work, and should ordinarily accompany our Prayers and Praises. When we speak to God, we must hear what God saith to us, and thus the Communion is complete. The Devotions of sanctified Souls are well-pleasing to God, of a sweet-smelling Savour; the Prayers of Saints are compared to sweet Odours, Rev. 5. 8. but 'tis the Incense which Christ adds to them that makes them acceptable, Rev. 8. 3. and his Blood that atones for the Guilt which cleaves to our best Services. And if the Heart and Life be not Holy, even Incense is an Abomination, Isa. 1. 13. and he that offers it is as if he blessed an Idol, Isa. 66. 3.

11 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 12 When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel, after their number; then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the LORD, when thou numberest them: that there be no plague amongst them, when thou numberest them. 13 This they shall give, every one, that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary (a shekel is twenty gerahs) an half shekel shall be the offering of the LORD. 14 Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto the LORD. 15 The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the LORD, to make an atonement for your souls. 16 And thou shalt take the atonement-money of the children of Israel, and shalt appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the LORD, to make an atonement for your souls.

Some observe, that the Repetition of these words, *The Lord spake unto Moses*, here and afterwards, v. 17, 22, 34, intimates, that God did not deliver these Precepts to *Moses* in the Mount, in a continued Discourse, but with many Intermittions, giving him time either to write what was said to him, or at least to charge his Memory with it. Christ gave Instructions to his Disciples, as they were able to bear them. He is here ordered to *levy Money* upon the People by way of *Poll*, so much a Head, for the Service of the Tabernacle. This he must do when he *numbered the People*; some think it refers only to the first numbring of them, now when the Tabernacle was set up, and that this Tax was to make up what was wanting in the voluntary Contributions for the finishing of the Work, or rather for the beginning of the Service in the Tabernacle. Others think it was afterwards repeated upon any Emergency, and always when the People were *number'd*; and that *David* offended in not demanding it when he numbered the People. But many of the Jewish Writers, and others from them, are of opinion, that it was to be an annual Tribute, only it was *begun* when *Moses* first numbered the People. This was that *Tribute-Money* which Christ paid, for fear of offending his Adversaries, *Mat. 17. 24.* when yet he shewed good reason why he should have been excused. Men were appointed in every City to receive this Payment yearly. Now, [1.] The Tribute to be paid was *half a Shekel*, about fifteen Pence of our Money; the Rich were not to give more, nor the Poor less, v. 15. to intimate that the Souls of the Rich and Poor are alike precious, and that God is *no Respecter of Persons*, *Job 34. 19.* in other Offerings Men were to give according to their Ability, but this, which was the *Ransom of the Soul*, must be alike for all; for the Rich have as much need of Christ as the Poor, and the Poor are as welcome to him as the Rich. They both alike contributed to the maintenance of the Temple-Service, because both were to have a like Interest in it, and Benefit by it. In Christ and his Ordinances, *Rich and Poor meet together, the Lord is their Maker*, the Lord Christ the Redeemer of them both, *Prov. 22. 2.* The Jews say, if a Man refused to pay this Tribute, he was not comprehended in the Expiation. [2.] This Tribute was to be paid as a *Ransom of the Soul*, that there might be no *Plague among them*. Hereby they acknowledged that they received their Lives from God, that they had forfeited their Lives to him, and that they depended upon his Power and Patience for the Continuance of them; and thus they did homage to the God of their Lives, and deprecated those Plagues which their Sins had deserved. [3.] This Money, that was *raised*, was to be employed in the Service of the Tabernacle, v. 16. with it they bought Sacrifices, Flower, Incense, Wine, Oil, Fuel, Salt, Priest's Garments, and all other things which the whole Congregation was interested in. Note, Those that have the Benefit of God's Tabernacle among them, must be willing to defray the Expenses of it, and not grudge the necessary Charges of God's publick Worship. Thus we must honour the Lord with our Substance, and reckon that best laid out which is laid out in the Service of God. Money indeed cannot make an *Atonement for the Soul*, but it may be used for the honour of him who has made the Atonement, and for the maintenance of the Gospel, by which the Atonement is applied.

17 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 18 Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and his foot also of brass, to wash withal: and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein. 19 For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat. 20 When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not: or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn an offering made by fire unto the LORD. 21 So they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not: and it shall be a statute for ever to them, even to him and to his seed throughout their generations.

Orders are here given; 1. For the making of a Laver, or Font of Brass, a large Vessel, that would contain a good quantity of Water, which was to be set near the Door of the Tabernacle, v. 18. The Foot of Brass, 'tis supposed, was so contrived as to receive the Water, which was let into it out of the Laver by Spouts or Cocks. They then had a Laver for the Priests only to wash in, but to us now there is a Fountain opened for Judah and Jerusalem to wash in, *Zech. 13. 1.* an inexhaustible Fountain of living Water, so that it is our own fault if we remain in our Pollution. 2. For the using of this Laver, Aaron and his Sons must wash their Hands and Feet at this Laver every time they went in to minister, eve-

ry morning at least, v. 19, 20, 21. for this purpose clean Water was put into the Laver fresh every day. Tho' they washed themselves never so clean at their own Houses, that would not serve, they must wash at the Laver, because that was appointed for washing, *2 Kings 5. 12.* This was designed, (1.) To teach them Purity in all their Ministrations, and to possess them with a Reverence of God's Holiness, and a Dread of the Pollutions of Sin. They must not only wash and be made clean, when they were first consecrated, but they must wash and be kept clean whenever they went in to minister. He only shall stand in God's Holy Place that hath clean Hands, and a pure Heart, *Psal. 24. 3, 4.* And, (2.) 'Twas to teach us, who are daily to attend upon God, daily to renew our Repentance for Sin, and our believing Application of the Blood of Christ to our Souls for Remission; for in many things we daily offend and contract Pollution, *John 13. 10.* This is the Preparation we are to make for solemn Ordinances, *Cleanse your Hands, and purify your Hearts*, and then draw nigh to God, *James 4. 8.* To this Law David alludes, *Psal. 26. 6. I will wash mine Hands in Innocency, so will I compass thine Altar, O Lord.*

22 Moreover the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 23 Take thou also unto thee principal spices, of pure myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty shekels, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty shekels. 24 And of cassia five hundred shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of oil-olive an hin. 25 And thou shalt make it an oil of holy ointment, an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary; it shall be an holy anointing oil. 26 And thou shalt anoint the tabernacle of the congregation therewith, and the ark of the testimony. 27 And the table and all his Vessels, and the candlestick and his vessels, and the altar of incense. 28 And the altar of burnt-offering with all his Vessels, and the laver and his foot. 29 And thou shalt sanctify them, that they may be most holy: whatsoever toucheth them, shall be holy. 30 And thou shalt anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office. 31 And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, This shall be a holy anointing oil unto me, throughout your generations. 32 Upon man's flesh shall it not be poured: neither shall ye make any other like it, after the composition of it: it is holy, and it shall be holy unto you. 33 Whosoever compoundeth any like it, or whosoever putteth any of it upon a stranger, shall even be cut off from his people. 34 And the LORD said unto Moses, Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum: these sweet spices with pure frankincense; of each shall there be a like weight. 35 And thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary; tempered together pure and holy. 36 And thou shalt beat some of it very small, and put of it before the testimony in the tabernacle of the congregation, where I will meet with thee: it shall be unto you most holy. 37 And as for the perfume which thou shalt make, you shall not make to yourselves according to the composition thereof; it shall be unto thee holy for the LORD. 38 Whosoever shall make like unto that, to smell thereto, shall even be cut off from his people.

Directions are here given for the Composition of the Holy anointing Oil, and the Incense, that were to be used in the Service of the Tabernacle; with these God was to be honoured, and therefore he would appoint the making of them; for nothing comes to God, but what comes from him.

1. The Holy anointing Oil is here ordered to be made up: The Ingredients, and their Quantities are prescribed, v. 24, 25. Interpreters are not agreed concerning them; we are sure, in general, they were the best and fittest for the purpose, they must needs be so when the Divine Wisdom appointed them for the Divine Honour. 'Twas to be compounded *secundum artem*, v. 25. the Spices, which were in all near half a hundred weight, were to be infused in the Oil, which was to be about five or six Quarts, and then strained out,

out, leaving an admirable sweet Smell in the Oil. With this Oil God's Tent, and all the Furniture of it, were to be anointed; 'twas to be used also in the Consecration of the Priests, v. 26--30. 'Twas to be continued *throughout their Generations*, v. 31. The Tradition of the *Jews* is, that this very Oil, which was prepared by *Moses* himself, lasted till near the Captivity. But *Bishop Patrick* shews the great Improbability of the Tradition, and supposeth it was repeated according to the Prescription, here, for *Solomon* was anointed with it, 1 Kings 1. 39. and some other of the Kings, and all the High Priests, with such a quantity of it, as that it ran down to the *Shirts of the Garments*; and we read of the making up of this Ointment, 1 Chron. 9. 30. and yet all agree that in the second Temple there was none of this Holy Oil, which he supposeth was owing to a Notion they had, that it was not lawful to make it up; Providence over-ruling that Want, as a Preface of the better Unction of the Holy Ghost in Gospel-Times, the Variety of whose Gifts was typified by these several sweet Ingredients. To shew the Excellency of Holiness, there was that in the Tabernacle, which was in the highest degree grateful both to the Sight and to the Smell. Christ's Name is said to be as Ointment poured forth, Cant. 1. 3. and the good Name of Christians better than precious Ointment, Eccles. 7. 1.

2. The Incense which was burnt upon the golden Altar, this was prepared of sweet Spices likewise, tho' not so rare and rich as those which the anointing Oil was compounded of, v. 34, 35. This was prepared once a year, (the *Jews* say) a pound for each day of the year, and three pound over for the day of Atonement: When it was used, it was to be eaten very small; thus it pleased the Lord to bruise the Redeemer, when he offered himself for a Sacrifice of a sweet-smelling Saviour.

Concerning both these Preparations the same Law is here given, v. 32, 33, 37, 38. that the like should not be made for any common Use. Thus God would preserve in the People's Minds a Reverence for his own Institutions, and teach us not to profane or abuse any thing whereby God makes himself known, as they did, who *invented to themselves Instruments of Musick* like David. 'Tis a great Affront to God to jest with Sacred Things, and to make Sport with the Word and Ordinances of God. That which is God's Peculiar must not be used as a common thing.

C H A P. XXXI.

God is here drawing towards a Conclusion of what he had to say to *Moses* upon the Mount, where he had now been with him forty Days and forty Nights, and yet no more is recorded of what was said to him in all that time, but what we have read in the six Chapters foregoing. In this, 1. He appoints what Workmen should be employed in the building and furnishing of the Tabernacle, v. 1--11. 2. He repeats the Law of the Sabbath, and the religious Observation of it, v. 12--17. 3. He delivers him the two Tables of the Testimony at parting, v. 18.

1 AND the LORD spake unto *Moses*, saying, 2 See, I have called by name, *Bezaleel* the son of *Uri*, the son of *Hur*, of the tribe of *Judah*: 3 And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, 4 To devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, 5 And in cutting of stones to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship. 6 And I, behold, I have given with him, *Aholiab* the son of *Ahifamach* of the tribe of *Dan*; and in the hearts of all that are wise-hearted I have put wisdom; that they may make all that I have commanded thee: 7 The tabernacle of the congregation, and the ark of the testimony, and the mercy-seat that is thereupon, and all the furniture of the tabernacle, 8 And the table and his furniture, and the pure candlestick with all his furniture, and the altar of incense, 9 And the altar of burnt-offering with all his furniture, and the laver and his foot, 10 And the clothes of service, and the holy garments for *Aaron* the priest, and the garments of his sons, to minister in the priest's office, 11 And the anointing oil, and sweet incense for the holy place: according to all that I have commanded thee, shall they do.

V O L. I.

A great deal of fine Work God had ordered to be done about the Tabernacle; the Materials the People were to provide, but who must put them into form? *Moses* himself was learned in all the Learning of the Egyptians, nay, he was well acquainted with the Words of God, and the Visions of the Almighty, but he knew not how to engrave or embroider: We may suppose there were some very ingenious Men among the *Israelites*, but having lived all their days in Bondage in *Egypt*, we cannot think they were any of them instructed in these curious Arts. They knew how to make Brick, and work in Clay, but to work in Gold, and cut Diamonds, was what they had never been brought up to. How should the Work be done with that Neatness and Exactness that was required, when they had no Goldsmiths or Jewellers, but what must be made out of Masons and Bricklayers? We may suppose there were now that would gladly be employed, and would do their best, but it would be hard to find out a proper Person to preside in this Work; Who was sufficient for these things? But God takes care of this Matter also.

1. He nominates the Persons that were to be employed, that there might be no Contest about the Preference, nor Envy at those that were preferred, God himself having made the Choice. (1.) *Bezaleel* was to be the Architect, or Master-Workman, v. 2. He was of the Tribe of *Judah*, a Tribe that God did delight to honour, the Grandson of *Hur*, probably that *Hur*, who had helped to hold up *Moses*'s Hands, Chap. 17. and was at this time in Commission with *Aaron* for the Government of the People in the absence of *Moses*, Chap. 24. 14. Out of that Family, which was of note in *Israel*, was this Workman chosen; and it added no little Honour to the Family, that a Branch of it was employed, tho' but as a mechanic or handicraft Tradesman, for the Service of the Tabernacle. The *Jews* Tradition is, that *Hur* was the Husband of *Miriam*, and then 'twas requisite God should appoint him to this Service, lest if *Moses* himself had done it, he should have been thought partial to his own Kindred, his Brother *Aaron* also being advanced to the Priesthood. God will put Honour upon *Moses*'s Relations, and yet will make it to appear, that he takes not the Honour to himself, or his own Family, but it is purely the Lord's doing. (2.) *Aholiab*, of the Tribe of *Dan*, is appointed next to *Bezaleel*, and Partner with him, v. 6. Two is better than one. Christ sent forth his Disciples, who were to rear the Gospel-Tabernacle, two and two, and we read of his two Witnesses. *Aholiab* was of the Tribe of *Dan*, which was one of the less honourable Tribes; that the Tribes of *Judah* and *Levi* might not be lifted up, as if they were to engross all the Preferments; to prevent a Schism in the Body, God giveth Honour to that part which lacked, 1 Cor. 12. 24. The Head cannot say to the Foot, I have no need of thee. *Hiram*, who was the Head-Workman in the Building of *Solomon*'s Temple, was also of the Tribe of *Dan*, 2 Chron. 2. 14. (3.) There were others that were employed by and under these, in the several Operations about the Tabernacle, v. 6. Note, When God hath Work to do, he will never want Instruments to do it with, for all Hearts, and Heads too, are under his Eye, and in his Hand; and those may cheerfully go about any Service for God, and go on in it, who have reason to think, that one way or other he has called them to it; for whom he calls, he will own and bear out.

2. He qualifies these Persons for the Service, v. 3. I have filled him with the Spirit of God; and v. 6. In the Hearts of all that are wise-hearted, I have put Wisdom. Note, 1. Skill in common Arts and Employments is the Gift of God, from him is both the Faculty, and the Improvement of the Faculty. 'Tis he that puts even this Wisdom into the inward Parts, Job 38. 36. He teacheth the Husbandman Discretion, Isa. 28. 26. and the Tradesman too, and he must have the Praise of it. 2. God dispenseth his Gifts variously, one Gift to one, another to another, and all for the Good of the whole Body, both of Mankind, and of the Church. *Moses* was fittest of all to govern *Israel*, but *Bezaleel* was fitter than he to build the Tabernacle. The common Benefit is very much supported by the Variety of Mens Faculties and Inclinations; the Genius of some leads them to be serviceable one way, of others another way, and all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, 1 Cor. 12. 11. This forbids Pride, Envy, Contempt, and Emulation, and strengthens the Bond of mutual Love. 3. Those whom God calls to any Service, he will either find them, or make them fit for it. If God give the Commission, he will in some measure give the Qualifications, according as the Service is. The Work that was to be done here, was to make the Tabernacle, and the Utensils of it, which are here particularly reckoned up, v. 7, &c. And for this the Persons employed were enabled to work in Gold, and Silver, and Brass. When Christ sent his Apostles to rear the Gospel-Tabernacle, he poured out his Spirit upon them, to enable them to speak with Tongues the wonderful Works of God, not to work upon Metal, but to work upon Men; so much more excellent were the Gifts; as the Tabernacle to be

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pitched was a greater and more perfect Tabernacle, as the Apostle calls it, *Heb. 9. 7.*

12 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 13 Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you, throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD, that doth sanctify you. 14 Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you. Every one that defileth it, shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from amongst his people. 15 Six days may work be done, but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD: whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath-day, he shall surely be put to death. 16 Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. 17 It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever; for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed. 18 And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.

Here's, 1. A strict Command for the Sanctification of the Sabbath-day, *v. 13--17.* The Law of the Sabbath had been given them before any other Law, by way of Preparation, *Exod. 16. 25.* It had been inserted in the Body of the Moral Law, in the fourth Commandment; it had been annexed to the Judicial Law, *Chap. 23. 12, 13.* And here it is added to the first part of the Ceremonial Law, because the Observation of the Sabbath is indeed the Hem and Hedge of the whole Law: where no Conscience is made of that, farewell both Godliness and Honesty; for in the Moral Law it stands in the midst, between the two Tables. Some suggest that it comes in here upon another account; Orders were now given, that a Tabernacle should be set up and furnished for the Service of God with all possible Expedition; but lest they should think that the nature of the Work, and the haste that was required, would justify them in working at it on Sabbath-days, that they might get it done the sooner, this Caution is seasonably inserted, *Verily, or nevertheless, my Sabbaths ye shall keep.* Tho' they must hasten the Work, yet they must not make more haste than good-speed; they must not break the Law of the Sabbath in their haste: Even Tabernacle-Work must give way to the Sabbath-Rest, so jealous is God for the Honour of his Sabbaths. Observe what is here said concerning the Sabbath-day.

1. The Nature, Meaning, and Intention of the Sabbath, by the Declaration of which God puts an Honour upon it, and teacheth us to value it. Divers things are here said of the Sabbath: (1.) *It is a sign between me and you, v. 13.* and again, *v. 17.* The Institution of the Sabbath was a great instance of God's Favour to them, and a sign that he had distinguished them from all other People; and their religious Observance of the Sabbath was a great instance of their Duty and Obedience to him. God, by sanctifying this Day among them, let them know that he sanctified them, and set them apart for himself and his Service, otherwise he would not have revealed to them his holy Sabbaths, to be the Support of Religion among them. Or it may refer to the Law concerning the Sabbath, *Keep my Sabbaths, that ye may know that I the Lord do sanctify you.* Note, If God, by his Grace, incline our Hearts to keep the Law of the fourth Commandment, it will be an evidence of a good Work wrought in us by his Spirit. If we sanctify God's Day, it is a sign between him and us, that he hath sanctified our Hearts: Hence it is the Character of the blessed Man, that he keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, *Isa. 56. 2.* The Jews, by observing one Day in seven, after six Days Labour, testified and declared that they worshipped the God that made the World in six Days, and rested the seventh; and so distinguished themselves from other Nations, who having first lost the Sabbath, which was instituted to be a Memorial of the Creation, by degrees lost the knowledge of the Creator, and gave that Honour to the Creature, which was due to him alone. (2.) *It is holy to you, v. 14. i. e.* it is designed for your Benefit as well as for God's Honour; *The Sabbath was made for Man,* or it shall be accounted holy by you, and shall be so observed, and you shall look upon it as Sacrilege to profane it. (3.) It is the Sabbath of Rest, holy to the Lord, *v. 15.* it is separated from common Use, and designed for the Honour and Service of God, and

by the Observance of it we are taught to rest from worldly Pursuits; and the Service of the Flesh, and devote ourselves, and all we are, have, and can do, to God's Glory. (4.) It was to be observed throughout their Generations, in every Age, for a perpetual Covenant, *v. 16.* This was to be one of the most lasting Tokens of that Covenant which was between God and Israel.

2. The Law of the Sabbath, they must keep it, *v. 13, 14, 16.* Keep it as a Treasure, as a Trust; observe it, preserve it; keep it from polluting it; keep it up, as a sign between God and them; keep it, and never part with it. The Gentiles had anniversary Feasts to the Honour of their Gods, but it was peculiar to the Jews to have a weekly Festival; this therefore they must carefully observe.

3. The Reason of the Sabbath, for God's Laws are not only back'd with the highest Authority, but supported with the best Reason; God's own Example is the great Reason, *v. 17.* As the Work of Creation is worthy to be thus commemorated, so the great Creator is worthy to be thus imitated, by a holy Rest the seventh Day, after six Days Labour; especially since we hope, in further conformity to the same Example, shortly to rest with him from all our Labours.

4. The Penalty to be inflicted for the Breach of this Law. Every one that defileth the Sabbath, by doing any Work therein, but Works of Piety and Mercy, shall be cut off from among his People, *v. 14.* He shall surely be put to death, *v. 15.* The Magistrate must cut him off with the Sword of Justice, if the Crime can be proved; if it cannot, or if the Magistrate be remiss, and do not do his Duty, God will take the Work into his own hands, and cut him off by a stroke from Heaven, and his Family shall be rooted out of Israel. Note, The Contempt and Profanation of the Sabbath-day, is an Iniquity to be punished by the Judges; and if Men do not punish it, God will here or hereafter, unless it be repented of.

2. The delivering of the two Tables of Testimony to Moses. God had promised him these Tables when he called him up into the Mount, *Chap. 24. 12.* and now when he was sending him down, he delivered them to him, to be carefully and honourably deposited in the Ark, *v. 18.* (1.) The ten Commandments, which God had spoken upon Mount Sinai in the hearing of all the People, were now written, in perpetuum rei memoriam, because that which is written remains. (2.) They were written in Tables of Stone, prepared not by Moses, as it should seem, (for it is intimated, *Chap. 24. 12.* that he found them ready written when he went up to the Mount) but some think by the Ministry of Angels. The Law was written in Tables of Stone, to note the perpetual Duration of it; what can be supposed to last longer, than that which is written in Stone, and laid up? To note likewise the Hardness of our Hearts, one might ealier write in Stone, than write any thing that's good in our corrupt and sinful Hearts. (3.) They were written with the Finger of God, *i. e.* by his Will and Power immediately, without the Use of any Instrument. 'Tis God only that can write his Law in the Heart, he gives a Heart of Flesh; and then by his Spirit, which is the Finger of God, he writes his Will in the fleshy Tables of the Heart, *2 Cor. 3. 3.* (4.) They were written in two Tables, being designed to direct us in our Duty both towards God, and towards Man. (5.) They are called Tables of Testimony, because this written Law testified both the Will of God concerning them, and his Good-will towards them, and would be a Testimony against them, if they were disobedient. (6.) They were delivered to Moses, probably with a Charge before he laid them up in the Ark, to shew them publicly, that they might be seen and read of all Men; and so what they had heard with the hearing of the Ear, might now be brought to their remembrance. Thus the Law was given by Moses, but Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ.

C H A P. XXXII.

'Tis a very lamentable Interruption which the Story of this Chapter gives, to the Record of the Establishment of the Church, and of Religion among the Jews. Things went on admirably well towards that happy Settlement, God had shewed himself very favourable, and the People had also seemed to be pretty tractable; Moses had now almost compleated his forty Days upon the Mount, and we may suppose was pleasing himself with the Thoughts of the very joyful Welcome he should have to the Camp of Israel at his Return, and the speedy setting up of the Tabernacle among them: But behold the Measures are broke, the Sin of Israel turns away those good Things from them, and puts a stop to the Current of God's Favours; the Sin that did the mischief, (would you think it?) was worshipping a golden Calf. The Marriage was ready to be solemnized between God and Israel, but Israel plays the Harlot, and so the Match is broke, and it will be no easy matter to piece it again. Here's, 1. The Sin of Israel, and Aaron particularly, in making the golden Calf for a God,

God, v. 1—4. and worshipping it, v. 5, 6. 2. The notice which God gave of this to Moses, who was now in the Mount with him, v. 7, 8. and the Sentence of his Wrath against them, v. 9, 10. 3. The Intercession which Moses immediately made for them in the Mount, v. 11, 12, 13. and the Prevalency of that Intercession, v. 14. 4. His coming down from the Mount, when he became an eye-witness of their Idolatry, v. 15—19. in detestation of which, and a just indignation at it, he broke the Tables, v. 19. and burnt the golden Calf, v. 20. 5. The Examination of Aaron about it, v. 21—24. 6. Execution done upon the Ringleaders in the Idolatry, v. 25—29. The further Intercession Moses made for them, to turn away the Wrath of God from them, v. 30, 32. and a Reprieve granted thereupon, reserving them for a further Reckoning, v. 33—35.

AND when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. 2 And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden ear-rings which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. 3 And all the people brake off the golden ear-rings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. 4 And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. 5 And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it, and Aaron made proclamation and said, To-morrow is a feast to the LORD. 6 And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt-offerings, and brought peace-offerings: and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

While Moses was in the Mount, receiving the Law from God, the People had time to meditate upon what had been delivered, and prepare themselves for what was further to be revealed, and forty Days was little enough for that Work; but instead of that, there were those among them that were contriving how to break the Laws they had already receiv'd, and to anticipate those which they were in expectation of. On the thirty-ninth Day of the forty, the Plot broke out, of Rebellion against the Lord.

Here's, 1. A tumultuous Address which the People made to Aaron, who was intrusted with the Government in the absence of Moses, v. 1. Up, make us Gods which shall go before us. (1.) See the ill Effect of Moses's Absence from them; if he had not had God's Call both to go and stay, he had not been altogether free from Blame. Those that have the Charge of others, as Magistrates, Ministers, and Masters of Families, ought not, without just cause, to absent themselves from their Charge, lest Satan get advantage thereby. (2.) See the Fury and Violence of a Multitude, when they are influenced and corrupted by such as lie in wait to deceive. Some few, it is likely, were at first possessed with this Humour, while many who would never have thought of it, if they had not put it in their Hearts, were brought to follow their pernicious ways; and presently such a Multitude were carried down this Stream, that the few who abhorred the Proposal, durst not so much as enter their Protestation against it. Behold how great a Matter a little Fire kindles!

Now what was the matter with this giddy Multitude?

(1.) They were weary of waiting for the promised Land. They thought themselves detained too long at Mount Sinai, tho' there they lay very safe and very easy, well fed, and well taught, yet they were undone to be going forward; they had a God that staid with them, and manifested his Presence with them by the Cloud, but that would not serve, they must have a God to go before them; they are for hastening to the Land flowing with Milk and Honey, and cannot stay to take their Religion along with them. Note, Those that would anticipate God's Counsels, are commonly precipitate in their own. We must first wait for God's Law, before we catch at his Promises. He that believeth doth not make haste; not more haste than good speed.

(2.) They were weary of waiting for the Return of Moses. When he went up into the Mount he had not told them, for God had not told him how long he must stay, and therefore when he had out-staid their time, tho' they were every way well provided for in his absence, some ill People advanced I

know not what Surmises concerning his Delay: As for this Moses, the Man that brought us up out of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. Observe, 1. How slightly they speak of his Person, this Moses. Thus ungrateful are they to Moses, who had shewed such a tender Concern for them, and thus do they walk contrary to God. While God delights to put Honour upon him, they delight to put Contempt upon him; and this to the face of Aaron, his Brother, and now his Viceroy. Note, The greatest Merits cannot secure Men from the greatest Indignities and Affronts in this ungrateful World. 2. How suspicious they speak of his Delay, We wot not what is become of him; they thought he was either consumed by the devouring Fire, or starved for want of Food, as if that God, who kept and fed them that were so unworthy, would not take care for the Protection and Supply of Moses, his Favourite. Some of them, that were willing to think well of Moses, perhaps suggested that he was translated to Heaven, like Enoch; while others, that cared not how ill they thought of him, insinuated that he had out-run his Undertaking, as unable to go on with it, and was returned to his Father-in-law, to keep his Flock. All these Suggestions were perfectly groundless and absurd, nothing could be more so; 'twas easy to tell what was become of him: He was seen to go into the Cloud, and the Cloud he went into was still seen by all Israel upon the top of the Mount; they had all the reason in the World to conclude he was safe there: If the Lord had been pleased to kill him, he would not have shewed him such Favours as these. If he tarried long, 'twas because God had a great deal to say to him for their Good; he resided upon the Mount as their Ambassador, and he would certainly return, as soon as he had finished the Business he went upon; and yet they make this the colour for their wicked Proposal, We wot not what is become of him. Note, 1. Those that are resolved to think ill, when they have ever so much reason to think well, commonly pretend that they know not what to think. 2. Misrepresentations of our Redeemer's Delays, is the occasion of a great deal of Wickedness. Our Lord Jesus is gone up into the Mount of Glory, where he is appearing in the Presence of God for us, but out of our sight, the Heavens must contain him, must conceal him, that we may live by Faith; there he has been long, there he is yet: Hence Unbelievers suggest, that they wot not what's become of him, and ask, Where is the Promise of his coming? 2 Pet. 3. 4. as if because he is not come yet, he would never come. The wicked Servant emboldens himself in his Impieties with this Consideration, My Lord delays his coming. 3. Short-sightedness, and Weariness of waiting, betrays us to a great many Temptations. This began Saul's Ruin, he staid for Samuel to the last Hour of the time appointed, but had not patience to stay that Hour, 1 Sam. 13. 11, 14. So Israel here, if they could but have staid one Day longer, would have seen what was become of Moses. The Lord is a God of Judgment, and must be waited for till he comes, waited for, tho' he tarry, and then we shall not lose our labour; for he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry.

(3.) They were weary of waiting for a Divine Institution of religious Worship among them, for that was the thing they were now in expectation of. They were told that they must serve God in this Mountain, and fond enough they would be of the Pomp and Ceremony of it, but because that was not appointed them so soon as they wished, they would set their own Wits on work to devise Signs of God's Presence with them, and would glory in them, and have a Worship of their own Invention, probably such as they had seen among the Egyptians; for Stephen saith, that when they said unto Aaron, Make us Gods, they did in Heart turn back into Egypt, Acts 7. 39, 40. This was a very strange Motion, Up, make us Gods. If they wot not what was become of Moses, and thought him lost, it had been decent for them to have appointed a solemn Mourning for him for certain Days; but see how soon so great a Benefactor is forgotten. If they had said, Moses is lost, make us a Governour, there had been some sense in it, tho' a great deal of Ingratitude to the Memory of Moses, and Contempt of Aaron and Hur, who were left Lords Justices in his absence; but to say, Moses is lost, make us a God, was the greatest Absurdity imaginable. Was Moses their God? Had he ever pretended to be so? Whatever was become of Moses, was it not evident beyond contradiction, that God was still with them? And had they any room to question his leading of their Camp, who vidualled it so well every day? Could they have any other God, that would provide so well for them as he had done; nay, as he now did? And yet make us Gods which shall go before us. Gods! How many would they have? Is not one sufficient? Make us Gods! And what good would Gods of their own making do them? They must have such Gods to go before them, as could not go themselves further than they were carried. So wretchedly befuddled and intoxicated are Idolaters; they are mad upon their Idols, Jer. 50. 38.

2. Here's the Demand which Aaron makes of their Jewels thereupon, *v. 2.* Bring me your golden Ear-rings. We do not find that he said one word to discountenance their Proposal, did not reprove their Insolence, did not reason with them, to convince them of the Sin and Folly of it; but seemed to approve the Motion, and shewed himself not unwilling to humour them in it. One would hope he designed at first only to make a jest of it, and by setting up a ridiculous Image among them to expose the Motion, and shew them the Folly of it. But if so, it proved ill jesting with Sin, and of dangerous consequence, with the unwary Fly, to play about the Candle. Some charitably suppose, that when Aaron bid them break off their Ear-rings, and bring him those, he did it with design to crush the Proposal, believing that tho' their Covetousness would have let them *lavish Gold out of the Bag* to make an Idol of *Isa. 46. 6.* yet their Pride would not have suffered them to part with their golden Ear-rings. But it is not safe to try how far Mens sinful Lusts will carry them in a sinful way, and what Expence they will be at; it proved here a dangerous Experiment.

3. Here's the making of the golden Calf, *v. 3, 4.* (1.) The People brought in their Ear-rings to Aaron, whose Demand of them, instead of discouraging the Motion, perhaps did rather gratify their Superstition, and beget in them a Fancy, that the Gold taken from their Ears would be the most acceptable, and would make a God the most valuable. Let their Readiness to part with their Rings to make an Idol of, shame us out of our Niggardliness in the Service of the true God. Did not they stick at the Charge of their Idolatry, and shall we grudge the Expences of our Religion, or starve so good a Cause? (2.) Aaron melted down their Rings, and having a Mould prepared for the purpose, poured the melted Gold into it, and then produced it in the shape of an Ox or Calf, giving it some finishing Strokes with a graving Tool. Some think Aaron chose this Figure for a Sign or Token of the Divine Preference, because he thought the Head and Horns of an Ox a proper Emblem of the Divine Power; and yet being so plain and common a thing, he hoped the People would not be so foolish as to worship it. But it is likely they had learnt of the Egyptians thus to represent the Deity; for it is said, *Ezek. 20. 8.* They did not forsake the Idols of Egypt: and *Chap. 23. 8.* Neither left she her Whoredoms brought from Egypt. Thus they changed their Glory into the Similitude of an Ox, *Psal. 106. 20.* and proclaimed their own Folly beyond that of other Idolaters, who worshipped the Host of Heaven.

4. Having made the Calf in Horeb, they worshipped the graven Image, *Psal. 106. 19.* (1.) Aaron seeing the People fond of their Calf, was willing yet further to honour them, and he built an Altar before it, and proclaimed a Feast to the Honour of it, *v. 5.* a Feast of Dedication. Yet he calls it a Feast to Jehovah, for as brutish as they were, they did not imagine that this Image was itself a God, nor did they design to terminate their Adoration in the Image, but they made it for a Representation of the true God, whom they intended to worship in and through this Image; and yet this did not excuse them from gross Idolatry, no more than it will excuse the Papists, whose Plea it is, that they do not worship the Image, but God by the Image: so making themselves just such Idolaters as the Worshipers of the golden Calf, whose Feast was a Feast to Jehovah, and proclaimed to be so, that the most ignorant and unthinking might not mistake it. (2.) The People are forward enough to celebrate this Feast, *v. 6.* They rose up early on the morrow, to shew how well pleased they were with the Solemnity, and according to the antient Rites of Worship, they offered Sacrifice to this new-made Deity, and then feasted upon the Sacrifice: Thus having, at the expence of their Ear-rings, made their God, they endeavour, at the expence of their Beasts, to make this God propitious. Had they offered these Sacrifices immediately to Jehovah, without the Intervention of an Image, they might (for ought I know) have been accepted, *Exod. 20. 24.* but having set up an Image before them, as a Symbol of God's Presence, and so changed the Truth of God into a Lye, these Sacrifices were an Abomination, nothing could be more so. When this Idolatry of theirs is spoken of in the New Testament, the account of their Feast upon the Sacrifice is quoted and referred to; *1 Cor. 10. 7.* They sate down to eat and drink of the Remains of what was sacrificed, and then rose up to play, to play the fool, to play the wanton: Like God, like Worship. They would not have made a Calf their God, if they had not first made their Belly their God; but when the God was a jest, no marvel the Service was sport: Being vain in their Imaginations, they became vain in their Worship; so great was this Vanity.

Now, 1. It was strange that any of the People, especially so great a number of them, should do such a thing. Had they not but t'other day in this very place heard the Voice of the Lord God speaking to them out of the midst of the Fire, *Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven Image?* Had they not heard the Thunder, seen the Lightnings, and felt the Earth-

quake, with the dreadful Pomp of which this Law was given? Had they not been particularly cautioned not to make Gods of Gold? *Exod. 20. 23.* Nay, had they not themselves solemnly entered into Covenant with God, and promised that all that which he had said unto them they would do, and would be obedient? *Chap. 24. 7.* And yet before they stirred from the Place where this Covenant had been solemnly ratified, and before the Cloud was removed from the top of Mount Sinai, thus to break an express Command, in defiance of an express Threatning, that this Iniquity should be visited upon them and their Children, what shall we think of it? It is a plain Indication, that the Law was no more able to sanctify than it was to justify; by it is the Knowledge of Sin, but not the Cure of it. This is intimated in the Emphasis laid upon the Place where this Sin was committed, *Psal. 106.* They made a Calf in Horeb, the very Place where the Law was given: 'Twas otherwise with those that received the Gospel, they immediately turned from Idols, *1 Thess. 1. 9.*

2. It was especially strange that Aaron should be so deeply concerned in this Sin, that he should make the Calf, and proclaim the Feast! Is this Aaron the Saint of the Lord? the Brother of Moses his Prophet, that could speak so well? *Exod. 4. 14.* And yet speaks not one word against this Idolatry. Is this he that had not only seen, but had been employed in summoning the Plagues of Egypt, and the Judgments executed upon the Gods of the Egyptians? What! and yet himself copying out the abandoned Idolatries of Egypt? With what face could they say, *These are thy Gods, that brought thee up out of Egypt,* when they thus bring the Idolatry of Egypt (the worst thing there) along with them! Is this Aaron who had been with Moses in the Mount, *Exod. 19. 24. — 24. 9.* and knew there was no manner of Similitude seen there, by which they might make an Image? Is this Aaron who was entrusted with the Care of the People in the absence of Moses, is he aiding and abetting in this Rebellion against the Lord? How was it possible he should ever do so ill a thing? Either he was strangely surprized into it, and did it when he was half asleep, or he was frighted into it by the Outrages of the Rabble. The Jews have a Tradition, that his Colleague Hur opposing it, the People fell upon him, and stoned him, and therefore we never read of him after, and that this frightened Aaron into a Compliance: And God left him to himself, 1. To teach us what the best of Men are when they are so left, that we may cease from Man, and that he that thinks he stands, may take heed lest he fall. 2. Aaron was at this time destined by the Divine Appointment to the great Office of the Priesthood; tho' he knew it not, Moses in the Mount did: now lest he should be lifted up above measure, with the Honours that were to be put upon him, a Messenger of Satan was suffered to prevail over him, that the Remembrance thereof might keep him humble all his days. He that had once shamed himself so far as to build an Altar to the golden Calf, must own himself altogether unworthy of the Honour of attending at the Altar of God, and purely indebted to Free Grace for it. Thus Pride and Boasting were for ever silenced, and a good Effect brought out of a bad Cause. By this likewise it was shew'd, that the Law made them Priests which had Infirmary, and needed first to offer for their own Sins.

7 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves. 8 They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them; they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. 9 And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people. 10 Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation. 11 And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt, with great power, and with a mighty hand? 12 Wherefore should the Egyptians speak and say, for mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil, against thy people. 13 Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel thy servants, to whom thou swearest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your

your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of, will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever. 14 And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.

Here, 1. God acquaints *Moses* with what was a doing in the Camp while he was absent, v. 7, 8. He could have told him sooner, as soon as the first step was taken towards it, and have hastened him down to prevent it, but he suffered it to come to this height, for wise and holy Ends, and then sent him down to punish it. Note, It is no Reproach to the Holiness of God, that he suffers Sin to be committed, since he knows not only how to restrain it when he pleaseth, but how to make it serviceable to the Designs of his own Glory. Observe what God here saith to *Moses* concerning this Sin. (1.) That they had corrupted themselves; Sin is the Corruption or Depravation of the Sinner, and it is a Self-Corruption: *Every Man is tempted, when he is drawn aside of his own Lust.* (2.) That they had turned aside out of the Way. Sin is a Deviation from the Way of our Duty into a By-path; when they promised to do all that God should command them, they set out as fair as could be, but now they missed their way, and turned side. (3.) That they had turned aside quickly; quickly after the Law was given them, and they had promised to obey it; quickly after God had done such great things for them, and declared his kind Intentions to do greater. They soon forgot his Works. To fall into Sin quickly after we have renewed our Covenants with God, or received special Mercy from him, is very provoking. (4.) He tells him particularly what they had done, they have made a Calf, and worshipped it. Note, Those Sins which are concealed from our Governours, are naked and open before God. He sees that which they cannot discover, nor is any of the Wickedness in the World hid from him. We could not bear to see the thousandth part of that Provocation which God sees every day, and yet keeps silence. (5.) He seems to disown them, in saying to *Moses*, they are thy People, which thou broughtest up out of the Land of Egypt, q. d. I will not own any Relation to them, or Concern for them; let it never be said they are my People, or that I brought them out of Egypt. Note, Those that corrupt themselves, not only shame themselves, but even make God himself ashamed of them, and of his Kindness to them. (6.) He sends him down to them with all speed, Go get thee down. He must break off even his Communion with God, to go and do his Duty, as a Magistrate, among the People; so must *Jehoiada*, Chap. 7. 10. Every thing is beautiful in its Season.

2. He expresseth his Displeasure against *Israel* for this Sin, and the Resolves of his Justice to cut them off, v. 9, 10. (1.) He gives this People their true Character, *It is a stiff-necked People*, unapt to come under the Yoke of the Divine Law, and governed as it were, by a Spirit of Contradiction, averse to all Good, and prone to Evil; obstinate to the Methods of Cure and Conduct. Note, The righteous God not only sees what we do, but what we are, not only the Actions of our Lives, but the Disposition of our Spirits, and hath an eye to them in all his Proceedings. (2.) He declares what was their just Desert, that his Wrath should wax hot against them, so as to consume them at once, and blot out their Name from under Heaven, Deut. 9. 14. not only cast them out of Covenant, but chase them out of the World. Note, Sin exposeth us to the Wrath of God, and that Wrath, if it be not allayed by Divine Mercy, will burn us up as stubble. It were just with God to let the Law have its Course against Sinners, and to cut them off immediately in the very Act of Sin; and if he should do so, it would be neither Loss nor Dishonour to him. (3.) He speaks *Moses* fair not to intercede for them; therefore, Let me alone. What did *Moses*, or what could he do to hinder God from consuming them? When God resolves to abandon a People, and the Decree of Ruin is gone forth, no Intercession can prevent it, Ezek. 14. 14. Jer. 15. 1. But God would thus express the Greatness of his just Displeasure against them, after the manner of Men, who would have none to intercede for those they resolve to be severe with. Thus also he would put an Honour upon Prayer, intimating that nothing but the Intercession of *Moses* could save them from Ruin, that he might be a Type of Christ, by whose Mediation alone God would reconcile the World unto himself. That the Intercession of *Moses* might appear the more illustrious, God fairly offers him, that if he would not interpose in this Matter, he would make of him a great Nation; that either in Process of Time he would raise up a People out of his Loins, or that he would presently by some means or other, bring another great Nation under his Government and Conduct, so that he should be no Loser, by their Ruin. Had *Moses* been of a narrow selfish Spirit he would have closed with this Offer, but he prefers the Salvation of *Israel* before the Advancement of his own Family. Here was a Man fit to be a Governour,

3. *Moses* earnestly intercedes with God on their behalf, v. 11, 12, 13. he besought the Lord his God. If God would not be called the God of *Israel*, yet he hoped he might address to him as his own God. What Interest we have at the Throne of Grace, we should improve it for the Church of God, and for our Friends.

Now *Moses* is standing in the Gap, to turn away the Wrath of God, Psal. 106. 23. He wisely took the Hint which God gave him, when he said, Let me alone; which tho' it seemed to forbid his interceding, did really encourage it, by shewing what Power the Prayer of Faith hath with God. In such a case God wonders if there be no Intercessor, Isa. 59. 16.

Observe, 1. His Prayer, v. 12. Turn from thy fierce Wrath; not as if he thought God were not justly angry, but he begs that he would not be so greatly angry as to consume them. Let Mercy rejoice against Judgment, repent of this Evil, change the Sentence of Destruction into that of Correction. 2. His Pleas. He fills his Mouth with Arguments, not to move God, but to express his own Faith, and to excite his own Fervency in Prayer. He urgeth, (1.) God's Interest in them, and the great things he had already done for them, and the vast experience of Favours and Miracles he had been at upon them, v. 11. God had said to *Moses*, v. 7. they are thy People, which thou broughtest up out of Egypt, but *Moses* humbly turns them back upon God again, they are thy People, thou art their Lord and Owner, I am but their Servant, thou broughtest them forth out of Egypt, I was but the Instrument in thy hand; that was done in order to their Deliverance, which thou only couldst do. Tho' their being his People was a reason why he should be angry with them, for setting up another God, yet it was a reason why he should not be angry with them, so as to consume them. Nothing more natural than for a Father to correct his Son, but nothing more unnatural than for a Father to slay his Son. And as the Relation is a good Plea, they are thy People, so is the Experience they had had of his Kindness to them, thou broughtest them out of Egypt, tho' they were unworthy, and had there served the Gods of the Egyptians, Josh. 24. 15. If thou didst that for them, notwithstanding their Sins in Egypt, wilt thou undo it for their Sins of the same nature in the Wilderness? (2.) He pleads the Concern of God's Glory, v. 12. Wherefore should the Egyptians say, For mischief did he bring them out? *Israel* is dear to *Moses* as his Kindred, as his Charge, but 'tis the Glory of God that he is most concerned for, that lies nearer his Heart than any thing else. If *Israel* could perish without any Reproach to God's Name, *Moses* could persuade himself to sit down contented; but he cannot bear to hear God reflected on, and therefore this he insists upon, Lord, what will the Egyptians say? Their Eyes, and the Eyes of all the neighbouring Nations, were now upon *Israel*; from the wondrous Beginnings of that People, they raised their Expectations of something great in their latter End; but if a People so strangely saved, should be suddenly ruined, what would the World say of it, especially the Egyptians, that have such an implacable Hatred both to *Israel*, and to the God of *Israel*? They will say, God was either weak, and could not, or fickle, and would not compleat the Salvation he begun; that he brought them forth to that Mountain, not to sacrifice, (as was pretended) but to be sacrificed. They will not consider the Provocation given by *Israel* to justify the Proceeding, but will think it cause enough for Triumph, that God and his People could not agree, but that their God had done that which they would have done. Note, The glorifying of God's Name, as it ought to be our first Petition, ('tis so in the Lord's Prayer) so it ought to be our great Plea, Psal. 79. 9. Do not disgrace the Throne of thy Glory, Jer. 14. 21. and see Jer. 33. 8, 9. And if we would with Comfort plead this with God, as a Reason why he should not destroy us, we ought to plead it with ourselves as a Reason why we should not offend him; What will the Egyptians say? We ought always to be very careful that the Name of God and his Doctrine be not blasphemed through us. (3.) He pleads God's Promise to the Patriarchs, that he would multiply their Seed, and give them the Land of Canaan for an Inheritance, and this Promise confirmed by an Oath, an Oath by himself, since he could swear by no greater, v. 13. God's Promises are to be our Pleas in Prayer, for what he has promised he is able to perform, and the Honour of his Truth is engaged for the Performance of it. Lord, if *Israel* be cut off what will become of the Promise? Shall their Unbelief make that of no effect? God forbid! Thus we must sake our Encouragements in Prayer from God only.

4. God graciously abates of the Rigour of the Sentence, and repented of the Evil he thought to do, v. 14. tho' he designed to punish them, yet he would not ruin them. See here, (1.) The Power of Prayer, God suffers himself to be prevailed with by the humble believing Importunity of Intercessors. (2.) The Compassion of God towards poor Sinners, and how ready he is to forgive. Thus he hath given other Proof besides his own Oath, that he had no pleasure in the Death of them that die, for he not only pardons upon the Repentance of

of Sinners, but spares and reprieves upon the Intercession of others for them.

15 And Moses turned and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand: the tables were written on both their sides; on the one side, and on the other were they written. 16 And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God graven upon the tables. 17 And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, *There is a noise of war in the camp.* 18 And he said, *It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome: but the noise of them that sing, do I hear.* 19. And it came to pass as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount. 20 And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it.

Here's, 1. The Favour of God to Moses, intrusting him with the two Tables of the Testimony, tho' of common Stone, yet far more valuable than all the precious Stones that adorned the Breast-plate of Aaron: *The Topaz of Ethiopia could not equal them, v. 15, 16.* God himself without the Ministry either of Man or Angel, for ought appears, wrote the ten Commandments on these Tables, *on both their sides*, some on one Table, and some on the other, so that they were folded together like a Book, to be deposited in the Ark. 2. The Familiarity between Moses and Joshua. While Moses was in the Cloud, as in the Presence-Chamber, Joshua continued as near as he might in the Anti-Chamber, (as it were) waiting till Moses came out, that he might be ready to attend him; and tho' he were all alone for forty Days (fed, it's likely, with Manna) yet he was not weary of waiting, as the People were, but when Moses came down, he came with him, and *not till then.* And here we are told what Constructions they put upon the noise that they heard in the Camp. *v. 17, 18.* Tho' Moses had been so long in immediate Converse with God, yet he did not disdain to talk freely with his Servant Joshua. Those whom God advanceth, he preserves from being puffed up. Nor did he disdain to talk of the Affairs of the Camp. Blessed Paul was not the less mindful of the Church on Earth, for his having been in the third Heavens, where he heard unspeakable Words. Joshua, who was a military Man, and had the Command of the Train-bands, fear'd there was a noise of War in the Camp; and then he would be missed; but Moses having received notice of it from God, better distinguished the Sound, and was aware that it was *the Voice of them that sing*: But it doth not appear that he told Joshua what he knew of the Occasion of their singing, for we should not be forward to proclaim Mens Faults, they will be known too soon.

3. The great and just Displeasure of Moses against Israel, for their Idolatry. Knowing what to expect, he was presently aware of the golden Calf, and the Sport the People made with it; he saw how merry they could be in his absence, how soon he was forgot among them, and what little thought they had of him, and his Return. He might justly take this ill, as an affront to himself, but that was the least part of the Grievance, he resented it as an Offence to God, and the Scandal of his People. See what a Change it is, to come down from the Mount of Communion with God, to converse with a World that lies in Wickedness: In God we see nothing but what is pure and pleasant, in the World nothing but Pollution and Provocation. Moses was the meekest Man on the Earth, and yet when he saw the Calf, and the Dancing, his Anger waxed hot. Note, It's no Breach of the Law of Meekness to shew our Displeasure at the Wickedness of the Wicked. Those are angry and sin not, that are angry at Sin only, not as against themselves, but as against God. Ephesus is famous for Patience, and yet cannot bear them which are evil, Rev. 2. 2. It becomes us to be cool in our own Cause, but warm in God's. Moses shewed himself very angry, both by breaking the Tables, and burning the Calf, that he might, by these Expressions of a strong Passion, awaken the People to a Sense of the Greatness of the Sin they had been guilty of, which they would have been ready to make light of, if he had not thus shewed his Resentments, as one in earnest for their Conviction.

1. To convince them that they had forfeited and lost the Favour of God, he broke the Tables, *v. 19.* Tho' God knew of their Sin before Moses came down, yet he did not order

him to leave the Tables behind him, but gave them him to take down in his hand, that the People might see how forward God was to take them into Covenant with himself, and that nothing but their own Sin prevented it; but then put it into his Heart, when the Iniquity of Ephraim was discovered, (as the Expression is, *Hos 7. 1.*) to break their Tables before their Eyes, as it is *Deut. 9. 17.* that the sight of it might the more affect them, and fill them with Confusion, when they saw what Blessings they had lost. Thus they being guilty of so notorious an Infraction of the Treaty now on foot, the Writings were torn, then when they lay ready to be sealed. Note, The greatest Sign of God's Displeasure against any Person or People, is his taking of his Law from them. The breaking of the Tables is the breaking of the Staff of Beauty and Band, (*Zech. 11. 10, 14*) it leaves a People unchurch'd, and undone. Some think Moses sinned in breaking the Tables, and observe, that when Men are angry, they are in danger of breaking all God's Commandments: but it rather seems to be an Act of Justice than of Passion, and we do not find that he himself speaks of it afterwards (*Deut. 9. 17.*) with any regret.

2. To convince them that they had betaken themselves to a God that could not help them, he burnt the Calf, *v. 20.* melted it down, and then filed it to Dust; and that the Powder to which it was reduced might be taken notice of throughout the Camp, he strawed it upon that Water, which they all drank of. That it might appear that an Idol is nothing in the World, (*1 Cor. 8. 4.*) he reduced this to Atoms, that it might be as near nothing as could be. And to shew that false Gods cannot help their Worshippers, he here shewed that this could not save itself, *Isa. 46. 1, 2.* And to teach us that all the Reliques of Idolatry ought to be abolished, and that the Names of Baalim should be taken away, the very Dust to which it was ground was scattered. Filings of Gold are precious, (we say) and therefore are carefully gathered up; but the Filings of the golden Calf were odious, and must be scattered with detestation. Thus the Idols of Silver and Gold must be cast to the Moles and the Bats, *Isa. 2. 20—30.* 22. and Ephraim shall say, *What have I to do any more with Idols?* His mixing this Powder with their Drink, signified to them, that the Curse they had hereby brought upon themselves would mingle itself with all their Enjoyments, and embitter them; it would enter into their Bowels like Water, and like Oil into their Bones. *The Backslider in Heart shall be filled with his own ways; he shall drink as he brews.* These were indeed Waters of Marah.

21 And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them? 22 And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my LORD wax hot: thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief. 23 For they said unto me, Make us gods, which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. 24 And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off: so they gave it me; then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf. 25 And when Moses saw that the people were naked, (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame, amongst their enemies) 26 Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD's side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. 27 And he said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. 28 And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. 29 For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves to day to the LORD, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother: that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day.

Moses having shewed his just Indignation against the Sin of Israel, by breaking the Tables, and burning the Calf, he now proceeds to reckon with the Sinners, and to call them to an account; herein acting as God's Representative, who is not only a holy God, and hates Sin, but a just God, and is engaged in honour to punish it, *Isa 59. 18.* Now,

1. He begins with Aaron, as God began with Adam, because he was the principal Person, tho' not first in the Transgression, but drawn into it. Observe here,

(1.) The just Reproof *Moses* gives him, *v. 21.* He doth not order him to be cut off, as those, *v. 27.* that had been the Ringleaders in the Sin. *Note,* A great deal of difference will be made between those that presumptuously rush into Sin, and those that thro' Infirmity are surprized into it; between those that overtake the Fault that flees from them, and those that are overtaken in the Fault they flee from: See *Gal. 6. 1.* Not but that *Aaron* deserved to have been cut off for this Sin, and had been so, if *Moses* had not interceded particularly for him, as appears, *Deut. 9. 20.* And having prevailed with God for him to save him from Ruin, he here expostulates with him, to bring him to Repentance. He puts *Aaron* upon considering, 1. What he had done to this People; *thou hast brought so great a Sin upon them.* The Sin of Idolatry is a great Sin, so great a Sin as cannot be expressed; the People, as the first Movers, might be said to bring the Sin upon *Aaron*: but he being a Magistrate who should have suppressed it, and yet aiding and abetting in it, might truly be said to bring it upon them, because he hardened their Hearts, and strengthened their Hands in it. It's an ill thing for Governors to humour People in their Sins, and give countenance to that, to which they should be a Terror. Observe in general, Those that bring Sin upon others, either by drawing them into it, or encouraging them in it, do more mischief than they are aware of; we really hate those, whom we either bring or suffer Sin upon, *Lev. 19. 17.* Those that share in Sin, help to break their Partners, and really ruin one another. 2. What moved him to it; *What did this People unto thee?* He takes it for granted, that it must needs be something more than ordinary that prevailed with *Aaron* to do such a thing, so insinuating an Excuse for him, because he knew that his Heart was upright; *What did they?* Did they speak thee fair, and wheedle thee into it, and durst thou displease thy God to please the People? Did they overcome thee by importunity, and hadst thou so little Resolution left, as to yield to the Stream of a popular Clamour! Did they threaten to stone thee! And couldst not thou have opposed God's Threatnings to theirs, and frightened them worse than they could frighten thee? *Note,* We must never be drawn into Sin by any thing that Man can say or do unto us, for it will not justify us, to say that we were so drawn in: Men can but tempt us to Sin, they cannot force us; Men can but frighten us if we do not comply, they cannot hurt us.

(2.) The frivolous Excuse *Aaron* makes for himself; we will hope he testified his Repentance for the Sin afterwards better than he did now, for what he saith here hath little in it of the Language of a Penitent. If a just Man fall, he shall rise again, but perhaps not quickly. 1. He deprecates the Anger of *Moses* only, whereas he should have deprecated God's Anger in the first place, *Let not the Anger of my Lord wax hot, v. 22.* 2. He lays all the Fault upon the People, *They are set on mischief, and they said, Make us Gods.* 'Tis natural to us to endeavour thus to transfer our Guilt, we have it by Kind, *Adam* and *Eve* did so; Sin is a Brat that no body is willing to own. *Aaron* was now the chief Magistrate, and had power over the People; and yet pleads that the People overpowered him: He that had Authority to restrain them, yet had so little Resolution as to yield to them. 3. It's well if he did not intend a Reflection upon *Moses*, as accessory to the Sin, by staying so long on the Mount, in repeating without need that invidious Surmise of the People, *As for this Moses, we wot not what's become of him, v. 23.* 4. He extenuates and conceals his own share in the Sin, as if he had only bid them break off their Gold that they had about them, intending but to make an hasty Essay for the present, and to try what he could make of the Gold that was next hand: And childishly insinuates, that when he cast the Gold into the Fire, it came came out either by accident, or by the magic Art of some of the mix'd Multitude (as the Jewish Writers dream) in this shape, but not a word of his graving and fashioning it, *v. 24.* But *Moses* relates to all Ages what he did, *v. 4.* tho' he himself here would not own it. *Note,* He that covers his Sin shall not prosper, for sooner or later it will be discovered. Well, this was all *Aaron* had to say for himself, and he had better have said nothing, for his Defence did but aggravate his Offence, and yet he is not only spared, but preferred; as Sin did abound, Grace did much more abound.

2. The People are next to be judged for this Sin. The Approach of *Moses* soon spoiled their sport, and turned their dancing into trembling. They that hectored *Aaron* into a Compliance with them in their Sin, durst not look *Moses* in the face, nor make the least opposition to the Severity which he thought fit to use both against the Idol, and against the Idolaters. *Note,* It is not impossible to make those Sins and Sinners sneak, that are most insolent and daring. *The King, that sits upon the Throne of Judgment, scattereth away all Evil with his Eyes.* Observe two things:

1. How they were expoled to Shame by their Sin; *the People were naked, v. 25.* not so much because they had some of them lost their Ear-rings, that was inconsiderable, but be-

cause they had lost their Integrity, and lay under the Reproach of Ingratitude to their best Benefactor, and a treacherous Revolt from their rightful Lord: 'Twas a Shame to them, and a perpetual Blot, that they changed their Glory into the Similitude of an Ox. Other Nations boasted, that they were true to their false Gods, well may *Israel* blush, for being false to the true God. Thus were they made naked, strip of their Ornaments, and liable to Contempt, strip of their Armour, and liable to Insults. Thus our first Parents, when they had sinned, became naked to their shame. *Note,* Those that do dishonour to God, really bring the greatest dishonour upon themselves: so *Israel* here did, and *Moses* was concerned to see it, tho' they themselves were not; he saw that they were naked.

2. The Course that *Moses* took to roll away this Reproach, not by concealing the Sin, or putting any false colour upon it, but by punishing it, and so bearing a publick Testimony against it; whenever it should be cast in their teeth, that they had made a Calf in Horeb, they might have this to say in answer to them that reproached them, that tho' it was true there were those that did so, yet Justice was executed upon them. The Government disallowed the Sin, and suffered not the Sinners to go unpunished: They did so, but they paid dear for it. Thus (saith God) thou shalt put the Evil away, *Deut. 13. 5.* Observe here,

[1.] By whom Vengeance was taken, by the Children of *Levi, v. 26, 27.* not by the immediate Hand of God himself, as on *Nadab* and *Abihu*, but by the Sword of *Man*, to teach them, that Idolatry was an Iniquity to be punished by the Judge, being a Denial of the God that is above, *Job 31. 28.* *Deut. 13. 9.* 'Twas to be done by the Sword of their own Brethren, that the Execution of Justice might redound more to the Honour of the Nation. And if they must fall now into the hands of Man, better so than flee before their Enemies. The Innocent must be culled out to be the Executioners of the Guilty, that it might be the more effectual Warning to themselves, that they did not the like another time; and the putting of them upon such an unpleasant Service, and so much against the grain, as this must needs be, to kill their next Neighbours, was a Punishment to them too, for not appearing sooner to prevent the Sin, and make head against it. The *Levites* particularly were employed in doing this Execution, for it should seem there were more of them than of any other Tribe, that had kept themselves free from the Contagion; which was the more laudable, because *Aaron*, the Head of their Tribe, was so deeply concerned in it. Now here we are told, (1.) How the *Levites* were called out to this Service, *v. 26.* *Moses* stood in the Gate of the Camp, the Place of Judgment, there he displayed a Banner, as it were, because of the Truth, to list Soldiers for God. He proclaimed, *Who is on the Lord's side?* The Idolaters had set up the golden Calf for their Standard, and now *Moses* sets up his in opposition to them. Now *Moses* clad himself with Zeal as with a Robe, summons all those to appear forthwith, that were on God's side, against the golden Calf: He doth not proclaim as *Jehu*, *Who is on my side?* (*2 Kings 9. 32.*) to avenge the Indignity done to me, but who is on the Lord's side? 'Twas God's Cause that he espoused against the Evil-doers, *Psal. 94. 16.* *Note,* 1. There are two great Interests on foot in the World, with the one or the other of which all the Children of Men are siding: The Interest of Sin and Wickedness is the Devil's Interest, and all wicked People side with that Interest; the Interest of Truth and Holiness is God's Interest, with which all godly People side; and 'tis a Case that will not admit a Neutrality. 2. It concerns us all to enquire whether we be on the Lord's side or no. 3. Those who are on his side are comparatively but few, and sometimes seem fewer than really they are. 4. God doth sometimes call out those that are on his side to appear for him, as Witnesses, as Soldiers, as Intercessors. (1.) How they were commissioned for this Service, *v. 27.* *Slay every Man his Brother, i. e.* slay all those that you know to have been active for the making and worshipping of the golden Calf, tho' they were your own nearest Relations, or dearest Friends. The Crime was committed publicly, the *Levites* saw who of their Acquaintance were concerned in it, and therefore needed no other Direction but their own Knowledge, whom to slay. And probably the greatest part of those that were guilty, were known, and known to be so, to some or other of the *Levites*, who were employed in the Execution. Yet it should seem they were to slay those only whom they found abroad in the Streets of the Camp, for it might be hoped that those who were retired into their Tents, were ashamed of what they had done, and were upon their knees repenting. Those are marked for Ruin, who persist in Sin, and are not ashamed of the Abominations they have committed, *Jer. 2. 13.* But how durst the *Levites* encounter so great a Body, who probably were much enraged by the burning of their Calf? 'Tis easy to account for this; Sense of Guilt disheartened the Delinquents, and a Divine Commission animated the Executioners. And one thing that

put life into them, was, that *Moses* had said, *Consecrate yourselves to-day to the Lord, that he may bestow a Blessing upon you*; thereby intimating to them, that they now stood fair for Preference, and if they would but signalize themselves upon this occasion, it would be construed such a *Consecration of themselves* to God and to his Service, as would put upon their Tribe a perpetual Honour. Those that *consecrate themselves* to the Lord, he will set apart for himself. Those that do the Duty, shall have the Dignity; and if we do signal Services for God, he will bestow special Blessings upon us. There was a Blessing designed for the Tribe of *Levi*; now saith *Moses*, *consecrate yourselves to the Lord, that you may qualify yourselves to receive that Blessing*. The *Levites* were to assist in the offering of Sacrifice to God, and now they must begin with the offering of these Sacrifices to the Honour of Divine Justice. Those that are to minister about holy things, must be not only sincere and serious, but warm and zealous, bold and courageous for God and Godliness. Thus all Christians, but especially Ministers, must *forsake Father and Mother*, and prefer the Service of Christ and his Interest far before their nearest and dearest Relations; whom if we love better than Christ, we are not worthy of him: See how this Zeal of the *Levites* is applauded, *Deut.* 33. 9.

[2.] On whom Vengeance is taken; *There fell of the People that day about three thousand Men*, *v.* 28. Probably these were but few in comparison of the many that were guilty, but these were the Men that headed the Rebellion, and were therefore picked out to be made Examples of, for Terror to all others. They that in the morning were shouting and dancing, before night were dying in their own Blood, such a sudden Change do the Judgments of God sometimes make with Sinners that are secure and jovial in their Sin, as with *Belshazzar* by the Hand-writing upon the Wall. This is written for warning to us, *1 Cor.* 10. 7. *Neither be ye Idolaters, as were some of them*.

30 And it came to pass on the morrow, that *Moses* said unto the people, *Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the LORD; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin.* 31 And *Moses* returned unto the LORD, and said, *Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold.* 32 Yet now, if thou wilt, forgive their sin: and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. 33 And the LORD said unto *Moses*, *Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.* 34 Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: Behold, mine angel shall go before thee: nevertheless, in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them. 35 And the LORD plagued the people, because they made the calf, which *Aaron* made.

Moses having executed Justice upon the principal Offenders, is here dealing both with the People, and with God.

(1.) With the People, to bring them to Repentance, *v.* 30. When some were slain, lest the rest should imagine that because they were exempt from the capital Punishment, they were therefore looked upon as free from Guilt, *Moses* here tells the Survivors, *Ye have sinned a great Sin, and therefore tho' you have escaped this time, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish*. That they might not think lightly of the Sin itself, he calls it a *great Sin*; and that they might not think themselves innocent, because perhaps they were not all so deeply guilty as some of them that were put to death, he tells them all, *Ye have sinned a great Sin*. The Work of Ministers is to shew People their Sins, and the Greatness of their Sins; *you have sinned*, and therefore you are undone if your Sins be not pardoned, for ever undone without a Saviour: 'Tis a great Sin, and therefore calls for great Sorrow, for it puts you in great Danger. To affect them with the Greatness of their Sin, he intimates to them what a difficult thing it would be to take up the Quarrel which God had with them for it. 1. It would not be done unless he himself go up unto the Lord on purpose, and give as long and as solemn Attendance as he had done for the receiving of the Law. And yet, 2. Even so it was but a *peradventure* that he should make atonement for them; the Case was extremely hazardous. This should convince us of the great Evil there is in Sin, that he who undertook to make atonement, found it no easy thing to do it; he must go up to the Lord with his own Blood to make atonement. The Malignity of Sin appears in the Price of Pardons.

Yet it was some Encouragement to the People, when they were told that they had sinned a great Sin, to hear that *Moses*, who had so great an Interest in Heaven, and so true an Affection for them, would go up unto the Lord to make atonement

for them. Consolation should go along with Conviction; first wound, and then heal, shew first People the Greatness of their Sin, and then make known to them the Atonement, and give them hopes of Mercy. *Moses* will go up unto the Lord, tho' it be but a *peradventure* that he should make atonement: Christ the great Mediator went upon greater certainty than this, for he had lain in the Bosom of the Father, and perfectly knew all his Counsels. But to us poor Supplicants, 'tis Encouragement enough in Prayer for particular Mercies, that *peradventure* we may obtain them, tho' we have not an absolute Promise, *Zeph.* 2. 3. *It may be ye shall be hid*. In our Prayers for others, we should be humbly earnest with God, tho' it is but a *peradventure* that God will give them Repentance, *2 Tim.* 2. 25.

(2.) He intercedes with God for Mercy; wherein observe,

1. How *pathetical* his Address was: *Moses* returned unto the Lord, not to receive further Instructions about the Tabernacle, there were no more Conferences now about that matter. Thus Mens Sins and Follies make work for their Friends and Ministers, unpleasant Work many times, and give great Interruptions to that Work which they delight in. *Moses* in this Address expresseth,

(1.) His great Deseffation of the People's Sin, *v.* 31. He speaks as one overwhelmed with the Horror of it, *Oh! this People have sinned a great Sin*. God had first told him of it, *v.* 7. and now he tells God of it by way of Lamentation. He doth not call them God's People, he knew they were unworthy to be called so; but *this People*, this treacherous ungrateful People, they have made them Gods of Gold: It is a great Sin indeed to make Gold our God, as they do that make it their Hope, and set their Heart on it. He doth not go about to excuse or extenuate the Sin, but what he had said to them by way of Conviction, he saith to God by way of Confession, they have sinned a great Sin; he came not to make Apologies, but to make Atonement: Lord pardon the Sin, for it is great, *Psal.* 25. 11.

(2.) His great Desire of the People's Welfare, *v.* 32. Yet now it is not too great a Sin for infinite Mercy to pardon, and therefore if thou wilt forgive their Sin; what then, *Moses*? 'Tis an abrupt Expression, if thou wilt, I desire no more; if thou wilt, thou wilt be praised, I shall be pleased, and abundantly recompensed for my Intercession. 'Tis an Expression like that of the Dresser of the Vineyard, *Luke* 13. 9. *If it bear Fruit; or, if thou wilt forgive, is as much as, O that thou wouldst forgive!* as *Luke* 19. 41. *If thou hadst known, is, O that thou hadst known!*

But if not, if the Decree be gone forth, and there is no remedy but they must be ruined, if sufficient unto them be not this Punishment, which has already been inflicted by many, (*2 Cor.* 2. 6.) but they must all be cut off; blot me, I pray thee, out of the Book which thou hast written: *i. e.* if they must be cut off, let me be cut off with them, and cut short of Canaan; if all *Israel* must perish, I am content to perish with them; let not the Land of Promise be mine by Survivorship. This Expression may be illustrated from *Ezek.* 13. 9. where this is threatened against the false Prophets, *They shall not be written in the Writing of the House of Israel, neither shall they enter into the Land of Israel*: God had told *Moses*, if he would not interpose, he would make of him a great Nation, *v.* 10. No, saith *Moses*, I am so far from desiring to see my Name and Family built upon the Ruins of *Israel*, that I will chuse rather to sink with them. If I cannot prevent their Destruction, let me not see it, (*Numb.* 11. 15) let me not be written among the Living, *Isa.* 4. 3. nor among those that are marked for Preservation, *e'en let me die in the last Ditch*. Thus he expresseth his tender Affection for the People, and is a Type of the good Shepherd, that lays down his Life for the Sheep, *John* 10. 11. who was to be cut off from the Land of the Living, for the Transgression of my People, *Isa.* 53. 8. *Dan.* 9. 26. He is also an Example of Publick-Spiritdness to all, especially to those in publick Stations. All private Interests must be postponed to the Good and Welfare of Communities. The matter is not great what comes of us and our Families in this World, so as it go well with the Church of God, and there be Peace upon *Israel*. *Moses* thus importunes for a Pardon, and wrestles with God; not prescribing to him, if thou wilt not forgive, thou art either unjust or unkind: no, he is far from that, but if not, let me die with the *Israelites*, and the Will of the Lord be done.

2. Observe how prevalent his Address was; God would not take him at his word, no, he will not blot any out of his Book, but those that by their wilful Disobedience have forfeited the Honour of being enrolled in it, *v.* 33. the Soul that sins shall die, and not the Innocent for the Guilty. This was also an Intimation of Mercy to the People, that they should not all be destroyed in a Body, but those only that had a hand in the Sin. Thus *Moses* gets ground by degrees; God would not at first give him full Assurances of his being reconciled to them, lest if the Comfort of a Pardon were too easily obtained, they should be embolden'd to do the like again, and should not be made sensible enough of the Evil of the Sin. Comforts are suspended, that Convictions may

be the deeper impressed: Also God would hereby exercise the Faith and Zeal of Moses their great Intercessor. Further, in answer to the Address of Moses, (1.) God promiseth to go on with his kind Intention of giving them the Land of Canaan for all this, the Land he had spoken to them of, v. 34 therefore he sends Moses back to them to lead them, tho' they were unworthy of him, and promiseth that his Angel should go before them, some created Angel that was employ'd in the common Services of the Kingdom of Providence; which intimated, that they were not to expect any thing for the future to be done for them out of the common Road of Providence, not any thing extraordinary. Moses afterwards obtain'd a Promise of God's special Presence with them, chap. 33. 14, 17. but at present this was all he could prevail for. (2.) Yet he threatens to remember this Sin against them, when hereafter he should see cause to punish them for other Sins; when I visit, I will visit for this among the rest. Next time I take the Rod in hand, they shall have one Stripe the more for this. From hence the Jews have a Saying, that from henceforward no Judgment fell upon Israel, but there was in it an Ounce of the Powder of the Golden Calf. I see no ground in Scripture for the Opinion some are of, that God would not have burdened them with such a multitude of Sacrifices, and other Ceremonial Institutions, if they had not provoked him, by worshipping the Golden Calf. On the contrary, St. Stephen saith, that when they made a Calf, and offered Sacrifice to the Idol, God turned, and gave them up to worship the Host of Heaven, Acts 7. 41, 42. so that the strange Addictedness of that People to the Sin of Idolatry, was a just Judgment upon them for making and worshipping the Golden Calf, and a Judgment they were never quite freed from till the Captivity in Babylon; see Rom. 1. 24. Note, Many, that are not presently cut off in their Sins, are reserved for a further Day of Reckoning; Vengeance is slow, but sure. At the present the Lord plagued the People (v. 35.) probably by the Pestilence, or some other infectious Disease, which was a Messenger of God's Wrath, and an Earnest of worse: Aaron made the Calf, and yet 'tis said the People made it, because they worshipped it; Deus qui rogat, ille facit, Aaron was not plagued, but the People, for his was a Sin of Infirmary, theirs a presumptuous Sin, between which there is a great difference, not always discernible to us, but evident to God, whose Judgment therefore we are sure is according to Truth. Thus Moses prevailed for a Reprieve, and a Mitigation of the Punishment, but could not wholly turn away the Wrath of God; which (some think) speaks the Impossibility of the Law of Moses to reconcile Men to God, and to perfect our Peace with him. That was reserved for Christ to do, in whom alone it is that God so pardons Sin, as to remember it no more.

C H A P. XXXIII.

In this Chapter we have a further account of the Mediation of Moses between God and Israel, for the making up of the breach that Sin had made between them. 1. He brings a very humbling Message from God to them, v. 1, 2, 3, 5. which has a good effect upon them, and helps to prepare them for Mercy, v. 4, 6. 2. He settles a Correspondence between God and them, and both God and the People signify their Approbation of that Correspondence, God by descending in a cloudy Pillar, and the People by worshipping at the Tent-Doors, v. 7—12. 3. He is earnest with God in Prayer, and prevails, (1.) For a Promise of his Presence with the People, v. 22—17. (2.) For a Sight of his Glory for himself, v. 18—23.

AND the LORD said unto Moses, Depart, and go up hence, thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land which I sware unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, Unto thy seed will I give it: 2 And I will send an angel before thee; and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite: 3 Unto a land flowing with milk and honey; for I will not go up in the midst of thee, for thou art a stiff-necked people; lest I consume thee in the way. 4 And when the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned; and no man did put on him his ornaments. 5 For the LORD had said unto Moses, Say unto the children of Israel, ye are a stiff-necked people; I will come up into the midst of thee in a moment, and consume thee: therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what

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to do unto thee. 6 And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments, by the mount Horeb.

Here's, 1. The Message which God sent by Moses to the Children of Israel, signifying the Continuance of the Displeasure against them, and the ill Terms they yet stood upon with God. This he must let them know, for their further Mortification. 1. He puts them into an ill Name, by giving them their just Character, for stiff-necked People, v. 3, 6. Go, (saith God to Moses) go tell them that they are so. He, that knows them better than they know themselves, saith so of them. God would have brought them under the Yoke of his Law, and into the Bond of his Covenant, but their Necks were too stiff to bow to them. God would have cured them of their corrupt and crooked Dispositions, and have set them straight: but they were wilful and obstinate, and hated to be reformed, and would not have God to reign over them. Note, God judgeth of Men by the Temper of their Minds. We know what Man doth, God knows what he is; we know what proceeds from Man, God knows what is in Man: And nothing is more displeasing to him than stiff-neckedness, as nothing in Children is more offensive to their Parents and Teachers than Stubbornness. 2. He tells them what they deserved, that he should come into the midst of them in a moment, and consume them, v. 3. Had he dealt with them according to their Sins, he had taken them away with a swift Destruction. Note, Those whom God pardons must be made to know what their Sin deserved, and how miserable they had been if they had been unpardoned, that God's Mercy may be the more magnified. 3. He bids them depart, and go up hence to the Land of Canaan, v. 1. This Mount Sinai, where they now were, was the Place appointed for the setting up of God's Tabernacle, and solemn Worship among them; this was not yet done, so that in bidding them depart hence, God intimates that it should not be done, let them go forward as they are, and so it was very expressive of God's Displeasure. 4. He turns them over to Moses, as the People which he had brought up out of the Land of Egypt, and leaves it to him to lead them to Canaan. 5. Tho' he promiseth to make good his Covenant with Abraham, in giving them Canaan, yet he denies them the extraordinary Tokens of his Presence, such as they had hitherto been blessed with, and leaves them under the common Conduct of Moses their Prince, and the common Convoy of a Guardian Angel. I will send an Angel before thee for thy Protector, otherwise the evil Angels would soon destroy thee, but I will not go up in the midst of thee, lest I consume thee, v. 2, 3. not as if an Angel would be more patient and compassionate than God, but their Affronts given to an Angel would not be so provoking, as those given to the Shechinah, or Divine Majesty itself. Note, The great Privileges we enjoy, the greater is our Danger if we do not improve them, and live up to them. 6. He speaks as one that was at a loss what Course to take with them. Justice said, Cut them off, and consume them; Mercy said, How shall I give thee up, Ephraim! Hos. 11. 8. Well, saith God, put off thine Ornaments, that I may know what to do with thee; i. e. put thyself into the Posture of a Penitent, that the Dispute may be determined in thy favour, and Mercy may rejoice against Judgment, v. 5. Note, Calls to Repentance are plain Indications of Mercy designed. If the Lord were pleased to kill us, Justice knows what to do with a stiff-necked People; but God has no pleasure in the Death of them that die, let them return and repent, and then Mercy, which otherwise is at a loss, knows what to do.

2. The People's melancholy Reception of this Message; 'twas evil Tidings to them to hear that they should not have God's special Presence with them; and therefore, (1.) They mourned, v. 4. mourned for their Sin, which had provoked God to withdraw from them, and mourned for this as the worst Punishment of their Sin. When three thousand of them were at one time laid dead upon the spot by the Levites Sword, we do not find that they mourned for that, hoping that would help to expiate the Guilt; but when God denied them his favourable Presence, then they mourned, and were in bitterness. Note, Of all the bitter Fruits and Consequences of Sin, that which true Penitents most lament, and dread most, is God's Departure from them. God had promised, that notwithstanding their Sin, he would give them the Land flowing with Milk and Honey; but they could have small Joy of that, if they had not God's Presence with them. Canaan itself would be no pleasant Land without that, therefore if they want that they mourn. (2.) In token of great Shame and Humiliation; they that were undressed did not put on their Ornaments, v. 4. and they that were dressed stripped themselves of their Ornaments by the Mount; or, as some read it, at a distance from the Mount, v. 6. standing afar off, like the Publican, Luke 18. 13. God bid them lay aside their Ornaments, v. 5. and they did so. Both to shew in general their deep Mourning, and in particular to take a Holy Revenge upon them.

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themselves, for giving their Ear-rings to make the golden Calf of. They that would part with their Ornaments, for the maintenance of their Sin, could do no less than lay aside their Ornaments, in token of their Sorrow and Shame for it. When the Lord God calls to Weeping and Mourning, we must comply with the Call, and not only fast from pleasant Bread (Dan. 10. 3.) but lay aside our Ornaments; even those that are decent enough at other times, are unseasonably worn on Days of Humiliation, or in Times of publick Calamity, Isa. 3. 18.

7 And Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of the congregation: and it came to pass, that every one, which sought the LORD, went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp. 8 And it came to pass when Moses went out unto the tabernacle, that all the people rose up, and stood every man at his tent door, and looked after Moses until he was gone into the tabernacle. 9 And it came to pass as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the Lord talked with Moses. 10 And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle-door, and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man in his tent door. 11 And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp, but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle.

Here's, 1. One Mark of Displeasure put upon them for their further Humiliation; *Moses took the Tabernacle*, not his own Tent for his Family, but the Tent wherein he gave Audience, heard Causes, and enquired of God, the Guildhall, as it were, of their Camp, and pitched it without, afar off from the Camp, v. 7. to signify to them that they had rendered themselves unworthy of it, and that unless Peace was made, it would return to them no more. God would thus let them know that he was fallen out with them: *The Lord is far from the Wicked*. Thus the Glory of the Lord departed from the Temple, when it was polluted with Sin, Ezek. 10. 4—11, 23. Note, It is a sign God is angry, when he removes his Tabernacle, for his Ordinances are Fruits of his Favour, and Tokens of his Presence; while we have them with us, we have him with us. Perhaps this Tabernacle was a Plan, or Model rather, of the Tabernacle that was afterwards to be erected, a hasty Draught from the Pattern shewed him in the Mount, designed for Direction to the Workman, and used in the mean time as a Tabernacle of Meeting between God and Moses, about publick Affairs. This was set up at a distance, to affect the People with the loss of that glorious Structure, which, if they had not forsaken their own Mercies for lying Vanities, was to have been set up in the midst of them. Let them see what they had forfeited.

2. Many Encouragements given them notwithstanding, to hope that God would yet be reconciled to them.

(1.) Tho' the Tabernacle was removed, yet every one, that was disposed to seek the Lord, was welcome to follow it, v. 7. Private Persons, as well as Moses, were invited and encouraged to apply themselves to God as Intercessors upon this Occasion. A Place was appointed for them to go to without the Camp, to sollicite God's Return to them. Thus when Ezra (a second Moses) interceded for Israel, there were assembled to him many that trembled at God's Word, Ezra 9. 4. When God designs Mercy, he stirs up Prayer. He will be sought unto (Ezek. 36. 37.) and thanks be to his Name he may be sought unto, and will not reject the poorest Intercession. Every Israelite, that sought the Lord, was welcome to this Tabernacle, as well as Moses, the Man of God.

(2.) Moses undertook to mediate between God and Israel. He went out to the Tabernacle, the place of Treaty, probably pitched between them and the Mount, v. 8. and he entered into the Tabernacle, v. 9. The Cause could not but speed well which had so good a Manager; when their Judge (under God) becomes their Advocate, and he who was appointed to be their Lawgiver, is an Intercessor for them, there is Hope in Israel concerning this thing.

(3.) The People seemed to be in a very good Mind, and well-disposed towards a Reconciliation. 1. When Moses went out to go to the Tabernacle, the People looked after him, v. 8. in token of their Respects to him whom before they had slighted, and their entire Dependence upon his Mediation. By this it appeared that they were very solicitous about this

matter, desirous to be at peace with God, and full of Concern what would be the Issue. Thus the Disciples looked after our Lord Jesus, when he ascended on high, to enter into the Holy Place not made with Hands, till a Cloud received him out of their sight, as Moses here: And we must with an eye of Faith follow him likewise thither, where he is appearing in the Presence of God for us, then we shall have the benefit of his Mediation. 2. When they saw the cloudy Pillar, that Symbol of God's Presence, give Moses the meeting, they all worshipped every Man at his Tent-Door, v. 10. thereby they signified, [1.] Their humble Adoration of the Divine Majesty, which they will ever worship, and not Gods of Gold any more. [2.] Their joyful Thankfulness to God, that he was pleased to shew them this Token for Good, and give them hopes of a Reconciliation; for if he had been pleased to kill them, he would not have shewed them such things as these, would not have raised them up such a Mediator, nor given him such countenance. [3.] Their hearty Concurrence with Moses as their Advocate, in every thing he should promise for them, and their Expectation of a comfortable and happy Issue of this Treaty. Thus must we worship God in our Tents, with an Eye to Christ as the Mediator. Their worshipping in their Tent-Doors, declare plainly that they were not ashamed to own their Respects to God and Moses, as they had openly worshipped the Calf.

(4.) God was in Moses reconciling Israel to himself, and manifested himself very willing to be at peace.

1. God met Moses at the Place of Treaty, v. 9. The cloudy Pillar, which had withdrawn itself from the Camp, when it was polluted with Idolatry, now returned to this Tabernacle, at some distance, coming back gradually. If our Hearts go forth towards God to meet him, he will graciously come down to meet us.

2. God talked with Moses, v. 9. spake to him Face to Face as a Man speaks to his Friend, v. 11. which intimates not only that God revealed himself to Moses with a greater Clearness and Evidence of Divine Light, than to any other of the Prophets; but also with greater Expressions of particular Kindness and Grace than to any other. He spake not as a Prince to a Subject, but as a Man to his Friend, whom he loves, and with whom he takes sweet Counsel. This was a great Encouragement to Israel, to see their Advocate so great a Favourite; and that they might be encouraged by it, Moses turned again into the Camp, to tell the People what hopes he had of bringing this Business to a good Issue, and that they might not despair if he should be long absent. But because he intended speedily to return to the Tabernacle of the Congregation, he left Joshua there, for it was not fit the place should be empty, so long as the Cloud of Glory stood at the Door, v. 9. but if God had any thing to say out of that Cloud, while Moses was absent, Joshua was there ready to hear it.

12 And Moses said unto the LORD, See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight. 13 Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people. 14 And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. 15 And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. 16 For wherein shall it be known here, that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? Is it not in that thou goest with us? So shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth. 17 And the LORD said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name. 18 And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory. 19 And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee, and will be gracious to whom I will shew mercy, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy. 20 And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. 21 And the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock. 22 And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that

I will put thee in a clift of the rock; and I will cover thee with my hand while I pafs by. 23 And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt fee my back-parts: but my face shall not be feen.

Moses is now returned to the Door of the Tabernacle, and there is an humble and importunate Supplicant for two very great Favours, and as a Prince he has Power with God, and prevails for both: Herein he was a Type of Christ, the great Intercessor, whom the Father heareth always.

1. He is here very earnest with God for a Grant of his Presence with *Israel*, in the rest of their March to Canaan, notwithstanding their Provocations. The People had by their Sin deserved the Wrath of God, and for the turning away of that *Moses* had already prevailed, chap. 32. 14. But they had likewise forfeited God's favourable Presence, and all the Benefit and Comfort of that, and this *Moses* is here begging for the return of: Thus, by the Intercession of Christ, we obtain not only the Removal of the Curse, but an Assurance of the Blessing; we are not only saved from Ruin, but become entitled to everlasting Happiness.

Observe how admirably *Moses* orders this Cause before God, and fills his Mouth Arguments. What a Value he expresth for God's Favour, what a Concern for God's Glory, and the Welfare of *Israel*, how he pleads, and how he speeds.

1. How he pleads. (1.) He insists upon the Commission God had given him to bring up this People, v. 12. This he begins with, Lord, it is thou thyself that employest me, and wilt thou not own me? I am in the way of my Duty, and shall I not have thy Presence with me in that way? Whom God calls out to any Service, he will be sure to furnish with necessary Assistances. Now, Lord, thou hast ordered me a great piece of Work, and yet left me at a loss how to go about it, and go through with it. Note, Those that sincerely design and endeavour to do their Duty, may in Faith beg of God Direction and Strength for the doing of it. (2.) He improves the Interest he himself had with God, and pleads God's gracious Expressions of Kindness to him, Thou hast said I know thee by Name, as a particular Friend and Confidant, and thou hast also found Grace in my sight, above any other. Now therefore, saith *Moses*, if it be indeed so, that I have found Grace in thy sight, shew me thy way, v. 13. What Favour God had exprest to the People, they had forfeited the benefit of, there was no insisting upon that, and therefore *Moses* lays the stress of his Plea upon what God had said to him, which tho' he owns himself unworthy of, yet he hopes he has not thrown himself out of the Benefit of it. By this therefore he takes hold on God, Lord, if ever thou wilt do any thing for me, do this for the People. Thus our Lord Jesus, in his Intercession, presents himself to the Father, as one in whom he is always well-pleased, and so obtains Mercy for us, with whom he is justly displeased, and we are accepted in the beloved. Thus also publick Spirits love to improve their Interest both with God and Man for the publick Good. Observe what it is he is thus earnest for, Shew me thy way, that I may know that I find Grace in thy sight. Note, A Divine Conduct is one of the best Evidences of Divine Favour. By this we may know that we find Grace in God's sight, if we find Grace in our Hearts to guide and quicken us in the way of our Duty. God's good Work in us is the surest Discovery of his Good-will towards us. (3.) He insinuates that the People also, tho' most unworthy, yet were in some relation to God; and considers that this Nation is thy People, a People that thou hast done great things for, redeemed to thyself, and taken into Covenant with thyself; Lord, they are thy own, do not leave them. The offended Father considers this, My Child is foolish and froward, but he is my Child, and I cannot abandon him. (4.) He expresth the great Value he had for the Presence of God. When God said, My Presence shall go with thee, he caught at that Word, as that which he could not live and move without, v. 15. If thy Presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. He speaks as one that dreaded the Thought of going forward without God's Presence, knowing their Marches could not be safe, nor their Encampments easy, if they had not God with them. Better lie down and die here in the Wilderness, than go forward to Canaan, without God's Presence. Note, Those who know how to value God's Favours, are best prepared to receive them. Observe, How earnest *Moses* is in this Matter, he begs as one that would rake no Denial: Here we'll stay till we obtain thy Favour, like *Jacob*, I will not let thee go except thou bless me. And observe how he grows upon God's Concessions, and the kind Intimations given him, make him yet more importunate. Thus God's gracious Promises, and the Advances of Mercy towards us, should not only encourage our Faith, but excite our Fervency in Prayer. (5.) He concludes with an Argument taken from God's Glory, v. 16. Wherein shall it be known to the Nations that have their Eyes upon us, that I, and thy People, with whom I have twisted Interests, have found Grace in thy sight, distin-

guishing Favour, so as to be separated from all People upon Earth; how will it appear that we are indeed thus honoured, Is it not in that thou goest with us? Nothing short of that can answer these Characters: Let it never be said that we are a peculiar People, and highly favoured, for we stand but upon a level with the rest of our Neighbours, unless thou go with us; sending an Angel with us will not serve. He lays a stress upon the place, here in this Wilderness, whither thou hast led us, and where we are certainly lost, if thou leave us. Note, God's special Presence with us here in this Wilderness, by his Spirit and Grace, to direct, defend, and comfort us, is the surest Pledge of his special Love to us, and will redound to his Glory, as well as our Benefit.

2. Observe how he speeds. He obtained an Assurance of God's Favour, (1.) To himself, v. 14. I will give thee Rest, I'll take care to make thee easy in this Matter; however it be, thou shalt have satisfaction. *Moses* never entered Canaan, and yet God made good his word, that he would give him Rest, Dan. 12. 1. (2.) To the People for his sake. *Moses* was not content with that Answer, which only spoke Favour to himself, he must gain a Promise, an express Promise for the People too, or he is not at rest; gracious, generous Souls think it not enough to get to Heaven themselves, but would have all their Friends thither too. And in this also *Moses* prevailed, v. 17. I will do this thing also which thou hast spoken. *Moses* is not checked as an unreasonable Beggar, whom no saying would serve, but he is encouraged; God grants as long as he asks, gives liberally, and doth not upbraid him. See the Power of Prayer, and be quickened hereby to ask, and seek, and knock, and to continue instant in Prayer; to pray always, and not to faint. See the Riches of God's Goodness; when he hath done much, yet he is willing to do more, I will do this also, above what we are able to ask or think. See in Type the Prevalency of Christ's Intercession, which he ever lives to make for all those that come to God by him, and the Ground of that Prevalency, 'tis purely his own Merit, not any thing in those for whom he intercedes, 'tis because thou hast found Grace in my sight. And now the matter is settled, God is perfectly reconciled to them, his Presence in the Pillar of Cloud returns to them, and shall continue with them; all's well again, and from henceforth we hear no more of the golden Calf. Lord! who is a God like unto thee, pardoning Iniquity?

2. Having gained this Point, he next begs a sight of God's Glory, and is heard in that Matter also. Observe,

(1.) The humble Request *Moses* makes, v. 18. I beseech thee shew me thy Glory. *Moses* had lately been in the Mount with God, had continued there a great while, and had had as intimate Communion with God as ever any Man had on this side Heaven, and yet he is still desiring a further Acquaintance: All that are effectually called in to the Knowledge of God, and Fellowship with him, tho' they desire nothing more than God, yet they are still coveting more and more of him, till they come to see as they are seen. *Moses* had wonderfully prevailed with God for one Favour after another, and the Success of his Prayers emboldened him to go on still to seek God; the more he had, the more he asked: When we are in a good Frame at the Throne of Grace, we should endeavour to preserve and improve it, and strike while the Iron is hot. Shew me thy Glory: Make me to see it; so the word is: Make it some way or other visible, and enable me to bear the sight of it. Not that he was so ignorant as to think God's Essence could be seen with bodily Eyes, but having hitherto only heard a Voice out of a Pillar of Cloud or Fire, he desired to see some Representation of the Divine Glory, such as God saw fit to gratify him with. It was not fit the People should see any Similitude when the Lord spoke unto them, lest they should corrupt themselves; but he hoped there was not that Danger in his seeing some Similitude. Something it was more than he had yet seen, that *Moses* desired; if it was purely for the assisting of his Faith and Devotion, the Desire was commendable; but perhaps there was in it a mixture of human Infirmary. God will have us walk by Faith, not by Sight, in this World, and Faith comes by Hearing. Some think *Moses* desired a sight of God's Glory as a Token of his Reconciliation, and an Earnest of that Presence he had promised them; but he knew not what he asked.

(2.) The gracious Reply God made to this Request.

1. He denied that which was not fit to be granted, and which *Moses* could not bear, v. 20. Thou canst not see my Face. A full Discovery of the Glory of God would quite overpower the Faculties of any mortal Man in this present State, and overwhelm him, even *Moses* himself. Man is mean and unworthy of it, weak, and could not bear it, guilty, and could not but dread it. 'Tis in compassion to our Infirmary, that God holdeth back the Face of his Throne, and spreadeth a Cloud upon it, Job 26. 9. God hath said here, his Face shall not be seen (v. 23) in this World; that's an Honour reserved for the future State, to be the eternal Bliss of holy Souls; should Men in this State know what it is, they would not be content to live short of it. There is a Knowledge and Enjoyment of God

God, which must be waited for in another World, when we shall see him as he is, 1 John 3. 2. in the mean time, let us adore the Height of what we do know of God, and the Depth of what we do not. Long before this Jacob had spoken of it with wonder, that he had seen God face to face, and yet his Life was preserved, Gen. 32. 30. Sinful Man dreads the sight of God his Judge, but holy Souls, being by the Spirit of the Lord changed into the same Image, behold with open face the Glory of the Lord, 2 Cor. 3. 18.

2. He granted that which would be abundantly satisfying.

(1.) He should bear what would please him, v. 19. *I will make all my Goodness pass before thee*: He had given him wonderful Instances of his Goodness in being reconciled to Israel, but that was only Goodness in the Stream, he would shew him Goodness in the Spring; all his Goodness. This was a sufficient Answer to his Request, *Shew me thy Glory*, saith Moses; *I will shew thee my Goodness*, saith God. Note, God's Goodness is his Glory; and he will have us to know him by the Glory of his Mercy, more than by the Glory of his Majesty, for we must fear even the Lord and his Goodness, Hos. 3. 5. That especially which is the Glory of God's Goodness, is the Sovereignty of it, that he will be gracious to whom he will be gracious; that as an absolute Proprietor, he makes what difference he pleaseth in bestowing his Gifts, and is not Debtor to any, nor accountable to any: *May he not do what he will with his own*? Also, that all his Reasons of Mercy are fetched from within himself, not from any Merit in his Creatures; as he has Mercy on whom he will, so because he will: *Even so Father, because it seemed good in thy sight*. It is never said, *I will be angry at whom I will be angry*, for his Wrath is always just and holy; but *I will shew Mercy on whom I will shew Mercy*, for his Grace is always free. He never damns by Prerogative, but by Prerogative he saves. The Apostle quotes this, Rom. 9. 15. in answer to those who charged God with Unrighteousness, in giving that Grace freely to some, which he with-holds justly from others.

(2.) He should see what he could bear, and would suffice him. The Matter is concerted so as that Moses might be safe, and yet satisfied. 1. Safe in a Cleft of the Rock, v. 21, 22. in that he was to be sheltered from the dazzling Light, and devouring Fire of God's Glory. This was the Rock in Horeb, out of which Water was brought; of which it is said, *That Rock was Christ*, 1 Cor. 10. 4. 'Tis in the Clefts of this Rock that we are secured from the Wrath of God, which otherwise would consume us; God himself will protect those that are thus hid: And 'tis only thro' Christ that we have the Knowledge of the Glory of God. None can see that to their Comfort, but those that stand upon this Rock, and take shelter in it. 2. He was satisfied with a sight of his Back-parts, v. 23. He should see more of God than any ever saw on Earth, but not so much as they see that are in Heaven. The Face in Man is the Seat of Majesty, and Men are known by their Faces, in them we take a full View of Men; that sight of God Moses might not have, but such a sight as we have of a Man who is gone past us, so that we only see his Back, and have (as we say) a Blush of him. We cannot be said to look at God, but rather to look after him, Gen. 16. 13. for we see thro' a Glass darkly; when we see what God has done in his Works, observe the Goings of our God, our King, we do as it were see his Back-parts. The best thus know but in part, and we cannot order our Speech concerning God, by reason of Darknes, no more than we can describe a Man, whose Face we never saw. Now Moses was allowed to see only the Back-parts, but long after, when he was a Witness to Christ's Transfiguration, he saw his Face shine as the Sun. If we faithfully improve the Discoveries God gives us of himself while we are here, a brighter and more glorious Scene will shortly be opened to us; for to him that hath shall be given.

C H A P. XXXIV.

God having, in the foregoing Chapter, intimated to Moses his Reconciliation to Israel, here gives Proofs of it, proceeding to settle his Covenant and Communion with them. Four Instances of the Return of his Favour we have in this Chapter: 1. The Orders he gives to Moses to come up to the Mount the next Morning, and bring two Tables of Stone with him, v. 1-4. 2. His meeting him there, and the Proclamation of his Name, v. 6-9. 3. The Instructions he gave him there, and his converse with them for forty Days together, without Intermission, v. 10-28. 4. The Honour he put upon him, when he sent him down with his Face shining, v. 29-35. In all which God deals with Moses as a publick Person, and Mediator between him and Israel, and a Type of the Great Mediator.

1 AND the LORD said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon these tables the words that

were in the first tables which thou brakest. 2 And be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning unto mount Sinai, and present thyself there to me, in the top of the mount. 3 And no man shall come up with thee, neither let any man be seen throughout all the mount: neither let the flocks nor herds feed before that mount. 4 And he hewed two tables of stone, like unto the first; and Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tables of stone.

The Treaty, that was on foot between God and Israel, being broke off abruptly, by their worshipping the golden Calf, when Peace was made, all must be begun anew, not where they left off, but from the beginning. Thus Backsliders must repent, and do their first Works, Rev. 2. 5.

1. Moses must prepare for the renewing of the Tables, v. 1. Before, God himself provided the Tables, and wrote on them; now, Moses must hew him out the Tables, and God would only write upon them. Thus in the first writing of the Law upon the Heart of Man in Innocency, both the Tables and the Writing were the Work of God; but when those were broke and defaced by Sin, and the Divine Law was to be preserved in the Scriptures, God therein made use of the Ministry of Man, and Moses first. But the Prophets and Apostles did only hew the Tables, as it were, the Writing was God's still; for all Scripture is given by Inspiration of God. Observe, When God was reconciled to them, he ordered the Tables to be renewed, and wrote his Law in them, which plainly intimates to us, (1.) That even under the Gospel of Peace, and Reconciliation by Christ, (of which the Intercession of Moses was typical) the Moral Law should continue to oblige Believers. Tho' Christ has redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, yet not from the Command of it, but still we are under the Law to Christ; when our Saviour, in his Sermon on the Mount, expounded the Moral Law, and vindicated it from the corrupt Glosses with which the Scribes and Pharisees had broken it, (Mat. 5. 19.) he did in effect renew the Tables, and made them like the first, i. e. reduce the Law to its primitive Sense and Intention. (2.) That the best Evidence of the Pardon of Sin, and Peace with God, is the writing of the Law in the Heart. The first token God gave of his Reconciliation to Israel, was the renewing of the Tables of the Law; thus the first Article of the new Covenant is, *I will write my Law in their Heart*, Heb. 8. 10. and it follows, v. 12. *For I will be merciful to their Unrighteousness*. (3.) That if we would have God to write the Law in our Hearts, we must prepare our Hearts for the Reception of it. The Heart of Stone must be hewn by Conviction and Humiliation for Sin, (Hos. 6. 5.) the Superstition of Naughtiness must be taken off, (James 1. 12.) the Heart made smooth, and laboured with, that the Word may have a place in it. Moses did accordingly hew out the Tables of Stone, or Slate, for they were so slight and thin, that Moses carried them both in his hand; and for their Dimensions, they must be somewhat less, and perhaps not much than the Ark, in which they were deposited, which was a Yard and quarter long, and three quarters broad. It should seem there was no great Curiosity in the framing of them; for there was no great time taken; Moses had them ready presently, to take up with him next morning. They were to receive their Beauty, not from the Art of Man, but from the Finger of God.

2. Moses must attend again on the top of Mount Sinai, and present himself to God there, v. 2. Tho' the Absence of Moses, and his Continuance so long on the Mount, had lately occasioned their making the golden Calf, yet God did not therefore alter his Measures; but he shall come up and tarry as long as he had done, to try whether they had learned to wait. To strike an awe upon the People, they are bid to keep their distance, none must come up with them, v. 3. They had said, Chap. 32. 1. we know not what's become of him; and God will not let them know. Moses accordingly rose up early, v. 4. to go to the Place appointed; to shew how forward he was to present himself before God, and loth to lose time. It is good to be early at our Devotion. The Morning is perhaps as good a Friend to the Graces, as it is to the Musings.

5 And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. 6 And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, 7 Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting

visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the childrens children, unto the third and to the fourth generation. 8 And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped. 9 And he said, If now I have found grace in thy sight, O LORD, let my LORD, I pray thee, go amongst us, (for it is a stiff-necked people) and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine inheritance.

No sooner was Moses got to the top of the Mount, but God gave him the meeting, v. 5. *The Lord descended*, by some sensible Token of his Presence, and Manifestation of his Glory. His descending speaks his condescending, he *humbleth himself*, to take cognizance of those that humble themselves to walk with him, *Psal. 113. 6. Lord, what is Man, that he should be thus visited?* He descended in the Cloud, probably that Pillar of Cloud which had hitherto gone before Israel, and had the day before met Moses at the Door of the Tabernacle. This Cloud was to strike an awe upon Moses, that the Familiarity he was admitted to might not breed Contempt. The Disciples feared when they entered into the Cloud. His making a Cloud his Pavilion, intimated that tho' he made known much of himself, yet there was much more concealed.

Now observe, [1.] How God proclaimed his Name, v. 6, 7. He did it in transitu, passed by before him. Fixed Views of God are reserved for the future State, the best we have in this World are transient. God now was performing what he had promised Moses the Day before, that his Glory should pass by; *Exod. 33. 22. He proclaimed the Name of the Lord*, by which he would make himself known. He had made himself known to Moses in the Glory of his Self-existence and Self-sufficiency, when he proclaimed that Name, *I am, that I am*; now he makes himself known in the Glory of his Grace, and Goodness, and All-sufficiency to us. Now God is about to publish a second Edition of the Law, he prefaces it with this Proclamation, for it is God's Grace and Goodness that gives the Law, especially the Remedial Law. The Pardon of Israel's Sin, in worshipping the Calf, was now to pass the Seal, and God by this Declaration would let them know, that he pardoned *ex mero motu*, not for their Merit's sake, but from his own Inclination to forgive. The proclaiming of it notes the universal Extent of God's Mercy, he is not only good to Israel, but good to all, let all take notice of it. He that hath an Ear let him hear, and know, and believe,

(1.) That the God, with whom we have to do, is a Great God; he is *Jehovah, the Lord*, that hath his Being of himself, and is the Fountain of all Being. *Jehovah-El, the Lord, the strong God*, a God of Almighty Power himself and the Original of all Power. This is prefixed before the Display of his Mercy, to teach us to think and to speak even of God's Grace and Goodness with great Seriousness, and a holy Awe, and to encourage us to depend upon these Mercies; they are not the Mercies of a Man that is frail and feeble, false and fickle, but the Mercies of the Lord; the Lord God, therefore sure Mercies, and sovereign Mercies, Mercies that may be trusted, but not tempted.

(2.) That he is a Good God. His Greatness and Goodness illustrate and set forth each other. That the Terror of his Greatness may not make us afraid, we are told how good he is; and that we may not presume upon his Goodness, we are told how great he is. Many Words are here heaped up to acquaint us with, and convince us of God's Goodness, and to shew how much his Goodness is both his Glory and his Delight, yet without any Tautology. 1. He is *merciful*. This speaks his *Pity and tender Compassion*, like that of a Father to his Children. This is put first, because it is the first Wheel in all the Instances of God's Good-will to fallen Man, whose Misery makes him an Object of Pity, *Judg. 10. 16. Isa. 63. 9.* Let not us then have either hard Thoughts of God, or hard Hearts towards our Brethren. 2. He is *gracious*. This speaks both Freeness and Kindness; it speaks him not only to have a Compassion to his Creatures, but a Complacency in them, and in doing good to them; and this of his own Good-will, and not for the sake of any thing in them. His Mercy is Grace, free Grace; this teacheth us to be not only *pious*, but *courteous*, 1 *Pet. 3. 8.* 3. He is *long-suffering*. This is a Branch of God's Goodness, which Sinners' Badness gives occasion for, Israel's had done so, they had tried his Patience, and experienced it. He is *long-suffering*; that is, he is *slow to Anger*, and delays the Executions of his Justice; he *waits to be gracious*, and lengthens out the Offers of his Mercy. 4. He is *abundant in Goodness and Truth*. This speaks plentiful Goodness, it *abounds* above our Deserts; above our Conception and Expression. The Springs of Mercy are always full, the Streams of Mercy always flowing; there's Mercy enough in God, enough for all, enough for each, enough for ever. It speaks *promised Goodness, Goodness and Truth* put together,

Goodness engaged by Promise, and his Faithfulness pawned for the Security of it. He not only doth Good, but by his Promise he raiseth our Expectation of it, and even obligeth himself to shew Mercy. 5. He *keepeth Mercy for Thousands*. This speaks, (1.) *Mercy extended* to Thousands of Persons; when he gives to some, still he keeps for others, and is never exhausted. He has Mercy enough for all the Thousands of Israel, when they shall multiply as the Sand. (2.) *Mercy entailed* upon Thousands of Generations, even to those upon whom the Ends of the World are come; nay, the Line of it is drawn parallel with that of Eternity itself. 6. He *forgiveth Iniquity, Transgression and Sin*. Pardoning Mercy is intimated in, because in that Divine Grace is most magnified, and because that's it that opens the Door to all other Gifts of the Divine Grace, and because of this he had lately given a very pregnant Proof. He forgives Offences of all sorts, *Iniquity, Transgression and Sin*, multiplies his Pardons, and with him is plentiful Redemption.

(3.) That he is a just and holy God: For, 1. He will by no means clear the Guilty. Some read it so as to express a Mitigation of Wrath, even when he doth punish; *When he empties he will not make quite desolate*, i. e. he doth not proceed to the greatest Extremity till there be no Remedy. As we read it we must expound it, that he will by no means connive at the Guilty, as if he took no notice of their Sin; or, he will not clear the impenitently Guilty, that go on still in their Trefpasses: He will not clear the Guilty without some Satisfaction to his Justice, and necessary Vindications of the Honour of his Government. 2. He visits the Iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children. He may justly do it, for all Souls are his, and there is a Malignity in Sin that taints the Blood. He sometimes will do it, especially for the Punishment of Idolaters: Thus he shews his Hatred of Sin, and Displeasure against it; yet he *keepeth not his Anger for ever*, but visits to the third and fourth Generation only, while he *keepeth Mercy for Thousands*. Well, this is God's Name for ever, and this is his Memorial unto all Generations.

[2.] How Moses received this Declaration which God made of himself, and of his Grace and Mercy. It should seem as if Moses accepted this as a sufficient Answer to his Request, that God would shew him his Glory; for we read not that he went into the Clift of the Rock, from whence to gain a sight of God's Back-parts; perhaps this satisfied him, and he desired no more, as we read not that Thomas did thrust his hand into Christ's side, tho' Christ invited him to do it. God having thus proclaimed his Name, Moses saith, It is enough, I expect no more till I come to Heaven; at least he did not think fit to relate what he saw. Now we are here told,

(1.) What Impression it made upon him, v. 8. *Moses made haste, and bowed his Head*. Thus he expressed, 1. His humble Reverence and Adoration of God's Glory, giving him the Honour due to that Name he had thus proclaimed. Even the Goodness of God must be looked upon by us with a profound Veneration, and holy Awe. 2. His Joy in this Discovery God had made of himself, and his Thankfulness for it. We have reason gratefully to acknowledge God's Goodness to us, not only in the real Instances of it, but in the Declarations he hath made of it by his Word; not only that he is and will be gracious to us, but that he is pleased to let us know it. 3. His holy Submission to the Will of God, made known in this Declaration, subscribing to his Justice as well as Mercy, and putting himself and his People Israel under the Government and Conduct of such a God; as *Jehovah* had now proclaimed himself to be. Let this God be our God for ever and ever.

(2.) What Improvement he made of it. He immediately grounded a Prayer upon it, v. 9. and a most earnest affectionate Prayer it is, 1. For the Presence of God with his People Israel in the Wilderness; *I pray thee go amongst us*, for thy Presence is all in all to our Safety and Success. 2. For Pardon of Sin; *O pardon our Iniquity and our Sin*, else we cannot expect thee to go amongst us. And, 3. For the Privileges of a peculiar People; and take us for thine Inheritance, which thou wilt have a particular eye to; and concern for, and delight in. These things God had already promised, and given Moses Assurances of, and yet he prays for them; not as doubting the Sincerity of God's Grants, but as one solicitous for the Ratification of them. God's Promises are intended not to supersede, but to direct and encourage Prayer. Those who have some good hopes through Grace; that their Sins are pardoned; yet must continue to pray for Pardon; for the renewing of their Pardon; and the clearing of it more and more to their Souls. The more we see of God's Goodness, the more ashamed we should be of our own Sins, and the more earnest for an Interest in it. God had said, in the Close of the Proclamation, he would visit the Iniquity upon the Children, and Moses here deprecates that, Lord, do not only pardon it to them; but to their Children, and let our Covenant-Relation to thee be entailed upon our Posterity, as an Inheritance. Thus Moses, like a Man of a truly publick Spirit, intercedes

even for the Children that should be born. But it is a strange Plea he urges, *For it is a stiff-necked People.* God had given this as a Reason why he would not go along with them, Chap. 33. 3. Yea, saith Moses, the rather go along with us, for the worse they are, the more need they have of thy Presence and Grace to make them better. Moses sees them so stiff-necked, that for his part, he has neither Patience nor Power enough to deal with them: therefore, Lord, do thou go among us, else they will never be kept in awe. Thou wilt spare, and bear with them, for thou art God, and not Man, Hof. 11. 9.

10 And he said, Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people amongst which thou art, shall see the work of the LORD; for it is a terrible thing that I will do with thee. 11 Observe thou that which I command thee this day: Behold, I drive out before thee the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite. 12 Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee, 13 But ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves. 14 For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God: 15 Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice, 16 And thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods. 17 Thou shalt make thee no molten gods.

Reconciliation being made, a Covenant of Friendship is here settled between God and Israel. The Traitors are not only pardoned, but preferred, and made Favourites again. Well may the Assurances of this be ushered in with a Behold, a Note commanding Attention and Admiration: Behold I make a Covenant. When the Covenant was broke, 'twas Israel that broke it; now it comes to be renewed, it is God that makes it. If there be Quarrels, we must bear all the blame; if there be Peace, God must have all the Glory.

Here's, 1. God's Part of this Covenant, what he would do for them, v. 10, 11. (1.) In general, *Before all thy People I will do Miracles.* Note, Covenant-Blessings are marvellous Things, (Ps. 98. 1.) Marvels in the Kingdom of Grace; those here were Marvels in the Kingdom of Nature, the drying up of Jordan, the standing still of the Sun, &c. Marvels indeed, for they were without Precedent, such as have not been done in all the Earth; they were the Joy of Israel, and the Confirmation of their Faith, *thy People shall see, and own the Work of the Lord*; and they were the Terror of their Enemies, 'tis a terrible thing that I will do. Nay, even God's own People should see them with astonishment. (2.) In particular, *I drive out before thee the Amorite.* God, as King of Nations, plucks up some to plant others, as pleaseth him: as King of Saints, he made room for the Vine he brought out of Egypt, Psal. 80. 8, 9. Kingdoms are sacrificed to Israel's Interests, Isa. 43. 4.

2. Their Part of the Covenant, *Observe that which I command thee*; we cannot expect the Benefit of the Promises, unless we make Conscience of the Precepts. The two great Precepts are, (1.) *Thou shalt worship no other Gods,* v. 14. not give Divine Honour to any Creature, or any Name whatsoever, the Creature of Fancy. A good Reason is annexed, 'tis at thy peril if thou do, *For the Lord, whose Name is Jealous, is a jealous God*, as tender in the Matters of his Worship, as the Husband is of the Honour of the Marriage-Bed. Jealousy is called the Rage of a Man, Prov. 6. 34. but it is God's holy and just Displeasure. Those cannot worship God aright, that do not worship him alone. (2.) *Thou shalt make thee no molten Gods,* v. 17. thou shalt not worship the true Gods by Images. This was the Sin they had lately fallen into, which therefore they are particularly cautioned against.

Fences are here erected about these two Precepts by two others: 1. That they might not be tempted to worship other Gods, they must not join in Affinity or Friendship with those that did, v. 12. *Take heed to thyself*, for thou art upon thy good Behaviour; 'tis a Sin thou art prone to, and that will easily beset thee, and therefore be very cautious, and carefully abstain from all Appearances of it, and Advances towards it,

make no Covenant with the Inhabitants of the Land. If God in kindness to them, drove out the Canaanites, they ought, in duty to God, not to harbour them: What could be insisted on more reasonable than this? If God make war with the Canaanites, let not them make peace with them; If God take care that the Canaanites be not their Lords, let them take care that they be not their Snarers. 'Twas for their civil Interest to compleat the Conquest of the Land, so much doth God consult our Benefit in the Laws he gives us. They must particularly take heed of intermarrying with them, v. 15, 16. If they espoused their Children, they would be in danger of espousing their Gods; such is the Corruption of Nature, that the Bad is much more likely to debauch the Good, than the Good to reform the Bad. The way of Sin is down hill; those that are in league with Idolaters, will come by degrees to be in love with Idolatry, and those that are prevailed with to eat of the Idolatrous Sacrifice, will come at length to offer it: Obsta Principiis.

2. That they might not be tempted to make molten Gods, they must utterly destroy those they found, and all that belonged to them, the Altars and Groves, v. 13. lest if they were left standing, they should be brought in process of time either to use them, or to take pattern by them, or to abate in their detestation and dread of Idolatry. The Relicks of Idolatry ought to be abolished as Affronts to the Holy God, and a great Repröach to the human Nature. Let it never be said, that Men that pretended to Reason were ever guilty of such Absurdities, as to make Gods of their own, and worship them.

18 The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou keep: Seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, in the time of the month Abib; for in the month Abib thou camest out from Egypt. 19. All that openeth the matrix is mine: and every firstling among thy cattel, whether ox or sheep, that is male. 20 But the firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb: and if thou redeem him not, then shalt thou break his neck. All the first-born of thy sons thou shalt redeem: and none shall appear before me empty. 21 Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest: in earing-time and in harvest thou shalt rest. 22 And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, of the first-fruits of wheat-harvest, and the feast of in-gathering at the year's end. 23 Thrice in the year shall all your men-children appear before the LORD God, the God of Israel. 24 For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the LORD thy God, thrice in the year. 25 Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven, neither shall the sacrifice of the feast of passover be left unto the morning. 26 The first of the first-fruits of thy land thou shalt bring unto the house of the LORD thy God. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk. 27 And the LORD said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenour of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel.

Here's a Repetition of several Appointments made before, especially relating to their solemn Feasts; when they had made the Calf, they proclaimed a Feast in honour of it: now that they might never do so again, they are here charged with the Observance of the Feasts which God had instituted. Note, Men need not be drawn from their Religion by the Temptation of Mirth, for we serve a Master that hath abundantly provided for the Joy of his Servants: Serious Godliness is a continual Feast, and Joy in God always.

(1.) *Once a Week they must rest,* v. 21. even in Earing-time and in Harvest, the most busy times of the Year. All worldly Business must give way to that Holy Rest; Harvest-Work will prosper the better for the religious Observation of the Sabbath-day in Harvest-time. Hereby we must shew, that we prefer our Communion with God, and our Duty to him, before either the Business or the Joy of Harvest.

(2.) *Thrice a Year they must feast,* v. 23. they must then appear before the Lord God, the God of Israel. In all our religious Approaches to God, we must eye him, 1. As the Lord God, infinitely blessed, great and glorious, that we may worship him with Reverence and godly Fear. 2. As the God of Israel, a God in Covenant with us, that we may be encouraged.

encouraged to trust in him, and to serve him cheerfully. We always are before God, but in holy Duties we *present* ourselves before him, as Servants to receive Commands, as Petitioners to sue for Favours, and we have reason to do both with Joy.

But it might be suggested, That when all the Males from every part of the Country were gone up to worship in the Place that God should chuse, the Country would be left exposed to the Insults of their Neighbours, and what would become of the poor Women and Children, the Sick and Aged, that were left at home? Trust God with them, *v. 24. Neither shall any Man desire thy Land*; not only they shall not invade it, but they shall not so much as think of invading it. *Note*, 1. All Hearts are in God's hand, and under his check; he can not only lay a restraint upon Mens Actions, but upon their Desires. *Canaan* was a *desirable Land*, and the Neighbour Nations were greedy enough, and yet God saith, they shall not *desire* it. Let us check all sinful Desires in our own Hearts against God and his Glory, and then trust him to check all sinful Desires in the Hearts of others against us and our Interest. 2. The way of Duty is the way of Safety. If we *serve* God, he will *preserve* us, and those that venture for him shall never lose by him. While we are employed in God's Work, and are attending upon him, we are taken under special Protection; as Noblemen and Members of Parliament are privileged from Arrests.

The three Feasts are here mentioned, with their Appendages. 1. The Passover, and the *Feast of unleavened Bread*, in remembrance of their Deliverance out of *Egypt*; and to this is annexed the Law of the Redemption of the First-born, *v. 18, 19, 20*. This Feast was instituted, *Chap. 12, and 13*, and urged again, *Chap. 23, 15*. 2. The Feast of Weeks, *i. e.* that of Pentecost, seven Weeks after the Passover; and to this is annexed the Law of the First-fruits. 3. The Feast of Ingathering at the Year's end, which was the Feast of Tabernacles, *v. 22*. of these also he had spoken before, *Chap. 23, 16*. As to those Laws repeated here, *v. 23, 26*. that *against* *Leaven* relates to the Passover, that of the *First-fruits* to the Feast of Pentecost, and therefore that *against* *seething the Kid in his Mother's Milk*, in all probability relates to the Feast of Ingathering, at which God would not have them use that superstitious Ceremony, which probably they had seen the *Egyptians*, or some other of the Neighbour Nations, bless their Harvests with.

With these Laws here repeated, 'tis probable all that was said to him, when he was before upon the Mount, was repeated likewise, and the Model of the Tabernacle shewed him again, lest the Ruffle and Discomposure which the golden Calf had put him into, should have lost him the Ideas he had in his mind of what he had seen and heard; also in token of a complete Reconciliation, and to shew that *not one iota or tittle of the Law should pass away*, but all should be carefully preserved by the great Mediator, who came not to destroy, but to fulfil, *Mat. 5, 17, 18*. And in the close, 1. *Moses* is ordered to *write these Words*, *v. 27*. that the People might be the better acquainted with them by a frequent Perusal, and that they might be transmitted to the Generations to come: we can never be enough thankful to God for the *written Word*. 2. He is told, that according to the Tenour of these Words, God would *make a Covenant with Moses and Israel*, not with *Israel* immediately, but with them in *Moses* as Mediator; thus the Covenant of Grace is made with Believers through Christ, who is *given for a Covenant to the People*, *Isa. 49, 8*. And as here the Covenant was made according to the Tenour of the Commands, so it is still, for we are by Baptism brought into Covenant, that we may be *taught to observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded us*, *Mat. 28, 19, 20*.

28 And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water: and he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments. 29 And it came to pass when Moses came down from mount Sinai, (with the two tables of testimony in Moses hand, when he came down from the mount) that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him. 30 And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come nigh him. 31 And Moses called unto them; and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto him: and Moses talked with them. 32 And afterward all the children of Israel came nigh: and he gave them in commandment all that the LORD had spoken with him in mount Sinai. 33 And till Moses had done speaking with them, he put a veil

on his face. 34 But when Moses went in before the LORD, to speak with him, he took the veil off, until he came out. And he came out and spake unto the children of Israel, *that* which he was commanded. 35 And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses face shone: and Moses put the veil upon his face again until he went in to speak with him.

Here's, 1. The Continuance of *Moses* in the Mount, where he was miraculously sustained, *v. 28*. He was there in very intimate Communion with God, without Interruption, *forty Days and forty Nights*, and did not think it long, when we are weary of an hour or two spent in Attendance upon God, and Adoration of him, we should think how many Days and Nights *Moses* spent with him, and of the eternal Day we hope to spend in praising him. During all this time, *Moses* did neither eat nor drink; tho' he had before been kept so long fasting, yet he did not this second time take up so many Days Provisions along with him, but believed, that *Man lives not by Bread alone*, and encouraged himself with the Experience he had had of the Truth of it: So long he continued without Meat and Drink, (and probably without Sleep too) for, (1.) The Power of God supported him, that he did not need it: He that made the Body can nourish it without ordinary Means, which he useth, but is not tied to. *The Life is more than Meat*. (2.) His Communion with God entertained him so, that he did not desire it. He had Meat to eat which the World knew not of, for it was his Meat and Drink to hear the Word of God, and pray. The abundant Satisfaction his Soul had in the Word of God, and the Visions of the Almighty, made him forget the Body, and the Pleasures of that: When God would treat his Favourite *Moses*, 'twas not with Meat and Drink, but with his Light, Law, and Love, with the Knowledge of himself and his Will; then *Man did indeed eat Angels Food*: See what we should value as the truest Pleasure; *The Kingdom of God is not Meat and Drink*, and either the Plenty or Delicacy of that, but Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost. As *Moses*, so *Elijah* and *Christ* fasted forty Days and forty Nights: The more dead we are to the Delights of Sense, the better prepared we are for the Pleasures of Heaven.

2. The coming down of *Moses* from the Mount greatly enriched, and miraculously adorned.

(1.) He came down enriched with the best Treasure, for he brought in his hands the two Tables of the Law, written with the Finger of God; *v. 28, 29*. 'Tis a great Favour to have the Law given us; this Favour was shewed to *Israel*, *Psal. 147, 19, 20*. 'Tis a great Honour to be employed in delivering God's Law to others; this Honour was done to *Moses*.

(2.) He came down adorned with the best Beauty, for the Skin of his Face shone, *v. 29*. This time of his being in the Mount he heard only the same he had heard before, but he saw more of the Glory of God, which having with open face beheld, he was in some measure changed into the same Image from Glory to Glory, *1 Cor. 3, 18*. The last time he came down from the Mount with the Glory of a Magistrate, to frown upon and chastise *Israel's* Idolatry, now with the Glory of an Angel, with Tidings of Peace and Reconciliation; then he came with a Rod, now with the Spirit of Meekness. Now this may be looked upon, 1. As a great Honour done to *Moses*, that the People might never again question his Mission, or think or speak slightly of him. He carried his Credentials in his very Countenance, which some think as long as he lived retained some Reminders of this Glory, which perhaps contributed to the Vigour of his old Age; that Eye could not wax dim, which had seen God; nor that Face wrinkle, which had shone with his Glory: the *Israelites* could not look him in the face, but they must there read his Commission, *Thus it was done to the Man whom the King of Kings did delight to honour*. Yet after this they murmured against him, for the most sensible Proofs will not of themselves conquer an obstinate Infidelity. The shining of *Moses's* Face was a great Honour to him; yet that was no Glory in comparison with the Glory which excelled: We read of our Lord Jesus, not only that his Face shone as the Sun, but his whole Body also, for his Raiment was white and glistering, *Mat. 17, 2*. But when he came down from the Mount, he quite laid aside that Glory, it being his Will that we should walk by Faith, not by Sight. 2. It was also a great Favour to the People, and an Encouragement to them, that God put this Glory upon him who was their Intercessor, thereby giving them assurance that he was accepted, and they through him. Thus the Advancement of Christ, our Advocate with the Father, is the great Support of our Faith. 3. It was the effect of his sight of God, Communion with God, (1.) Doth make the Face to shine in true Honour: Serious Godliness puts a Lustre upon a Man's

Countenance, such as commands Esteem and Affection. (2.) It should make the Face to shine in *universal Holiness*; when we have been in the Mount with God, we should let our *Light shine before Men* in Humility, Meekness, and all the Instances of a heavenly Conversation: Thus must the *Beauty of the Lord our God be upon us*, even the *Beauty of Holiness*, that all we converse with may take knowledge of us, that we have been with Jesus, Acts 4. 13.

Now concerning the shining of Moses's Face, observe here,

(1.) That Moses was not aware of it himself, v. 29. he *wist not that the Skin of his Face shone*. Thus, 1. It is the Infelicity of some, that their *Faces shine* in true Grace, and yet they do not know it, to take the Comfort of it. Others see much of God in them, but they themselves are ready to think they have no Grace. 2. It is the Humility of others that their *Faces shine* in eminent Gifts and Usefulness, and yet they do not know it, to be puffed up with it: whatever Beauty God puts upon us, we should still be filled with such a humble Sense of our own Unworthiness and manifold Infirmities, as will make us even overlook and forget that which makes our Faces shine.

(2.) That Aaron and the Children of Israel saw it, and were afraid, v. 30. The Truth of it was attested by a multitude of Witnesses, who were also conscious of the Terror of it. It not only dazzled their Eyes, but struck such an awe upon them, as obliged them to retire; probably they doubted whether it were a Token of God's Favour, or of his Displeasure, and tho' it seemed most likely to be a good Omen, yet being conscious of Guilt, they feared the worst, especially remembering the Posture Moses found them in when he came last down from the Mount. Holiness will command Reverence; but the Sense of Sin makes Men afraid of their Friends, and even of that which really is a Favour to them.

(3.) That Moses put a Veil upon his Face, when he perceived that it shone, v. 33, 35. 1. This teacheth us all a Lesson of Modesty and Humility; we must be content to have our Excellencies obscur'd, and a Veil drawn over them, not covering to make a fair shew in the Flesh. They that are truly desirous to be owned and accepted of God, will likewise desire not to be taken notice of, or applauded by Men, *qui bene latuit, bene vivit*. 2. It teacheth Ministers to accommodate themselves to the Capacities of People, and to preach to them as they are able to bear it. Let all that Art and Learning be veiled, which tends to Amusement rather than Edification, and let the Strong condescend to the Infirmities of the Weak. 3. This Veil signified the Darkeness of that Dispensation: The Ceremonial Institutions had in them much of Christ, and the Grace of the Gospel, but a Veil was drawn over it, so that the Children of Israel could not distinctly and steadfastly see those good things to come, which the Law had the shadow of. 'Twas Beauty veiled; Gold in the Mine; a Pearl in the Shell: But, thanks be to God, by the Gospel, Life and Immortality are brought to light, the Veil is taken away from off the Old Testament; yet still it remains upon the Hearts of those who shut their Eyes against the Light. Thus the Apostle expounds this Passage, 2 Cor. 3. 13, 14, 15.

(4.) That when he went in before the Lord, to speak with him in the Tabernacle of meeting, he put off the Veil, v. 34. Then there was no occasion for it, and before God every Man doth and must appear *unveiled*; for all things are naked and open before the Eyes of him with whom we have to do, and 'tis folly for us to think of concealing or disguising any thing: Every Veil must be thrown aside when we come to present ourselves unto the Lord. This signified also, as it is explained, 2 Cor. 3. 16. that when a Soul turns to the Lord, the Veil shall be taken away, that with open face it may behold his Glory. And when we shall come before the Lord in Heaven, to be there for ever speaking with him, the Veil shall not only be taken off from the Divine Glory, but from our Hearts and Eyes, that we may see as we are seen, and know as we are known.

CHAP. XXXV.

What should have been said and done upon Moses's coming down the first time from the Mount, if the Golden Calf had not broke the measures, and put all into disorder, now at last, when with great difficulty Reconciliation was made, begins to be said and done; and that great Affair, of the setting up of God's Worship, is put into its former Channel again, and goes on now without Interruption. 1. Moses gives Israel those Instructions he had received, which required a present Observance, (1.) Concerning the Sabbath, v. 1-3. (2.) Concerning the Contribution that was to be made for the erecting of the Tabernacle, v. 4-9. (3.) Concerning the framing of the Tabernacle, and the Utensils of it, v. 10-19. 2. The People bring in their Contributions, v. 20-29. 3. The Head-Workmen are nominated, v. 30-35.

1 AND Moses gathered all the congregation of the children of Israel together, and said unto them, These are the words which the LORD hath commanded, that ye should do them. 2 Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a sabbath of rest to the LORD: whosoever doth work therein, shall be put to death. 3 Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath day. 4 And Moses spake unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, This is the thing which the LORD commanded, saying, 5 Take ye from amongst you an offering unto the LORD: Who-soever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the LORD; gold, and silver, and brass, 6 And blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats hair, 7 And rams skins dyed red, and badgers skins, and shittim-wood, 8 And oil for the light, and spices for anointing oil, and for the sweet incense, 9 And onyx-stones, and stones to be set, for the ephod, and for the breast-plate. 10 And every wise hearted among you, shall come and make all that the LORD hath commanded: 11 The tabernacle, his tent, and his covering, his taches, and his boards, his bars, his pillars, and his sockets, 12 The ark and the staves thereof, with the mercy-seat, and the veil of the covering, 13 The table and his staves, and all his vessels, and the shew-bread, 14 The candlestick also for the light, and his furniture, and his lamps, with the oil for the light, 15 And the incense-altar, and his staves, and the anointing oil, and the sweet incense, and the hanging for the door at the entering in of the tabernacle, 16 The altar of burnt-offering with his brazen grate, his staves, and all his vessels, the laver and his foot. 17 The hangings of the court, his pillars and their sockets, and the hangings for the door of the court, 18 The pins of the tabernacle, and the pins of the court, and their cords, 19 The clothes of service, to do service in the holy place, the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons to minister in the priests office.

It was said in general, Chap. 34. 32. that Moses gave them in commandment all that the Lord had spoken with him: But the erecting and furnishing of the Tabernacle being the Work to which they were now immediately to apply themselves, here's particular mention of the Orders given concerning that. 1. All the Congregation is summoned to attend, v. 1. viz. the Heads and Rulers of the Congregation, the Representatives of the several Tribes, who must receive Instructions from Moses, as he had received them from the Lord, and must communicate them to the People. Thus St. John, being commanded to write what had been revealed to him to the seven Churches, writes it to the Angels, or Ministers of the Churches. 2. Moses gave them in charge all that, and that only, which God had commanded him; thus he approved himself faithful both to God and Israel, between whom he was a Messenger or Mediator. If he had added, alter'd, or diminish'd, he had been false to both; but both sides having reposed a Trust in him, he was true to the Trust: yet he was faithful as a Servant only, but Christ as a Son, Heb. 3. 5, 6. 3. He begins with the Law of the Sabbath, because that was much insisted on in the Instructions he had received, v. 2, 3. Six Days shall Work be done: Work for the Tabernacle, and the Work of the Day that was now to be done in its Day, and they had little else to do here in the Wilderness, where they had neither Husbandry nor Merchandize, neither Food to get, nor Clothes to make; but on the seventh Day you must not strike a stroke, no nor at the Tabernacle-Work, the Honour of the Sabbath was above that of the Sanctuary, more quiet, and more lasting; that must be to you a Holy Day, devoted to God, and not to be spent in common Business, 'tis a Sabbath of Rest: It is a Sabbath of Sabbaths, so some read it, more honourable and excellent than any of the other Feasts, and should survive them all. A Sabbath of Sabbaths, so others read it, being typical of that Sabbathism or Rest, both (spiritual) and eternal, which remains for the People of God, Heb. 4. 9. It is a Sabbath of Rest, i. e. in which a Rest from all worldly

worldly Labour must be very carefully and strictly observed. It is a Sabbath, and a little Sabbath, so some of the Jews would have it read; not only observing the whole Day as a Sabbath, but an Hour before the beginning of it, and an Hour after the ending of it, which they throw in over and above our of their own time, and call a *Little Sabbath*, to shew how glad they are of the Approach of the Sabbath, and how loth to part with it. 'Tis a Sabbath of Rest, but it is Rest to the Lord, to whose Honour it must be devoted. A Penalty is here annexed to the breach of it, *Whoever doth work therein, shall be put to death*; and a particular Prohibition of kindling Fires on the Sabbath-day for any servile Work, as Smiths Work, or Plumbers, &c. 4. He orders Preparation to be made for the setting up of the Tabernacle. Two things were to be done,

1. All that were able must contribute; *Take ye from among you an Offering*, v. 5. The Tabernacle was to be dedicated to the Honour of God, and used in his Service, and therefore what was brought for the setting up and furnishing of that, was an Offering to the Lord. Our Goodness extendeth not to God; but what is laid out for the Support of his Kingdom and Interest among Men, he is pleased to accept as an Offering to himself, and he requires such Acknowledgments of our receiving our All from him, and such Instances of our dedicating our All to him. The Rule is, *Whoever is of a willing Heart, let him bring*. 'Twas not to be a Tax imposed upon them, but a Benevolence or voluntary Contribution; to intimate to us, (1.) That God has not made our Yoke heavy. He is a Prince that doth not burden his Subjects with Taxes, nor make them to serve with an Offering, but draws with the Cords of a Man, and leaves it to ourselves to judge what is right, his is a Government that there's no cause to complain of, for he doth not rule with rigour. (2.) That God loves a cheerful Giver, and is best pleased with the Free-will Offerings. Those Services are acceptable to him, that come from the willing Heart of a willing People, Psal. 110. 3.

2. All that were skillful must work, v. 10. *Every wise-hearted among you shall come and make*. See how God dispenseth his Gifts variously, and as every Man hath received the Gift, so he must minister, 1 Pet. 4. 10. Those that were rich, must bring in Materials to work on; those that were ingenious, must serve the Tabernacle with their Ingenuity; as they needed one another, so the Tabernacle needed them both, 1 Cor. 12. 7, 21. The Work was likely to go on, when some helped with their Purse, others with their Hands, and both with a willing Heart. Moses, as he had told them what must be given, v. 5-9. so he gives them the general Heads of what must be made, v. 11-19. that seeing how much Work was before them, they might apply themselves to it the more vigorously, and every Hand might be busy; and it gave them such an Idea of the Fabrick designed, that they could not but long to see it finished.

20 And all the congregation of the children of Israel departed from the presence of Moses. 21 And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the LORD's offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments. 22 And they came both men and women, as many as were willing-hearted, and brought bracelets, and ear-rings, and rings, and tablets, all jewels of gold: and every man that offered, offered an offering of gold unto the LORD. 23 And every man with whom was found blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats hair, and red skins of rams, and badgers skins, brought them. 24 Every one that did offer an offering of silver and brass, brought the LORD's offering: and every man with whom was found shittim-wood for any work of the service, brought it. 25 And all the women that were wise-hearted, did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, both of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine linen. 26 And all the women, whose hearts stirred them up in wisdom, span goats hair. 27 And the rulers brought onyx-stones, and stones to be set, for the ephod, and for the breast-plate: 28 And spice, and oil for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense. 29 The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the LORD, every man and woman, whose heart made them willing to bring for all manner of work, which

the LORD had commanded to be made, by the hand of Moses.

Moses having made known to them the Will of God, they went home, and immediately put in practice what they had heard, v. 20. O that every Congregation would thus depart from the hearing of the Word of God, with a full Resolution to be Doers of the same! Observe here,

1. The Offerings that were brought for the Service of the Tabernacle, v. 21, &c. concerning which many things may be noted. 1. It is intimated that they brought their Offerings presently; they departed to their Tents immediately to fetch their Offering, and did not desire time to consider of it, lest their Zeal should be cooled by Delays. What Duty God convinceth us of, and calls us to, we should set about it speedily. No Season will be more convenient than the present Season. 2. It is said that their Spirits made them willing, v. 21 and their Hearts, v. 29. What they did, they did cheerfully, and from a good Principle. They were willing, and it was not any external Inducement that made them so, but their Spirits. 'Twas from a Principle of Love to God and his Service, a Desire of his Presence with them by his Ordinances, Gratitude for the great things he had done for them, Faith in his Promise of what he would further do, or at least, from the present Consideration of these things, that they were willing to offer. What we give and do for God is then acceptable, when it comes from a good Principle in the Heart and Spirit. 3. When it is said that as many as were willing-hearted brought their Offerings (v. 22,) it should seem as if there were some that were not, who loved their Gold better than their God, and would not part with it, no not for the Service of the Tabernacle; such there are who will be called Israelites, and yet will not be moved by the Equity of the thing, God's Expectations from them, and the good Examples of those about them, to part with any thing for the Interests of God's Kingdom; they are for the true Religion, provided it be cheap, and will cost them nothing. 4. The Offerings were of divers kinds, according as they had; those that had Gold and precious Stones brought them, not thinking any thing too good and too rich to part with for the Honour of God. Those that had not precious Stones to bring, brought Goats Hair, and Rams Skins: If we cannot do as much as others for God, we must not therefore sit still, and do nothing: If the meaner Offerings, which are according to our Ability, gain us not such a Reputation among Men, yet they shall not fail of Acceptance with God, who requires according to what a Man hath, and not according to what he has not, 2 Cor. 8. 12. Two Mites from a Pauper were more pleasing, than so many Talents from a Divul, 2 Kings 5. 23. God has an eye to the Heart of the Giver, more than to the Value of the Gift. 5. Many of the things they offered were their Ornaments, Bracelets, and Rings, and Tablets or Locketts, v. 22. and even the Women parted with these: Can a Maid forget her Ornaments? Thus far they forgot them, that they preferred the beautifying of the Sanctuary before their own adorning. Let this teach us in general to part with that for God, when he calls for it, which is very dear to us, which we value, and value ourselves by, and particularly to lay aside our Ornaments, and deny ourselves in them, when either they occasion Offence to others, or feed our own Pride. If we think those Gospel-Rules concerning our Clothing too strict, 1 Tim. 2. 9, 10. 1 Pet. 3. 3, 4. I fear we would scarce have done as these Israelites here did. If they thought their Ornaments well bestowed upon the Tabernacle, shall not we think the want of Ornaments well made up by the Graces of the Spirit? Prov. 1. 9. 6. These rich things that they offered, we may suppose, were mostly the Spoils of the Egyptians; for the Israelites in Egypt were kept poor, till they borrowed at parting. And we may suppose the Rulers had better things, v. 27. only because they had a better Interest when they borrowed. Who would have thought that ever the Wealth of Egypt should have been so well employed, but thus God hath often made the Earth to help the Woman, Rev. 12. 16. 'Twas by a special Providence and Promise of God that the Israelites got all that Spoil, and therefore 'twas highly fit they should devote a part of it to the Service of that God, to whom they owed it all. Let every Man give according as God hath prospered him, 1 Cor. 16. 2. Extraordinary Successes should be acknowledged by extraordinary Offerings. Apply it to human Learning, Arts and Sciences, which are borrowed, as it were, from the Egyptians, those that are enriched with these must devote them to the Service of God and his Tabernacle: They may be used as Helps to understand the Scriptures, as Ornaments or Hand-maids to Divinity. But then great care must be taken that Egypt's Gods mingle not with Egypt's Gold: Moses, though learned in all the Learning of the Egyptians, did not therefore pretend, in the least Instance, to correct the Pattern shewed him in the Mount. The furnishing of the Tabernacle with the

Riches of Egypt, was perhaps a good Omen to the Gentiles, who, in the fulness of time, should be brought into the Gospel-Tabernacle, and their Silver and their Gold with them, Isa. 60. 9. and it should be said, *Blessed be Egypt, my People*, Isa. 19. 25. 7. We may suppose that the remembrance of the Offerings to the making of the Golden Calf, made them the more forward in their Offerings. Those that had then parted with their Ear-rings, would now testify their Repentance, by giving the rest of their Jewels to the Service of God: *Godly Sorrow worketh such a Revenge*, 2 Cor. 7. 11. And those that had kept themselves pure from that Idolatry, yet argued with themselves, Were they so forward in contributing to an Idol, and shall we backward or sneaking in our Offerings to the Lord? Thus some Good was brought even out of that Evil.

2. The Work that was done for the Service of the Tabernacle, v. 25. *The Women did spin with their Hands*; some spun fine Work, of Blue and Purple, others coarse Work, of Goats Hair, and yet theirs also is said to be done in Wisdom, v. 26. As it is not only rich Gifts, so 'tis not only fine Work that God accepts. Notice is here taken of the good *Womens* Work for God, as well as of *Bezaleel's* and *Aholiab's*: The meanest Hand employed, the meanest Service performed for the Honour of God, shall have an honourable Recompence; *Mary's* anointing Christ's Head shall be *told for a Memorial*, Mat. 26. 13. and a Record kept of the *Women that laboured in the Gospel-Tabernacle*, Phil. 4. 3. and were *Helpers to Paul in Christ Jesus*, Rom. 16. 3. 'Tis part of the Character of the virtuous Woman, that she *layeth her Hand to the Spindle*, Prov. 31. 19. This Employment was here turned to a pious Use, as it may be still, tho' we have no Hangings to make for the Tabernacle, by the Imitation of the Charity of *Dorcas*, who *made Coats and Garments for poor Widows*, Acts 9. 39. Even those that are not in a Capacity to give in Charity, may yet work in Charity; and thus the Poor may relieve the Poor, and those that have nothing but their Limbs and Senses, may be very charitable in the Labour of Love.

30 And Moses said unto the children of Israel, See, the LORD hath called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah.

31 And he hath filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship; 32 And to devise curious works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, 33 And in the cutting of stones to set them, and in carving of wood to make any manner of cunning work. 34 And he hath put in his heart, that he may teach, both he and Aholiab the son of Ahisamach of the tribe of Dan. 35 Them hath he filled with wisdom of heart, to work all manner of work, of the engraver, and of the cunning workman, and of the embroiderer, in blue, and in purple, in scarlet, and in fine linen, and of the weaver, even of them that do any work, and of those that devise cunning work.

Here's the Divine Appointment of the Master-Workmen, that there might be no Strife for the Office, and that all that were employed in the Work might take direction from, and give account to these general Inspectors; for God is the God of Order, and not of Confusion.

Observe, 1. Those whom God called by Name to this Service, he filled with the Spirit of God, to qualify them for it, v. 30, 31. Skill in secular Employments is God's Gift, and comes from above, James 1. 17. From him the Faculty is, and the Improvement of it; to his Honour therefore all Knowledge must be devoted, and we must study how to serve him with it. The Work was extraordinary which Bezaleel was designed for, and therefore he was qualified in an extraordinary manner for it. Thus when the Apostles were appointed to be Master-Builders, in setting up the Gospel-Tabernacle, they were filled with the Spirit of God in Wisdom and Understanding.

2. They were appointed not only to devise, but to work, v. 32. to work all manner of Work, v. 35. Those of eminent Gifts, that are capable of directing others, must not think that that will excuse them in Idleness. Many are ingenious enough in cutting out Work for other People, and can tell what this Man and that Man should do, but the Burdens they bind on others, they themselves will not touch with one of their Fingers: These will fall under the Character of *Idolish Servants*.

3. They were not only to devise and work themselves, but they were to teach others, v. 34. Not only that he may have power to command, but that he may take pains to in-

struct. Those that *rule* should teach, and those to whom God hath given Knowledge, should be willing to communicate it for the Benefit of others, not coveting to monopolize it.

CHAP. XXXVI.

In this Chapter, 1. *The Work of the Tabernacle is begun*, v. 1-4. 2. *A Stop put to the People's Contribution*, v. 5-7. 3. *A particular Account is given of the making of the Tabernacle itself, the fine Curtains of it*, v. 8-13. *The coarse ones*, v. 14-19. *The Boards*, v. 20-35. *The Bars*, v. 31-34. *The Partition-Veil*, v. 35, 36. and *the Hanging for the Door*, v. 37, 38.

THEN wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise-hearted man, in whom the LORD put wisdom and understanding, to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, according to all that the LORD had commanded. 2 And Moses called Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise-hearted man, in whose heart the LORD had put wisdom, even every one whose heart stirred him up to come unto the work to do it. 3 And they received of Moses all the offering which the children of Israel had brought for the work of the service of the sanctuary, to make it withal. And they brought yet unto him free offerings every morning. 4 And all the wise men that wrought all the work of the sanctuary, came every man from his work which they made. 5 And they spake unto Moses, saying, The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work which the LORD commanded to make. 6 And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing. 7 For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much.

Here's, 1. The Workmen set in without delay: *Then* they wrought, v. 1. when God had qualified them for the Work, then they applied themselves to it. *Note*, The Talents we are entrusted with must not be laid up, but laid out; not hid in a Napkin, but traded with. What have we all our Gifts for, but to do good with them? *Then* when Moses called them, v. 2. even those whom God has qualified for, and inclined to the Service of the Tabernacle, yet must wait for a regular Call to it, either extraordinary, as that of Preachers and Apostles, or ordinary, as that of Pastors and Teachers. And observe who they were that Moses called; those in whose Heart God had put Wisdom for this purpose, beyond their natural Capacity, and whose Heart stirred him up to come to the Work in good earnest. *Note*, Those are to be called to the Building of the Gospel-Tabernacle, whom God has by his Grace made in some measure fit for the Work, and free to it: Ability and Willingness, with Resolution, are the two things to be regarded in the Call of Ministers. Has God given them not only Knowledge, but Wisdom? for he that would win Souls, must be wise: And have their Hearts stirred them up to come to the Work, and not to the Honour only, to do it, and not to talk of it only? Let them come to it with full purpose of Heart to go through with it.

The Materials which the People had contributed were deliver'd by Moses to the Workmen, v. 3. They could not create a Tabernacle, that is, make it out of nothing, nor work unless they had something to work upon; that therefore the People brought, and Moses put it into their hands. Precious Souls are the Materials of the Gospel-Tabernacle, they are built up a spiritual House, 1 Pet. 2. 5. To this end they are to offer themselves a Free-will Offering to the Lord, for his Service, Rom. 15. 16. and they are then committed to the Care of his Ministers, as Builders, to be framed and wrought upon for their Edification and Increase in Holiness, till they all come like the Curtains of the Tabernacle, in the Unity of the Faith, to be a Holy Temple, Eph. 2. 21, 22.—4. 12, 13.

2. The Contributions restrained; the People continued to bring free Offerings every Morning, v. 5. *Note*, We should always make it our Morning's Work to bring our Offering unto the Lord; even the spiritual Offerings of Prayer and Praise, and a broken Heart surrendered entirely to God: This is that which the Duty of every Day requires. God's Compassions are new every Morning, and so should our Offerings be.

our Free Offerings: God's Grace to us is free, and so must our Duty to him be. Probably there were some that were backward at first to bring their Offering, but their Neighbours Forwardness stirred them up, and shamed them. The Zeal of some provoked many. There are those who will be content to follow, that yet do not care for leading in a good Work: 'Tis best to be forward, but better late than never. Or, perhaps some that had offered at first, having pleasure in reflecting upon it, offer'd more; so far were they from grudging what they had contributed, that they doubled their Contribution: Thus in Charity, give a Portion to seven, and also to eight. Having given much, give more.

Now observe, 1. The honesty of the Workmen? When they had cut out their Work, and found how their stuff held out, and that the People were still forward to bring in more, they went in a Body to Moses, to tell him that there needed no more Contributions, v. 4, 5. Had they sought their own things, they had now a fair Opportunity of enriching themselves by the People's Gifts, for they might have made up their Work, and converted the Overplus to their own Use, as Perquisites of their Place. But they were Men of Integrity, that scorn'd to do so mean a thing, as to sponge upon the People, and enrich themselves with that which was offered to the Lord: Those are the greatest Cheats that cheat the Publick. If to murder many, is worse than to murder one, by the same Rule to defraud Communities, and to rob the Church or State, is a much greater Crime than to pick the Pocket of a single Person. But these Workmen here were not not only ready to account for all they received, but were not willing to receive more than they had occasion for, lest they should come either into the Temptation, or under the Suspicion of taking it to themselves. These were Men that knew when they had enough.

2. The Liberality of the People, that tho' they saw what a great deal was contributed, yet they continued to offer, till they were forbidden by Proclamation, v. 6, 7. A rare Instance! most need a Spur to quicken their Charity, few need a Bridle to check it; yet these here did. Had Moses aimed to enrich himself, he might have suffered them still to bring in their Offerings, and when the Work was finish'd, might have taken the Remainder to himself: But he also prefer'd the publick before his own private Interest, and was therein a good Example to all publick Trusts. 'Tis said, v. 6, the People were restrained from bringing: They looked upon it as a Restrains upon them, not to be allowed to do more for the Tabernacle, such was the Zeal of these People, who gave to their power, yea, and beyond their power, praying the Collectors, with much intreaty, to receive the Gift, 2 Cor. 8, 3, 4. These were the Fruits of a flesh Love; in these last Days, Charity is grown too cold, for us to expect such things from it.

8 And every wise hearted man among them, that wrought the work of the tabernacle, made ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, with cherubims of cunning work made he them. 9 The length of one curtain was twenty and eight cubits; and the breadth of one curtain four cubits: the curtains were all of one size. 10 And he coupled the five curtains one unto another: and the other five curtains he coupled one unto another. 11 And he made loops of blue on the edge of one curtain, from the selvage in the coupling: likewise he made in the uttermost side of another curtain, in the coupling of the second. 12 Fifty loops made he in one curtain, and fifty loops made he in the edge of the curtain which was in the coupling of the second: the loops held one curtain to another. 13 And he made fifty taches of gold, and coupled the curtains one unto another with the taches. So it became one tabernacle.

The first Work they set about was the framing of the House; that must be done before the Furniture of it was prepared. This House was not made of Timber or Stone, but of Curtains curiously embroider'd, and coupled together. This serv'd to typify the State of the Church in this World, the Palace of God's Kingdom among Men. 1. Tho' it be upon the Earth, yet its Foundation is not in the Earth, as that of a House is; no, Christ's Kingdom is not of this World, nor founded in it. 2. 'Tis mean and mutable, and in a militant State; Shepherds dwell in Tents, and God is the Shepherd of Israel; Soldiers dwell in Tents, and the Lord is a Man of War, and his Church marcheth through an Enemy's Country, and must fight its way. The Kings of the Earth clofe themselves in Cedar, Jer. 22, 15. but the Ark of God was lodged in Curtains

only. 3. Yet there is a Beauty in Holiness; the Curtains were embroider'd, so is the Church adorned with the Gifts and Graces of the Spirit, that Raiment of Needle-Work, Psal. 46, 14. 4. The several Societies of Believers are united in one, and as here, all become one Tabernacle, for there is one Lord, one Faith, and one Baptism.

14 And he made curtains of goats hair, for the tent over the tabernacle: eleven curtains he made them. 15 The length of one curtain was thirty cubits, and four cubits was the breadth of one curtain: the eleven curtains were of one size. 16 And he coupled five curtains by themselves, and six curtains by themselves. 17 And he made fifty loops upon the uttermost edge of the curtain in the coupling, and fifty loops made he upon the edge of the curtain, which coupleth the second. 18 And he made fifty taches of brals to couple the tent together, that it might be one. 19 And he made a covering for the tent, of rams skins dyed red, and a covering of badgersskins above that. 20 And he made boards for the tabernacle, of shittim-wood, standing up. 21 The length of a board was ten cubits, and the breadth of a board one cubit and a half. 22 One board had two tenons, equally distant one from another: thus did he make for all the boards of the tabernacle. 23 And he made boards for the tabernacle: twenty boards for the south-side, southward. 24 And forty sockets of silver he made under the twenty boards: two sockets under one board for his two tenons, and two sockets under another board for his two tenons. 25 And for the other side of the tabernacle, which is towards the north-corner, he made twenty boards. 26 And their forty sockets of silver: two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board. 27 And for the sides of the tabernacle westward, he made six boards. 28 And two boards made he for the corners of the tabernacle in the two sides. 29 And they were coupled beneath, and coupled together at the head thereof, to one ring: thus he did to both of them in both the corners. 30 And there were eight boards, and their sockets were sixteen sockets of silver, under every board two sockets. 31 And he made bars of shittim-wood: five for the boards of the one side of the tabernacle, 32 And five bars for the boards of the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the tabernacle for the sides westward. 33 And he made the middle bar to shoot through the boards from the one end to the other. 34 And he overlaid the boards with gold, and made the rings of gold to be places for the bars, and overlaid the bars with gold.

Here, 1. The Shelter and special Protection that the Church is under, is signified by the Curtains of Hair-Cloth which were spread over the Tabernacle, and the Covering of Rams Skins and Badgers Skins over them, v. 14—19. God has provided for his People a Shadow from the Heat, and a Cover from Storms and Rain, Isa. 4, 6. they are armed against all Weathers; the Sun and Moon shall not smite them, and they are protected from the Storms of Divine Wrath, that Hail which will sweep away the Refuge of Lyes, Isa. 28, 18. Those that dwell in God's House shall find, be the Tempest ever so violent, or the Dropping ever so continual, it doth not rain in. 2. The Strength and Stability of the Church, tho' it be but a Tabernacle, is signified by the Boards and Bars, with which the Curtains were borne up, v. 20—34. The Boards were coupled together, and joined by the Bars which shot through them; for the Union of the Church, and the hearty Agreement of those that are its Stays and Supporters among themselves, contributes abundantly to its Strength and Establishment.

35 And he made a veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen: with cherubims made he it of cunning work. 36 And he made thereunto four pillars of shittim-wood, and overlaid them with gold: their hooks were of gold, and he cast for them

them four sockets of silver. 37 And he made an hanging for the tabernacle-door, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, of needle-work, 38 And the five pillars of it with their hooks: and he overlaid their chapiters, and their fillets, with gold: but their five sockets were of brass.

In the building of a House there is a great deal of Work about the Doors and Partitions; in the Tabernacle they were answerable to the rest of the Fabrick: that was *Curtains*, these were *Nails*.

1. There was a Veil made for a Partition between the Holy Place, and the most Holy, v. 35, 36. This signified the Darkness and Distance of that Dispensation, compared with the New Testament, which shews us the Glory of God more clearly, and invites us to draw near to it; and the Darkness and Distance of our present State, in comparison with Heaven, where we shall be ever with the Lord, and see him as he is.

2. There was a Veil made for the Door of the Tabernacle, v. 37, 38. At this Door the People assembled, tho' forbidden to enter; for while we are in this present State, we must get as near to God as we can.

CHAP. XXXVII.

Bezaleel and his Workmen are still busy, making, 1. The Ark, with the Mercy-seat and the Cherubims, v. 1-9. 2. The Table, with its Vessels, v. 10-16. 3. The Candlestick, with its Appurtenances, v. 17-24. 4. The Golden Altar for Incense, v. 25-28. 5. The Holy Oil and Incense, v. 29. The particular Appointment concerning each of which, we had before in the 25th and 30th Chapters.

AND Bezaleel made the ark of shittim-wood: two cubits and a half was the length of it, and a cubit and a half the breadth of it, and a cubit and a half the height of it. 2 And he overlaid it with pure gold within and without, and made a crown of gold to it round about. 3 And he cast for it four rings of gold, to be set by the four corners of it: even two rings upon the one side of it, and two rings upon the other side of it. 4 And he made staves of shittim-wood, and overlaid them with gold. 5 And he put the staves into the rings, by the sides of the ark, to bear the ark. 6 And he made the mercy-seat of pure gold: two cubits and an half was the length thereof, and one cubit and an half the breadth thereof. 7 And he made two cherubims of gold, beaten out of one piece made he them, on the two ends of the mercy-seat: 8 One cherub on the end on this side, and another cherub on the other end on that side; out of the mercy-seat made he the cherubims on the two ends thereof. 9 And the cherubims spread out their wings on high, and covered with their wings over the mercy-seat, with their faces one to another, even to the mercy-seat-ward were the faces of the cherubims.

It may be thought strange, that Moses, when he had recorded so fully the Instructions given him upon the Mount for the making of all these things, should here record as particularly the making of them; when it might have sufficed only to have said in a few words, that each of these things was made exactly according to the Directions before recited. We are sure Moses, when he wrote by Divine Inspiration, used no vain Repetitions; there are no idle Words in Scripture, why then are so many Chapters taken up with this Narrative, which we are tempted to think needless and tedious? But we must consider, 1. That Moses wrote primarily for the People of Israel, to whom it would be of great use to read and hear often of these Divine and Sacred Treasures, with which they were entrusted. These several Ornaments, wherewith the Tabernacle was furnished, they were not admitted to see, but the Priests only, and therefore 'twas requisite they should be thus largely described particularly to them. That which they ought to read again and again, lest they should fail of doing, that is written again and again: Thus many of the same Passages of the History of Christ are in the New Testament related by two or three, and some by four of the Evangelists, for the same reason. The great things of God's Law and Gospel we need to have inculcated upon us again and again. To write the same (saith St. Paul) to me is not grievous, but for you it is safe, Phil. 3. 3.

2. Moses would thus shew the great Care which he and his Workmen took to make every thing exactly according to the Pattern shewed him in the Mount. Having before given us the Original, he here give us the Copy, that we may compare them, and observe how exactly they agree. Thus he appeals to every Reader concerning his Fidelity to him that appointed him, in all his House, and in all the Particulars of it, Heb. 3. 5. And thus he teacheth us to have respect to all God's Commandments, even to every iota and tittle of them. 3. 'Tis intimated hereby, that God takes delight in the sincere Obedience of his People, and keeps an exact account of it, which shall be produced to their Honour in the Resurrection of the Just. None can be so punctual in their Duty, but God will be as punctual in his notices of it. He is not unrighteous, to forget the Work and Labour of Love, in every instance of it, Heb. 6. 16. 4. The spiritual Riches and Beauties of the Gospel-Tabernacle are hereby recommended to our frequent and serious Consideration. Go walk about this Zion, view it and review it; the more you contemplate the Glories of the Church, the more you will admire them, and be in love with them; The Charter of its Privileges, and the Account of its Constitution, will very well bear a second Reading.

In these Verses we have an account of the making of the Ark, with its glorious and most significant Appurtenances, the Mercy-seat and the Cherubims. Consider these three together, and they represent the Glory of a Holy God, the Sincerity of a Holy Heart, and the Communion that is between them, in and by a Mediator. 1. It is the Glory of a Holy God, that he dwelleth between the Cherubims, i. e. is continually attended and adored by the blessed Angels, whose Swiftness was signified by the Wings of the Cherubim, and their Unanimity and joint Concurrence in their Services, was signified by their Faces being one towards another. 2. It is the Character of an upright Heart, that, like the Ark of the Testament, it hath the Law of God hid, and kept in it. 3. By Jesus Christ, the great Propitiation, there is Reconciliation made, and a Communion settled between us and God: He interposeth between us and God's Displeasure, and not only so, but through him we become entitled to God's Favour. If he write his Law in our Heart, he will be to us a God, and we shall be to him a People; from the Mercy-seat he will teach us, there he will accept us, and shew himself merciful to our Unrighteousnesses, and under the shadow of his Wings we shall be safe and easy.

10 And he made the table of shittim-wood; two cubits was the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. 11 And he overlaid it with pure gold, and made thereunto a crown of gold round about. 12 Also he made thereunto a border of an hand breadth, round about; and made a crown of gold for the border thereof, round about. 13 And he cast for it four rings of gold, and put the rings upon the four corners that were in the four feet thereof. 14 Over against the border were the rings, the places for the staves, to bear the table. 15 And he made the staves of shittim-wood, and overlaid them with gold, to bear the table. 16 And he made the vessels which were upon the table, his dishes, and his spoons, and his bowls, and his covers to cover withal, of pure gold. 17 And he made the candlestick of pure gold, of beaten work made he the candlestick, his shaft and his branch, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers were of the same. 18 And six branches going out of the sides thereof; three branches of the candlestick out of the one side thereof, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side thereof. 19 Three bowls made after the fashion of almonds, in one branch, a knop and a flower; and three bowls made like almonds, in another branch, a knop and a flower: so throughout the six branches, going out of the candlestick. 20 And in the candlestick were four bowls made like almonds, his knops and his flowers. 21 And a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, according to the six branches going out of it. 22 Their knops and their branches were of the same: all of it was one beaten work of pure

pure gold. 23 And he made his seven lamps, and his snuffers, and his snuff-dishes, of pure gold. 24 Of a talent of pure gold made he it, and all the vessels thereof.

Here's, 1. The making of the *Tables*, on which the *Shew-Bread* was to be continually placed: God is a good Householder, that always keeps a plentiful Table. Is the World his Tabernacle? His Providence in it spreads a Table for all the Creatures; he *provideth Food for all Flesh*. Is the Church his Tabernacle? His Grace in it spreads a Table for all Believers, furnished with the Bread of Life. But observe how much the Dispensation of the Gospel exceeds that of the Law. Tho' here was a Table furnished, 'twas only with *Shew-Bread*, Bread to be looked upon, not to be fed upon, while it was on this Table, and afterwards only by the Priests; but to the Table Christ has spread in the New Covenant, all good Christians are invited Guests, and to them it is said, *Eat, O Friends, come eat of my Bread*: What the Law gave but a sight of at a distance, the Gospel gives the enjoyment of, and a hearty welcome to.

2. The making of the *Candlestick*, which was not of Wood overlaid with Gold, but all *beaten Work of pure Gold only*, v. 17, 22. This signified that Light of Divine Revelation, with which God's Church upon Earth (which is his Tabernacle among Men) hath always been enlightened, being always supplied with fresh Oil from Christ, the good Olive, *Zeck. 4. 2, 3*. God's Manifestations of himself in this World are but *Candle-light*, compared with the *Day-light* of the future State. The Bible is a Golden Candlestick, 'tis of *pure Gold*, *Psal. 19. 10*. from it Light is diffused to every part of God's Tabernacle, that by it his spiritual Priests may see to minister unto the Lord, and to do the Service of his Sanctuary. This Candlestick has not only its *Bowls* for necessary Use, but its *Knops and Flowers* for Ornament, many things which God saw fit to beautify his Word with, which we can no more give a reason for, than for these *Knops and Flowers*, and yet must be sure they were added for good purpose. Let us bless God for this Candlestick, have an eye to it continually, and dread the Removal of it out of its Place.

25 And he made the incense altar of shittim-wood; the length of it was a cubit, and the breadth of it a cubit, (it was four-square) and two cubits was the height of it: the horns thereof were of the same. 26 And he overlaid it with pure gold, both the top of it, and the sides thereof round about, and the horns of it: also he made unto it a crown of gold round about. 27 And he made two rings of gold for it, under the crown thereof, by the two corners of it, upon the two sides thereof, to be places for the staves to bear it withal. 28 And he made the staves of shittim-wood, and overlaid them with gold. 29 And he made the holy anointing oil, and the pure incense of sweet spices, according to the work of the apothecary.

Here's, 1. The making of the golden Altar, on which Incense was to be burnt daily: which signified both the Prayers of Saints, and the Intercession of Christ, to which is owing the Acceptableness and Success of those Prayers. The Rings, and Staves, and all the Appurtenances of this Altar, were overlaid with Gold, as all the Vessels of the Table and Candlestick were of Gold, for these were used in the Holy Place. God is the best, and we must serve him with the best we have; but the best we can serve him with in his Courts on Earth, is but as *Brass*, compared with the *Gold*, the sinless and spotless Perfection with which his Saints shall serve him in his Holy Place above.

2. The preparing of the Incense, which was to be burnt upon this Altar, and with it the holy anointing Oil, v. 29. according to that Dispensatory, *Chap. 30. 22, etc.* God taught Bezaleel this Art also; so that tho' he was not before acquainted with it, yet he made up these things according to the Work of the Apothecary, as dextrously and exactly as if he had been bred up to the Trade. Where God gives Wisdom and Grace, it will make the Man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished to every good Work.

C H A P. XXXVIII.

Here's an Account, 1. Of the making of the brazen Altar, v. 1—7. and the Laver, v. 8. 2. The preparing of the Hangings for the insides of the Court in which the Tabernacle was to stand, v. 9—20. 3. A summary Account of the Gold, Silver, and Brass that was contributed to, and used in the preparing of the Tabernacle, v. 21—31.

1 AND he made the altar of burnt-offering of shittim-wood: five cubits was the length thereof and five cubits the breadth thereof, (it was four-square) and three cubits the height thereof. 2. And he made the horns thereof on the four corners of it; the horns thereof were of the same, and he overlaid it with brass. 3 And he made all the vessels of the altar, the pots, and the shovels, and the basons, and the flesh-hooks, and the fire-pans: all the vessels thereof made he of brass. 4 And he made for the altar a brazen gate of net-work, under the compass thereof, beneath unto the midst of it. 5 And he cast four rings for the four ends of the grate of brass, to be places for the staves. 6 And he made the staves of shittim-wood, and overlaid them with brass. 7 And he put the staves into the rings on the sides of the altar, to bear it withal; he made the altar hollow with boards. 8 And he made the laver of brass, and the foot of it, of brass, of the looking-glasses of the women assembling, which assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

Bezaleel having finished the *Gold Work*, which tho' the richest, yet was ordered to lie most out of sight, in the Tabernacle itself, here goes on to prepare the Court, which lay open to the view of all. Two things the Court was furnished with, and both made of Brass.

1. An Altar of *Burnt-Offering*, v. 1—7. On this all their Sacrifices were offered, and this was it, which being sanctified itself for this purpose by the Divine Appointment, *sanctified the Gift*, that was in Faith offered on it. Christ was himself the Altar to his own Sacrifice of Atonement, and so he is to all our Sacrifices of Acknowledgment. We must have an eye to him in offering them, as God hath in accepting them.

2. A Laver, to hold Water for the Priests to wash in, when they went in to minister, v. 8. This signified the Provision that is made in the Gospel of Christ for the cleansing of our Souls from the moral Pollution of Sin, by the Merit and Grace of Christ, that we may be fit to serve the Holy God in Holy Duties. This is here said to be made of the *Looking-Glasses* (or Mirrors) of the Women that assembled at the Door of the Tabernacle. 1. It should seem these Women were eminent and exemplary for Devotion, attending more frequently and seriously at the Place of publick Worship than others did, and notice is here taken of it to their Honour. Anna was such a one long after, who departed not from the Temple, but served God with Fasting and Prayers night and day, *Luke 2. 37*. It seems in every Age of the Church there have been some that have thus distinguished themselves by their serious zealous Piety, and they have thereby dignified themselves, for *devout Women* are really *honourable Women*, *Acts 13. 50*. and not the less so, for their being called by the Scoffers of the latter Days *silly Women*. Probably these Women here were such as shewed their Zeal upon this occasion, by assisting in the Work that was now doing, for the Service of the Tabernacle. They assembled by Troops; so the word is: A blessed Sight! to see so many, and those so zealous, and so unanimous in this good Work. 2. These Women parted with their *Looking-Glasses*, which were of the finest Brass, burnished for that purpose, for the use of the Tabernacle. Those Women that admire their own Beauty, are in love with their own Shadow, and make the putting on of Apparel their chief adorning, by which they value and recommend themselves, could of any thing ill spare their *Looking-Glasses*, yet these Women offered them to God: Either, (1.) In token of their Repentance for the former Abuse of them to the Support of their Pride and Vanity; now they were convinced of their Folly, and had devoted themselves to the Service of God, at the Door of the Tabernacle, they thus threw away that which, tho' lawful and useful in itself, yet had been an occasion of Sin to them. Thus *Mary Magdalen*, that had been a Sinner, when she became a Penitent, wiped Christ's Feet with her Hair. Or, (2.) In token of their great Zeal for the Work of the Tabernacle, rather than the Workmen should want Brass, or not have of the best, they would part with their *Looking-Glasses*, tho' they could not well be without them. God's Service and Glory must always be preferred by us before any Satisfaction or Accommodations of our own. Let us never complain of the Want of that, which we may honour God by parting with. 3. These *Looking-Glasses* were used for the making of the Laver; either they were artfully joined together, or else molten down and cast anew,

anew: but 'tis probable the Laver was so brightly burnished, that the Sides of it still served for Looking-Glasses, that the Priests, when they came to wash, might there see their Faces, and so discover the Spots, and wash them clean. *Note*, In the washing of Repentance there is need of the Looking-Glass of Self-Examination. The Word of God is a Glass, in which we may see our own Faces; see *James* 1. 23. and with it we must compare our own Hearts and Lives; that finding out our Blemishes, we may wash with particular Sorrow, and Application of the Blood of Christ to our Souls. Usually the more particular we are in the Confession of Sin, the more Comfort we have in the Sense of the Pardon.

9 And he made the court; on the south-side south-ward, the hangings of the court were of fine twined linen, an hundred cubits: 10 Their pillars were twenty, and their brazen sockets twenty: the hooks of the pillars, and their fillets, were of silver. 11 And for the north-side, the hangings were an hundred cubits, their pillars were twenty, and their sockets of brass twenty: the hooks of the pillars, and their fillets, of silver. 12 And for the west-side were hangings of fifty cubits, their pillars ten, and their sockets ten: the hooks of the pillars, and their fillets, of silver. 13 And for the east-side east-ward fifty cubits. 14 The hangings of the one side of the gate were fifteen cubits, their pillars three, and their sockets three. 15 And for the other side of the court-gate, on this hand and that hand, were hangings of fifteen cubits, their pillars three, and their sockets three. 16 All the hangings of the court round about, were of fine twined linen. 17 And the sockets for the pillars were of brass; the hooks of the pillars, and their fillets, of silver, and the overlaying of their chapiters of silver; and all the pillars of the court were filleted with silver. 18 And the hanging for the gate of the court was needle-work, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen: and twenty cubits was the length, and the height in the breadth was five cubits, answerable to the hangings of the court. 19 And their pillars were four, and their sockets of brass four, their hooks of silver, and the overlaying of their chapiters, and their fillets, of silver. 20 And all the pins of the tabernacle, and of the court round about, were of brass.

The Walls of the Court, or Church-yard, were like the rest, Curtains, or Hangings, made according to the Appointment, Chap. 27. 9. &c. This represented the State of the Old-Testament-Church, 'twas a Garden enclosed; the Worshipers were then confined to a little Compass: But the Inclosure being of Curtains only, intimated that that Confinement of the Church to one particular Nation was not to be perpetual. The Dispensation itself was a Tabernacle-Dispensation, movable and mutable, and in due time to be taken down, and folded up, when the Place of the Tent should be enlarged, and its Cord lengthened, to make room for the Gentile World, as is foretold, *Isa.* 54. 2, 3. The Church here on Earth is but the Court of God's House, and happy they that tread these Courts, and flourish in them; but through these Courts we are passing to the Holy Place above: Blessed are they that dwell in that House of God, they will be still praising him. The inclosing of a Court before the Tabernacle, teacheth us a gradual Approach to God. The Priests that ministered must pass through the Holy Court, before they entered the Holy House. Thus before solemn Ordinances, there ought to be the separated and inclosed Court of a solemn Preparation, in which we must wash our Hands, and so draw near with a true Heart.

21 This is the sum of the tabernacle, even of the tabernacle of testimony, as it was counted, according to the commandment of Moses, for the service of the Levites, by the hand of Ithamar, son to Aaron the priest. 22 And Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, made all that the LORD commanded Moses. 23 And with him was Aholiab, son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, an engraver, and a cunning workman, and

an embroiderer in blue, and in purple, and in scarlet, and fine linen. 24 All the gold that was occupied for the work, in all the work of the holy place, even the gold of the offering, was twenty and nine talents, and seven hundred and thirty shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary. 25 And the silver of them that were numbred of the congregation, was an hundred talents, and a thousand seven hundred and threescore and fifteen shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary. 26 A bekah for every man, that is, half a shekel, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for every one that went to be numbred, from twenty years old and upward, for six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty men. 27 And of the hundred talents of silver, were cast the sockets of the sanctuary, and the sockets of the veil; an hundred sockets of the hundred talents, a talent for a socket. 28 And of the thousand seven hundred seventy and five shekels, he made hooks for the pillars, and overlaid their chapiters, and filleted them. 29 And the brass of the offering was seventy talents, and two thousand and four hundred shekels. 30 And therewith he made the sockets to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the brazen altar, and the brazen grate for it, and all the vessels of the altar. 31 And the sockets of the court round about, and the sockets of the court-gate, and all the pins of the tabernacle, and all the pins of the court round about.

Here we have a Breviate of the Account, which by Moses's Appointment the Levites took and kept of the Gold, Silver, and Brass, that was brought in for the Tabernacle's Use, and how it was employed. Ithamar, the Son of Aaron, was appointed to draw up this Account, who was thus by lesser Services trained up and fitted for greater, v. 23. Bezaleel and Aholiab must bring in the Account, v. 22, 23. and Ithamar must audit it, and give it in to Moses. And it was thus:

1. All the Gold was a Free-will Offering, every Man brought as he could and would; and it amounted to twenty-nine Talents, and seven hundred and thirty Shekels over; which some compute to about one hundred and fifty thousand Pounds worth of Gold, according to the present Value of it. Of this was made all the golden Furniture and Vessels.

2. The Silver was levied by way of Tax, every Man was assessed half a Shekel, a kind of Poll-money; this amounted in the whole to a hundred Talents, and one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five Shekels over, v. 25, 26. Of this they made the Sockets; into which the Boards of the Tabernacle were let, and on which they rested; so that they were as the Foundations of the Tabernacle, v. 26, 27. The Silver amounted to about thirty-four thousand Pound of our Money. The raising of the Gold by voluntary Contribution, and of the Silver by way of Tribute, shews that either way may be taken for the defraying of publick Expenses, provided that nothing be done with Partiality.

3. The Brass, tho' less valuable, was of use not only for the brazen Altar, but the Sockets of the Court, which probably in other Tents were of Wood; but it is promised, *Isa.* 60. 17. for Wood I will bring Brass. See how liberal the People were, and how faithful the Workmen were; both which ought to be followed as good Examples.

C H A P. XXXIX.

This Chapter gives us an account of the finishing of the Work of the Tabernacle.

1. The last thing prepared was the Holy Garments. The Ephod, and its curious Girdle, v. 1—5. The Onyx Stones for the Shoulders, v. 6, 7. The Breast-plate, with the precious Stones in it, v. 8—21. The Robe of the Ephod, v. 22—26. The Coats, Bonnets, and Breeches for the inferior Priests, v. 27—29. And the Plate of the Holy Crown, v. 30, 31.
2. A summary Account of the whole Work, as it was presented to Moses when it was all finished, v. 32—43.

AND of the blue, and purple, and scarlet, they made clothes of service, to do service in the holy place, and made the holy garments for Aaron; as the LORD commanded Moses. 2 And he made the ephod, of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet,

scarlet, and fine twined linen. 3 And they did beat the gold into thin plates, and cut it into wires; to work it in the blue, and in the purple, and in the scarlet, and in the fine linen, with cunning work. 4 They made shoulder-pieces for it, to couple it together by the two edges was it coupled together. 5 And the curious girdle of his ephod that was upon it, was of the same according to the work thereof; of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen; as the LORD commanded Moses. 6 And they wrought onyx-stones enclosed in ouches of gold, graven as signets are graven, with the names of the children of Israel. 7 And he put them on the shoulders of the ephod, that they should be stones for a memorial to the children of Israel; as the LORD commanded Moses. 8 And he made the breast-plate of cunning work, like the work of the ephod; of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen. 9 It was four-square, they made the breast-plate double: a span was the length thereof, and a span the breadth thereof being doubled. 10 And they set it in four rows of stones; the first row was a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle: this was the first row. 11 And the second row, an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. 12 And the third row, a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst. 13 And the fourth row, a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper: they were enclosed in ouches of gold in their inclosings. 14 And the stones were according to the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, like the engravings of a signet, every one with his name, according to the twelve tribes. 15 And they made upon the breast-plate chains, at the ends, of wreathen work of pure gold. 16 And they made two ouches of gold, and two gold rings; and put the two rings in the two ends of the breast-plate. 17 And they put the two wreathen chains of gold in the two rings on the ends of the breast-plate. 18 And the two ends of the two wreathen chains they fastened in the two ouches, and put them on the shoulder-pieces of the ephod, before it. 19 And they made two rings of gold, and put them on the two ends of the breast-plate, upon the border of it, which was on the side of the ephod inward. 20 And they made two other golden rings, and put them on the two sides of the ephod underneath, toward the fore-part of it, over against the other coupling thereof, above the curious girdle of the ephod. 21 And they did bind the breast-plate by his rings unto the rings of the ephod, with a lace of blue, that it might be above the curious girdle of the ephod, and that the breast-plate might not be loosed from the ephod; as the LORD commanded Moses. 22 And he made the robe of the ephod of woven work, all of blue. 23 And there was a hole in the midst of the robe, as the hole of an habergeon, with a band round about the hole, that it should not rent. 24 And they made upon the hems of the robe, pomegranates of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and twined linen. 25 And they made bells of pure gold, and put the bells between the pomegranates, upon the hem of the robe, round about between the pomegranates. 26 A bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate, round about the hem of the robe to minister in; as the LORD commanded Moses. 27 And they made coats of fine linen, of woven work, for Aaron and for his sons. 28 And a mitre of fine linen, and goodly bonnets of fine linen, and linen breeches of fine twined linen. 29 And a girdle of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, of needle-work; as the LORD commanded Moses. 30 And they made the plate of

the holy crown, of pure gold, and wrote upon it a writing, like to the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. 31 And they tied unto it a lace of blue, to fasten it on high upon the mitre; as the LORD commanded Moses.

In this Account of the making of the Priests Garments, according to the Instructions given, Chap. 28. we may observe, 1. That the Priests Garments are called here *Clothes of Service*; v. 1. Note, Those that wear Robes of Honour must look upon them as Clothes of Service; for those upon whom Honour is put, from them Service is expected. 'Tis said of those that are arrayed in white Robes, that they are before the Throne of God, and serve him day and night in his Temple; Rev. 7. 13, 14. Holy Garments were not made for Men to sleep in, or to strut in, but to do service in, and then they are indeed for Glory and Beauty. The Son of Man himself came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. 2. That all the six Paragraphs here, which give a distinct Account of the making of these Holy Garments, conclude with those words, as the Lord commanded Moses, v. 5, 7, 21, 26, 29, 31. The like is not in any of the foregoing Accounts, as if in these more than any other of the Appurtenances of the Tabernacle, they had a particular regard to the Divine Appointment, both for Warrant and for Direction. 'Tis an Intimation to all the Lord's Ministers to make the Word of God their Rule in all their Ministrations, and to act in observance of, and obedience to the Command of God. 3. That these Garments, in conformity to the rest of the Furniture of the Tabernacle, were very rich and splendid: The Church in its Infancy was thus taught, thus pleased with the Rudiments of this World; but now under the Gospel, which is the Ministration of the Spirit, to affect and impose such pompous Habits as the Church of Rome doth, under pretence of Decency and Instruction, is to betray the Liberty wherewith Christ has made free, and to entangle the Church again in the Bondage of those carnal Ordinances, which were imposed only till the time of Reformation. 4. That they were all Shadows of good things to come, but the Substance is Christ, and the Grace of the Gospel; when therefore the Substance is come, 'tis a jest to be fond of the Shadow. (1.) Christ is our great High Priest; he put upon him the Clothes of Service when he undertook the Work of our Redemption. Arrayed himself with the Gifts and Graces of the Spirit, which he received not by Measure. Girded himself with the curious Girdle of Resolution to go through with his Undertaking. Charged himself with all God's spiritual Israel, bare them on his Shoulders, carried them in his Bosom, laid them near his Heart, engraved them on the Palms of his Hands, and presented them in the Breast-plate of Judgment unto his Father. And (lastly) he crowned himself with Holiness to the Lord, consecrating his whole Undertaking to the Honour of his Father's Holiness. Now consider how great this Man is. (2.) True Believers are spiritual Priests. The clean Linen with which all their Clothes of Service must be made, is the Righteousness of Saints, Rev. 19. 8. and Holiness to the Lord must be so written upon their Foreheads, that all who converse with them may see and say, that they bear the Image of God's Holiness, and are devoted to the Praise of it.

31 Thus was all the work of the Tabernacle of the tent of the congregation finished: and the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so did they. 32 And they brought the Tabernacle unto Moses, the tent, and all his furniture, his taches, his boards, his bars, and his pillars, and his sockets, 33 And the covering of rams skins dyed red, and the covering of badgers skins, and the veil of the covering, 34 The ark of the testimony, and the staves thereof, and the mercy-seat, 35 The table, and all the vessels thereof, and the shew-bread, 36 The pure candlestick, with the lamps thereof, even with the lamps to be set in order, and all the vessels thereof, and the oil for light, 37 And the golden altar, and the anointing oil, and the sweet incense, and the hanging for the Tabernacle door, 38 The brazen altar, and his gate of brass, his staves, and all his vessels, the laver and his foot, 39 The hangings of the court, his pillars, and his sockets, and the hanging for the court-gate, his cords, and his pins, and all the vessels of the service of the Tabernacle, for the tent of the congregation, 40 The clothes of service to do

service in the holy place, and the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and his sons garments to minister in the priest's office. 42 According to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so the children of Israel made all the work. 43 And Moses did look upon all the work, and behold, they had done it as the LORD had commanded, even so had they done it: And Moses blessed them.

Observe here, 1. That the Builders of the Tabernacle made very good Dispatch. 'Twas not much more than five Months from the beginning to the finishing of it. Tho' there was a great deal of fine Work about it, such as useth to be the Work of Time, Embroidering, and Engraving, not only in Gold, but in precious Stones, yet they went through with it in a little time. Church-Work useth to be slow Work, but they made quick Work of this, and yet did it with the greatest Exactness imaginable. For, (1.) Many Hands were employed, all unanimous, and not vying with each other. This expedited the Business, and made it easy. (2.) The Workmen were taught of God, and so were kept from making Blunders, which would have retarded them. (3.) The People were hearty and zealous in the Work, and impatient till it was finished. God had prepared their Hearts, and then the thing was done suddenly, 2 Chron. 29. 36. Resolution and Industry, and a cheerful Application of Mind, will, by the Grace of God, bring a great deal of good Work to pass in a little time; less than one would expect. 2. That they punctually observed their Orders, and did not in the least vary from them. They did it according to all that the Lord commanded Moses, v. 32, 42. Note, God's Work must be done in every thing according to his own Will. His Institutions neither need nor admit Mens Inventions to make them either more beautiful, or more likely to answer the Intentions of them. Add thou not unto his Words: God is pleased with willing Worship, but not with Will-Worship. 3. That they brought all their Work to Moses, and submitted it to his Inspection and Censure, v. 33: He knew what he had ordered them to make, and now the Particulars were called over, and all produced, that Moses might see both that they had made all, and omitted nothing, and that they had made all according to the Instructions given them; and that, if they had made a mistake in any thing, it might be forthwith rectified. Thus they shewed respect to Moses, who was set over them in the Lord; not objecting, that Moses did not understand such Work, and therefore, why should they submit it to his Judgment? No, that God who gave them so much Knowledge as to do the Work, gave them also so much Humility, as to be willing to have it examined, and compared with the Model. Moses was in Authority, and they would pay a deference to his Place; The Spirit of the Prophets is subject to the Prophets. And besides, tho' they knew how to do the Work better than Moses, Moses had a better and more exact Idea of the Model than they had, and therefore they could not be well pleased with their own Work, unless they had his Approbation. Thus in all the Services of Religion, we should labour to be accepted of the Lord. 4. That Moses upon search found all done according to the Rule, v. 43. Moses, both for their Satisfaction, and for his own, did look upon all the Work, piece by piece, and behold they had done it according to the Pattern shewed him; for the same that shewed him the Pattern, guided their Hand in the Work. All the Copies of God's Grace exactly agree with the Original of his Counsels: what God works in us, and by us, is the fulfilling of the Good-pleasure of his own Goodness; and when the Mystery of God shall be finished, and all his Performances come to be compared with his Purposes, it will appear, that behold, all is done according to the Counsel of his own Will, not one iota or tittle of which shall fall to the ground, or be varied from. 5. That Moses blessed them.

(1.) He commended them, and signified his Approbation of all they had done. He did not find fault where there was none, as some do, who think they disparage their own Judgment, if they do not find something amiss in the best and most accomplished Performance. In all this Work 'tis probable there might have been found here and there a stitch amiss, and a stroke awry, which would have served for an over-curious and censorious Critick to animadvert upon; but Moses had too good an eye to spy small Faults, where there were no great ones. Note, All Governours must be a Praise to them that do well, and not only a Terror to Evil-doers; why should any take a pride in being hard to be pleased? (2.) He not only praised them, but prayed for them: He blessed them as one having Authority, for the less is blessed of the better. We read not of any Wages Moses paid them for their Work, but this Blessing he gave them. For tho' ordinarily the Labourer be worthy of his Hire, yet in this case, (1.) They wrought for themselves. The Honour and Comfort of God's Tabernacle among them would be Recompense enough; If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself. (2.) They had their Meas-

from Heaven on Free-coit, for themselves and their Families, and their Raiment waxed not old upon them; so that they neither needed Wages, nor had reason to expect any. Freely ye have received, freely give. The Obligations we lie under both in Duty and Interest to serve God, are sufficient to quicken us to our Work, tho' we had not a Reward in prospect. But, (3.) This Blessing in the Name of the Lord was Wages enough for all their Work. Those whom God employs, he will bless; and those whom he blesteth, they are blessed indeed. The Blessing he commands is Life for evermore.

CHAP. XL.

In this Chapter, 1. Orders are given for the setting up of the Tabernacle, and the fixing of all the Appurtenances of it in their proper Places, v. 1-8. and the consecrating of it, v. 8-15. and of the Priests, v. 12-15. 1. Care taken so do all this, and as when it was appointed to be done, v. 16-33. 3. God's taking possession of it by the Cloud, v. 34-38.

1 AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 On the first day of the first month shalt thou set up the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation; 3 And thou shalt put therein the ark of the testimony, and cover the ark with the veil: 4 And thou shalt bring in the table, and set in order the things that are to be set in order upon it, and thou shalt bring in the candlestick, and light the lamps thereof. 5 And thou shalt set the altar of gold for the incense before the ark of the testimony, and put the hanging of the door to the tabernacle. 6 And thou shalt set the altar of the burnt-offering, before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation. 7 And thou shalt set the laver between the tent of the congregation, and the altar, and shalt put water therein. 8 And thou shalt set up the court round about, and hang up the hanging at the court-gate. 9 And thou shalt take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle, and all that is therein, and thou shalt hallow it, and all the vessels thereof: and it shall be holy. 10 And thou shalt anoint the altar of the burnt-offering, and all his vessels, and sanctify the altar: and it shall be an altar most holy. 11 And thou shalt anoint the laver and his foot, and sanctify it. 12 And thou shalt bring Aaron and his sons unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and wash them with water. 13 And thou shalt put upon Aaron the holy garments, and anoint him, and sanctify him; that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. 14 And thou shalt bring his sons, and clothe them with coats: 15 And thou shalt anoint them, as thou didst anoint their father, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office: for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood, throughout their generations.

The Materials and Furniture of the Tabernacle had been viewed severally, and approved, and now they must be put together. 1. God here directs Moses to set up the Tabernacle, and the Utenils of it, in their Places. Tho' the Work of the Tabernacle was finished, and every thing ready for rearing, and the People, no doubt, very desirous to see it up, yet Moses will not do it till he has express Orders for the doing of it. 'Tis good to see God going before us in every step, Psal. 37. 23. The time for doing this is fixed to the first Day of the first Month, v. 2. which wanted but fourteen Days of a Year since they came out of Egypt; and a good Year's Work there was done in it. Probably the Work was made ready but just at the end of the Year, so that the appointing of this Day gave no Delay, or next none to this good Work. We must not put off any necessary Duty under pretence of waiting for some remarkable Day, the present Season is the most convenient; but the Tabernacle happening to be set up on the first Day of the first Month, intimates, That it is good to begin the Year with some good Work. Let him that is the first have the first, and let the things of his Kingdom be first sought. In Hezekiah's time we find they began to sanctify the Temple on the first Day of the first Month, 2 Chron. 29. 17. The new Moon (which by their Computation was the first Day of every Month) was observed by them with some Solemnity,

lemnity, and therefore this first new Moon of the Year was thus made remarkable. *Note.* When a new Year begins, we should think of serving God more and better than we did the Year before.

Moses is particularly ordered to set up the Tabernacle itself first, in which God would dwell, and would be served, v. 2. then to put the Ark in its place, and draw the Veil before it, v. 3. then to fix the Table, and the Candlestick, and the Altar of Incense, without the Veil, v. 4, 5. and to fix the Hanging of the Door before the Door. Then in the Court he must place the Altar of Burnt-offering, and the Laver, v. 6, 7. And lastly, he must set up the Curtains of the Court, and a Hanging for a Court-gate. And all this would be easily done in one day; many hands, no doubt, being employ'd in it, under the Direction of Moses.

2. He directs Moses, when he had set up the Tabernacle and all the Furniture of it, to consecrate it and them, by anointing them with the Oil which was prepared for the purpose, Chap. 30. 16, &c. 'Twas there ordered that this should be done, here it was ordered that it should be done now, v. 9, 10, 11. Observe, Every thing was sanctified when it was put in its proper place, and not till then; for till then it was not fit for the Use to which it was to be sanctified. As every thing is beautiful in its Season, so is every thing in its Place.

3. He directs him to consecrate Aaron and his Sons; when the Goods were brought into God's House, they were marked first, and then Servants were hired to bear the Vessels of the Lord, and they must be clean who were put into that Office, v. 12, 13, 14, 15. The Law which was now ordered to be put in execution, we had before, Chap. 29. Thus in the visible Church, which is God's Tabernacle among Men, 'tis requisite there be Ministers to keep the Charge of the Sanctuary, and that they receive the anointing.

16 Thus did Moses: according to all that the LORD commanded him, so did he. 17 And it came to pass, in the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was reared up. 18 And Moses reared up the tabernacle, and fastened his sockets, and set up the boards thereof, and put in the bars thereof, and reared up his pillars. 19 And he spread abroad the tent over the tabernacle, and put the covering of the tent above upon it; as the LORD commanded Moses. 20 And he took and put the testimony into the ark, and set the staves on the ark, and put the mercy-seat above upon the ark. 21 And he brought the ark into the tabernacle, and set up the veil of the covering, and covered the ark of the testimony; as the LORD commanded Moses. 22 And he put the table in the tent of the congregation, upon the side of the tabernacle northward, without the veil. 23 And he set the bread in order upon it before the LORD; as the LORD had commanded Moses. 24 And he put the candlestick in the tent of the congregation, over against the table, on the side of the tabernacle southward. 25 And he lighted the lamps before the LORD; as the LORD commanded Moses. 26 And he put the golden altar in the tent of the congregation, before the veil. 27 And he burnt sweet incense thereon, as the LORD commanded Moses. 28 And he set up the hanging at the door of the tabernacle. 29 And he put the altar of burnt offering by the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation, and offered upon it the burnt-offering, and the meat-offering; as the LORD commanded Moses. 30 And he set the laver between the tent of the congregation and the altar, and put water there, to wash withal. 31 And Moses, and Aaron and his sons, washed their hands and their feet thereat. 32 When they went into the tent of the congregation, and when they came near unto the altar, they washed; as the LORD commanded Moses. 33 And he reared up the court round about the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the hanging of the court-gate: so Moses finished the work.

When the Tabernacle, and the Furniture of it, were prepared, they did not put off the rearing of it till they came to Canaan; tho' they now hoped to be there very shortly, but in obedience to the Will of God, they set it up in the midst of their Camp, while they were in the Wilderness. Those that are unsettled in the World, must not think that that will excuse them in their continued Irreligion; as if it were time enough to begin to serve God; when they begin to be settled in the World: No, a Tabernacle for God is a very needful and profitable Companion even in a Wilderness, especially considering that our Carcasses may fall in that Wilderness, and we may be fixed in another World, before we come to fix in this.

The rearing of the Tabernacle was a good Day's Work, the consecrating of it, and of the Priests, was done some Days after. Here we have an account only of that New Year's Day's Work. 1. Moses not only did all that God directed him to do, but in the Order that God appointed; for God will be fought in the due Order. 2. To each particular there is added an express Reference to the Divine Appointment, which Moses governed himself by as carefully and conscientiously as the Workman did; and therefore, as before, so here it is oft repeated, as the Lord commanded Moses, seven times in less than fourteen Verses. Moses himself, as great a Man as he was, would not pretend to vary from the Institution, neither to add to it, nor diminish from it in the least Particlar. They that command others, must remember that their Master also is in Heaven, and they must do as they are commanded. 3. That which was to be veiled, he veiled, v. 21. and that which was to be used immediately for the Instruction of the Priests, that by seeing him do the several Offices, they might learn to do them the more dextrously. Tho' Moses was not properly a Priest, yet he is numbered among the Priests, Psal. 99. 6. and the Jewish Writers call him the Priest of the Priests. What he did, he did by special Warrant and Direction from God, rather as a Prophet or Lawgiver, than as a Priest. He set the Wheels a going, and then left the Work in the hands of the appointed Ministry. (1.) When he had placed the Table, he set the Shew-bread in order upon it, v. 23. for God will never have his Table unfurnished. (2.) As soon as he had fixed the Candlestick, he lighted the Lamps before the Lord, v. 25. Even that dark Dispensation would not admit of unlighted Candles. (3.) The golden Altar being put in its place, immediately he burnt sweet Incense thereon, v. 27. for God's Altar must be a smoking Altar. (4.) The Altar of Burnt-offering was no sooner set up in the Court of the Tabernacle, but he had a Burnt-offering, and a Meat-offering, ready to offer upon it, v. 29. Some think, tho' this be mentioned here, it was not done till some time after; but it seems to me that he presently began the Ceremony of its Consecration, tho' it was not completed in seven Days. (5.) At the Laver likewise, when he had fixed that, Moses himself washed his Hands and Feet. Thus in all these Instances, he not only shewed the Priests how to do the Duty, but has taught us, That God's Gifts are intended for use, and not barely for shew. Tho' the Altars, and Table, and Candlestick, were fresh and new, he did not say it was pity to sully them; no, he handled them immediately. Talents were given to be occupied, not to be buried.

34 Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. 35 And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. 36 And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys: 37 But if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not, till the day that it was taken up. 38 For the cloud of the LORD was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.

As when in the Creation God had finished this Earth, which he designed for Man's Habitation, he made Man, and put him in possession of it; so when Moses had finished the Tabernacle, which was designed for God's Dwelling-place among Men, God came and took possession of it. The Shechinah, the Divine Eternal Word, tho' not yet made Flesh, yet as a Prelude to that, came and dwelt among them, John 1. 14. This was henceforward the Place of his Throne, and the Place of the Soles of his Feet, Ezek. 43. 7. here he resided, here he ruled. By the visible Tokens of God's coming among them, to take possession of the Tabernacle, he testified both the Return of his Favour to them, which they had forfeited by

the golden Calf, Chap. 33. 7. and his gracious Acceptance of all the Expence they had been at, and all the Care and Pains they had taken about the Tabernacle. Thus God owned them, shewed himself well pleased with what they had done, and abundantly rewarded them. *Note*, God will dwell with those that prepare him a Habitation. The broken and contrite Heart, the clean and holy Heart, that is furnished for his Service, and devoted to his Honour, shall be his Rest for ever; here will Christ dwell by Faith, Eph. 3. 17. Where God has a Throne and an Altar in the Soul, there is a living Temple. And God will be sure to own and crown the Operations of his own Grace, and the Observance of his own Appointments.

As God has manifested himself upon Mount Sinai, so he did now in this new-erected Tabernacle. We read, Chap. 24. 16. that the Glory of the Lord abode upon Mount Sinai, which is said to be like devouring Fire, v. 17. and that the Cloud covered that Glory: Accordingly when God descended to take possession of his House, the Cloud covered it on the outside, and the Glory of the Lord filled it within; to which, probably there is an Allusion, Zach. 2. 5. where God promiseth to be a Wall of Fire round about Jerusalem, (and the Pillar of Cloud was by Night a Pillar of Fire) and the Glory in the midst of her. 1. The Cloud covered the Tent, that same Cloud, which, as the Chariot, or Pavillion of the Shechinah, had come up before them out of Egypt, and had led them hither, now settled upon the Tabernacle, and hovered over it even in the hottest and clearest Day; for it was none of those Clouds which the Sun scatters. This Cloud was intended to be, (1.) A Token of God's Presence constantly visible Day and Night (v. 38.) to all Israel, even to those that lay in the remotest Corners of the Camp, that they might never again make a question of it, Is the Lord among us, or is he not? That very Cloud which had already been so pregnant of Wonders in the Red Sea, and on Mount Sinai, sufficient to prove God in it of a truth, was continually in the sight of all the House of Israel throughout all their Journeys; so that they were inexcusable, if they believed not their own Eyes. (2.) A Concealment of the Tabernacle, and the Glory of God in it. God did indeed dwell among them, but he dwelt in a Cloud; Verily, thou art a God that hidest thyself: Blessed be God for the Gospel of Christ, in which we all with open face behold, as in a Glass, not as in a Cloud, the Glory of the Lord. (3.) A Protection of the Tabernacle: They had sheltered it with one Covering upon another, but after all, the Cloud that covered it was its best Guard. Those that dwell in the House of the Lord, are hid there, and are safe under the Divine Protection, Psal. 27. 4, 5. Yet this, which was then a peculiar Favour to the Taber-

nacle, is promised to every Dwelling-place of Mount Zion, Isa. 4. 5. for upon all the Glory shall be a Defence. (4.) A Guide to the Camp of Israel in their March thro' the Wilderness, v. 36, 37. While the Cloud continued on the Tabernacle, they rested, when it removed; they removed and followed it, as being purely under a Divine Conduct. This is spoken of more fully, Numb. 9. 15, &c. and mentioned with Thankfulness to the Glory of God long after, Neh. 9. 19 Psal. 78. 14. — 105. 39. As before the Tabernacle was set up, the Israelites had the Cloud for their Guide, which appeared sometimes in one place, and sometimes in another, but from henceforward rested on the Tabernacle, and was to be found there only; so the Church had Divine Revelation for its Guide from the first, before the Scriptures were written, but since the making up of that Canon, it rests in that as its Tabernacle, and there only it is to be found. As in the Creation, the Light which was made the first Day, centred in the Sun the fourth Day. Blessed be God for the Law and the Testimony. 2. The Glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle, v. 34, 35. The Shechinah now made an awful and pompous Entry into the Tabernacle, thro' the outer Part of it which it passed into the most Holy Place as the Presence-Chamber, and there seated itself between the Cherubims. 'Twas in Light and Fire, and for ought we know, no otherwise, that the Shechinah made itself visible: for God is Light, our God is a consuming Fire; with these the Tabernacle was now filled, yet as before the Bush, so now the Curtains were not consumed, or so much as singed by this Fire: for to those that have received the anointing, the terrible Majesty of God is not destroying. Yet now so dazzling was the Light, and so dreadful was the Fire, that Moses was not able to enter into the Tent of the Congregation, at the Door of which he attended, till the Splendor was a little abated, and the Glory of the Lord retired within the Veil, v. 35. This shews how terrible the Glory and Majesty of God is, and how unable the greatest and best of Men are to stand before him. The Divine Light and Fire, let forth in their full strength, will overpower the strongest Heads, and the purest Hearts. But what Moses could not do, in that he was weak through the Flesh, our Lord Jesus has done, whom God caused to draw near and approach; and as the Fore-runner, he is for us entered, and has invited us to come boldly even to the Mercy-seat. He was able to enter into the Holy Place not made with hands, Heb. 9. 24. Nay, he is himself the true Tabernacle, filled with the Glory of God, John 1. 14, even with that Divine Grace and Truth, which were figured by this Fire and Light. In him the Shechinah took up its Rest for ever, for in him dwells all the Fulness of the Godhead bodily. Blessed be God for Jesus Christ.



A N E X P O S I T I O N W I T H P R A C T I C A L O B S E R V A T I O N S, Upon the Third Book of *M O S E S*, called L E V I T I C U S.

There is nothing Historical in all this Book of Leviticus, except the Account it gives, Chap. 8, and 9. Of the Consecration of the Priesthood. Chap. 10. Of the Punishment of Nadab and Abihu, by the Hand of God, for offering strange Fire; and that of Shelomith's Son, by the Hand of the Magistrate, for Blasphemy, Chap. 24. Moses, concerning their Sacrifices and Offerings, their Meats and Drinks, and divers Washings, and other the Peculiarities, by which God set that People apart for himself, and distinguished them from other Nations: All which were Shadows of good things to come, which are realized and superseded by the Gospel of Christ——We call the Book Leviticus, from the Septuagint, because it contains the Laws and Ordinances of the Levitical Priesthood, (as it is called Heb. 7. 11.) and the Ministrations of it; the Levites were principally charged with these Institutions, both to do their part, and to teach the People theirs.——We read in the Close of the foregoing Book of the setting up of the Tabernacle, which was to be the Place of Worship: and as that was framed according to the Pattern, so must the Ordinances of Worship be, which were there to be administred. In these the Divine Appointment was as particular as in the former, and must be as punctually observed. The remaining Record of these abrogated Laws is of use to us, for the strengthening of our Faith in Jesus Christ, as the Lamb slain from the Foundation of the World; and for the Encrease of our Thankfulness to God, that by him we are freed from the Yoke of the Ceremonial Law, and live in the Times of Reformation.

C H A P. I.

This Book begins with the Laws concerning Sacrifices, of which the most antient were the Burnt-Offerings; about which God gives Moses Instructions in this Chapter: Orders are here given how that sort of Sacrifice must be managed. 1. If it were a Bullock out of the Herd, v. 3—9. 2. If it were a Sheep or Goat, a Lamb or Kid out of the Flock, v. 10—13. 3. If it were a Turtle-Dove or a young Pidgeon, v. 14—17. And whether the Offering were more or less valuable in itself, if it was offered with an upright Heart, according to these Laws, it was accepted of God.

1 **A**ND the LORD called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying, 2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man of you bring an offering unto the LORD, ye shall bring your offering of the cattel, *even* of the herd, and of the flock.

Observe here, 1. It is taken for granted, that People would be inclined to bring Offerings to the Lord. The very Light of Nature directs Man, some way or other, to do Honour to his Maker, and pay him Homage as his Lord: Revealed Religion supposeth Natural Religion. An Antient and Early Institution, since the Fall, had directed Men to glorify God by Sacrifice; which was an implicit Acknowledgment of their having received all from God as Creatures, and their having forfeited all to him as Sinners. A Conscience thoroughly convinced of Dependence and Guilt, would be willing to come before God with thousands of Rams, Mic. 6. 6. 2. Provision is made that Men should not indulge their own Fancies, nor become vain in their Imaginations and Inventions about their Sacrifices, lest while they pretend to honour God, they should really dishonour him, and do that which was unworthy of him. Every thing therefore is directed to be

done with a due Decorum, and by a certain Rule; and so as that the Sacrifices might be most significant, both of the great Sacrifice of Atonement which Christ was to offer in the Fulness of Time, and of the spiritual Sacrifices of Acknowledgment which Believers should offer daily. 3. God gave those Laws to Israel by Moses; nothing is more frequently repeated than this, The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the Children of Israel. God could have spoken it to the Children of Israel himself; as he did the ten Commandments, but he chose to deliver it to them by Moses; because they had desired he would no more speak to them himself, and he had designed that Moses should above all the Prophets be a Type of Christ, by whom God would in these last Days speak to us, Heb. 1. 1. By other Prophets God sent Messages to his People, but by Moses he gave them Laws; and therefore he was fit to typify him, to whom the Father hath given all Judgment. And besides, the Treasure of Divine Revelation was always to be put into earthen Vessels, that our Faith might be tried, and that the Excellency of the Power might be of God. 4. God spake to him out of the Tabernacle. As soon as ever the Shechinah had taken possession of its new Habitation, in token of the Acceptance of what was done, God talked with Moses from the Mercy Seat, while he attended without the Veil, or rather at the Door, hearing a Voice only; and 'tis probable he wrote what he heard at that time, to prevent any mistake, or slip of Memory in the Rehearsal of it. The Tabernacle was set up to be a Place of Communion between God and Israel; there, where they performed their Services to God, God revealed his Will to them: Thus by the Word and Prayer we now have Fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, Acts 6. 4. When we speak to God, we must be desirous to hear from him, and reckon it a great Favour that he is pleased to speak to us: The Lord called to Moses, not to come near; under that Dispensation even Moses must keep his distance: but to attend, and hearken to what should be said. A Letter less than ordinary in the Hebrew Word for called, the Jewish Criticks tell us, intimates, that God spake in a still small Voice. The Moral Law was given with Terror from a burning Mountain

in Thunder and Lightning; but the Remedial Law of Sacrifice was given more gently from a Mercy-seat; because that was typical of the Grace of the Gospel, which is the Ministration of Life and Peace.

3 If his offering be a burnt-sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD. 4 And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him. 5 And he shall kill the bullock before the LORD; and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 6 And he shall slay the burnt-offering, and cut it into his pieces. 7 And the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire upon the altar, and lay the wood in order upon the fire. 8 And the priests, Aaron's sons, shall lay the parts, the head and the fat, in order upon the wood that is on the fire, which is upon the altar. 9 But his inwards and his legs shall he wash in water: and the priest shall burn all on the altar, to be a burnt-sacrifice, an offering made by fire of a sweet savour unto the LORD.

If a Man were rich and could afford it, it is supposed that he would bring his Burnt-Sacrifice, with which he designed to honour God, out of his Herd of larger Cattle: He that considers that God is the best that is, will resolve to give him the best he has, else he gives him not the Glory due unto his Name. Now if a Man determined to kill a Beef, not for a Feast for his Family and Friends, but for a Sacrifice to his God, these Rules must be religiously observed. 1. The Beast to be offered must be a Male, and without blemish; and the best Bull he had in his Pasture; Being designed purely for the Honour of him that is infinitely perfect, it ought to be the most perfect in its kind. This signified the complete Strength and Purity that was in Christ, the dying Sacrifice; and the Sincerity of Heart, and Unblameableness of Life, that should be in Christians, who are presented to God as living Sacrifices. But literally in Christ Jesus there is neither Male nor Female; nor is any natural Blemish in the Body a Bar to our Acceptance with God, but only the moral Defects and Deformities of the Soul by Sin. 2. The Owner must offer it of his own voluntary Will: What is done in Religion, so as to please God, must be done by no other Constraints but that of Love. God accepts the willing People, and the cheerful Giver. *Ainsworth* and others read it, not as the Principle, but as the End of Offering; let him offer it for his favourable Acceptation before the Lord. Let him propose this to himself, as his End in bringing his Sacrifice; and let his Eye be fixed steadily upon that End, That he may accepted of the Lord: And those only shall find Acceptance, who sincerely desire and design it, in all their religious Services, 2 Cor. 5. 9. 3. It must be offered at the Door of the Tabernacle, where the brazen Altar of Burnt-Offerings stood, which sanctified the Gift, and not elsewhere. He must offer it at the Door, as one unworthy to enter, and acknowledging that there's no Admission for a Sinner into Covenant and Communion with God but by Sacrifice; but at the Tabernacle of the Congregation, in token of his Communion with the whole Church of Israel, even in this personal Service. 4. The Offerer must put his Hand upon the Head of his Offering, v. 4. He must put both his Hands, say the Jewish Doctors, with all his might between the Horns of the Beast, signifying thereby, (1.) The transferring of all his Right to, and Interest in the Beast to God, actually and by a manual Delivery resigning it to his Service, (2.) An Acknowledgment that he deserved to die, and would have been willing to die, if God had required it for the serving of his Honour, and the obtaining of his Favour. (3.) A Dependence upon the Sacrifice, as an instituted Type of the great Sacrifice, on which the Iniquity of us all was to be laid. The mystical Signification of the Sacrifices, and especially this Rite, some think the Apostle means by the Doctrine of laying on of Hands, Heb. 6. 2. which typified Evangelical Faith. The Offerer's putting his Hand on the Head of the Offering, was to signify his Desire and Hope that it might be accepted for him to make atonement for him. Tho' the Burnt-Offerings had not respect to any particular Sin, as the Sin-Offering had, yet they were to make Atonement for Sin in general; and he that laid his Hand on its Head, was to confess, that he had left undone what he ought to have done, and had done that which he ought not to have done; and to pray, that

tho' he deserved to die himself, the Death of his Sacrifice might be accepted for the expiating of his Guilt. 5. The Sacrifice was to be killed by the Priests or Levites, before the Lord, i. e. in a devout, religious manner, and with an eye to God and his Honour. This signified that our Lord Jesus was to make his Soul, or Life, an Offering for Sin: *Messiah*, the Prince, must be cut off as a sacrifice, but not for himself, Dan. 9. 26. It signified also, that in Christians, who are living Sacrifices, the brutal Part must be mortified or killed, the Flesh crucified with its corrupt Affections and Lusts, and all the Appetites of the mere animal Life. 6. The Priests were to sprinkle the Blood upon the Altar, v. 5. for the Blood being the Life, that was it that made Atonement for the Soul. This signified the direct and actual Regard which our Lord Jesus had to the Satisfaction of his Father's Justice, and the securing of his injured Honour in the shedding of his Blood; He offered himself without spot to God. It also signified the pacifying and purifying of our Consciences, by the sprinkling of the Blood of Jesus Christ upon them by Faith, 1 Pet. 1. 2. Heb. 10. 22. 7. The Beast was to be slayed and decently cut up, and divided into its several Joints or Pieces, according to the Art of the Butcher; and then all the Pieces, with the Head and Fat, the Legs and Inwards, being first washed, were to be burnt together upon the Altar, v. 6, 7, 8, 9. But to what purpose (would some say) was this Waste? Why should all this good Meat, that might have been given to the Poor, and have served their hungry Families for Food a great while, be burnt together to Ashes? So was the Will of God, and it is not for us to object or find fault with it. When it was burnt for the Honour of God, in obedience to his Command, and to signify spiritual Blessings, it was really better bestowed, and better answered the End of its Creation, than when it was used as Food for Man. We must never reckon that lost, that's laid out for God. The burning of the Sacrifice signified the sharp Sufferings of Christ, and the devout Affections with which, as a holy Fire, Christians must offer up themselves, their whole Spirit, Soul, and Body, unto God. Lastly, This is said to be an Offering of a sweet Savour, or Savour of Rest unto the Lord. The burning of Flesh is unsavoury in itself, but this as an Act of Obedience to a Divine Command, and a Type of Christ, was well-pleasing to God; he was reconciled to the Offerer, and did himself take a complacency in that Reconciliation. He rested, and was refreshed with these Institutions of his Grace, as at first with his Works of Creation, *Exod. 31. 17.* rejoicing therein, *Psal. 104. 31.* Christ's offering of himself to God, is said to be of a fragrant-smelling Savour, *Eph. 5. 2.* And the spiritual Sacrifices of Christians are said to be acceptable to God through Christ, 1 Pet. 2. 3.

10 And if his offering be of the flocks, namely, of the sheep, or of the goats, for a burnt-sacrifice, he shall bring it a male without blemish. 11 And he shall kill it on the side of the altar northward before the LORD; and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall sprinkle his blood round about upon the altar. 12 And he shall cut it into his pieces, with his head and his fat; and the priest shall lay them in order on the wood that is on the fire which is upon the altar. 13 But he shall wash the inwards and the legs with water; and the priest shall bring it all, and burn it upon the altar: it is a burnt-sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD. 14 And if the burnt-sacrifice for his offering to the LORD be of fowls, then he shall bring his offering of turtle-doves, or of young pigeons. 15 And the priest shall bring it unto the altar, and wring off his head, and burn it on the altar: and the blood thereof shall be wrung out at the side of the altar. 16 And he shall pluck away his crop with his feathers, and cast it beside the altar, on the east-part, by the place of the ashes. 17 And he shall cleave it, with the wings thereof, but shall not divide it asunder; and the priest shall burn it upon the altar, upon the wood that is upon the fire: it is a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.

Here we have the Laws concerning the Burnt-Offerings, which were of the Flock, or of the Fowls. Those of the middle Rank, that could not well afford to offer a Bullock, would bring a Sheep, or a Goat; and those that were not able to do that, should be accepted of God, if they brought a Turtle-Dove, or a Pigeon: for God in his Law, and in his Gospel, as well as in his Providence, considers the Poor. 'Tis observable,

observable, that those Creatures were chosen for Sacrifice, which were most mild and gentle, harmless and inoffensive; to typify the Innocency and Meekness that was in Christ, and to teach the Innocency and Meekness that should be in Christians. Directions are here given,

1. Concerning the Burnt-offerings of the Flock, v. 10. and the Method of managing these is much the same with that of the Bees; only 'tis order'd here, that the Sacrifice should be kill'd on the side of the Altar northward: which, though mention'd here only, 'tis likely to be observ'd concerning the former, and other Sacrifices. Probably on that side of the Altar there was the largest vacant space, and room for the Priests to turn them in. 'Twas of old observ'd, that Fair Weather comes out of the North, and that the North Wind drives away Rain; and by these Sacrifices the Storms of God's Wrath are scatter'd, and the Light of God's Countenance is obtain'd, which is more pleasant than the brightest fairest Weather.

2. Concerning those of the Fowls. They must be either Turtle-Doves, and if so, they must be old Turtles, (say the Jews) or Pidgeons; and if so, they must be young Pidgeons. What was most acceptable at Meas Tables, must be brought to God's Altar. In the offering of these Fowls, (1.) The Head must be wrung off; quite off, say some, others think only pinch'd so as to kill the Bird, and yet leave the Head hanging to the Body: but it seems more likely that it was to be quite separated, for it was to be burnt first. (2.) The Blood was to be squeez'd out on the side of the Altar. (3.) The Garbage, with the Feathers, were to be thrown by upon the Dung-hill. (4.) The Body was to be open'd, sprinkled with Salt, and then burnt upon the Altar. This Sacrifice of Birds, the Jews say, was one of the most difficult Services the Priests had to do, to teach those that minister in Holy Things, to be as solicitous for the Salvation of the Souls of the Poor as of the Rich; for their Services are as acceptable to God, if they come from an upright Heart, as the Services of the Rich: for he expects according to what a Man hath, and not according to what he hath not, 2 Cor. 8. 12. The poor Man's Turtle-Doves, or young Pidgeons, are here said to be an Offering of a sweet-smelling Savour, as much as that of an Ox or Bullock, that hath Horns and Hoofs. Yet after all, to love God with all our Hearts, and to love our Neighbour as ourselves, is better than all Burnt-Offerings and Sacrifices, Mark 12. 33.

CHAP. II.

In this Chapter we have the Law concerning the Meat-Offerings.

1. The Matter of it, Whether of raw Flour, with Oil and Incense, v. 1. or baked in the Oven, v. 4. or upon a Plate, v. 5, 6. or in a Frying-pan, v. 7. 2. The Management of it—of the Flour, v. 1, 3. of the Cakes, v. 8, 9, 10. 3. Some particular Rules concerning it, that Leaven and Honey must never be admitted, v. 11, 12. and Salt never omitted in the Meat-Offering, v. 13. 4. The Law concerning the Offering of First-Fruits in the Ear, v. 14, 15, 16.

AND when any will offer a meat-offering unto the LORD, his offering shall be of fine flour; and he shall pour oil upon it, and put frankincense thereon. 2 And he shall bring it to Aaron's sons, the priests: and he shall take thereof his handful of the flour thereof, and of the oil thereof, with all the frankincense thereof; and the priest shall burn the memorial of it upon the altar, to be an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD. 3 And the remnant of the meat-offering shall be Aaron's and his sons: it is a thing most holy of the offerings of the LORD made by fire. 4 And if thou bring an oblation of a meat-offering baken in the oven, it shall be unleavened cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, or unleavened wafers anointed with oil. 5 And if thy oblation be a meat offering baken in a pan, it shall be of fine flour unleavened, mingled with oil. 6 Thou shalt part it in pieces, and pour oil thereon: it is a meat-offering. 7 And if thy oblation be a meat-offering baken in the frying-pan, it shall be made of fine flour with oil. 8 And thou shalt bring the meat-offering, that is made of these things, unto the LORD: and when it is presented unto the priest,

he shall bring it unto the altar. 9 And the priest shall take from the meat-offering a memorial thereof, and shall burn it upon the altar: it is an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD. 10 And that which is left of the meat-offering, shall be Aaron's and his sons: it is a thing most holy, of the offerings of the LORD made by fire.

There were some Meat-Offerings, that were only Appendages to the Burnt-Offering; as that which was offer'd with the daily Sacrifice, Exod. 29. 38, 39. and with the Peace-Offerings, and these had Drink-Offerings join'd with them; see Num. 15. 4, 7, 9, 10. and in these the Quantity was appointed. But the Law of this Chapter concerns those Meat-Offerings, that were offer'd by themselves, whenever a Man saw cause thus to express his Devotion. The first Offering we read of in Scripture, was of this kind, Gen. 4. 3. Cain brought of the Fruit of the Ground an Offering. This sort of Offerings was appointed, 1. In Condescension to the Poor, and their Ability, that they who themselves lived only upon Bread and Cakes, might offer an acceptable Offering to God, out of that which was their own coarse and homely Fare, and by making for God's Altar, as the Widow of Sarepta for his Prophet, a little Cake first, might procure such a Blessing upon the Household of Meal in the Barrel, and the Oil in the Cruet, as that it may not fail. 2. As a proper Acknowledgment of the Mercy of God to them in their Food; this was like a Quit-Rent, by which they testified their Dependence upon God, their Thankfulness to him, and their Expectations from him as their Owner, and bountiful Benefactor, who giveth to all Life and Breath, and Food convenient. Thus must they honour the Lord with their Substance, and in token of their eating and drinking to his Glory, must consecrate some of their Meat and Drink to his immediate Service. They that now with a grateful charitable Heart deal out their Bread to the Hungry, and provide for the Necessities of those that are destitute of daily Food; and when they eat the Fat, and drink the Sweet themselves, send Portions to them, for whom nothing is prepared: these offer unto God an acceptable Meat-Offering. The Prophet laments it as one of the direful Effects of Famine, that thereby the Meat-Offering and Drink-Offering was cut off from the House of the Lord, Joel 1. 9. and reckon'd it the greatest Blessing of Plenty, that it would be the Revival of them, Joel 2. 14.

Now the Laws of the Meat-Offering were these:

1. That the Ingredients must always be fine Flour and Oil, two staple Commodities of the Land of Canaan, Deut. 8. 8. Oil was to them then in their Food, what Butter is now to us. If it was undress'd, the Oil must be pour'd upon the Flour, v. 1. if cook'd, it must be mingled with the Flour, v. 4. 2. If it were Flour unbaked, besides the Oil, it must have Frankincense put upon it, which was to be burnt with it, v. 1, 2. for the perfuming of the Altar; in Allusion to which, Gospel-Ministers are said to be a sweet savour unto God, 2 Cor. 2. 15. 3. If it was prepar'd, they might do it various ways; either bake it, or fry it, or mix the Flour and Oil upon a Plate: for the doing of each of which, Conveniences were provided about the Tabernacle. The Law was very exact, even about those Offerings which were least costly, to intimate the Cognizance God takes of the religious Services perform'd with a devout Mind, even by the Poor of his People. 4. It was to be presented by the Offerer to the Priest, which is call'd bringing it to the LORD, v. 3. for the Priests were God's Receivers, and were ordain'd to offer Gifts. 5. Part of it was to be burnt upon the Altar, for a Memorial, i. e. in token of, their Mindfulness of God's Bounty to them, in giving them all things richly to enjoy. It was an Offering made by Fire, v. 2, 9. The consuming of it by Fire might mind them, that they deserv'd to have all the Fruits of the Earth thus burnt up, and that it was of the Lord's Mercies that they were not. They might also learn, that as Meats are for the Belly, and the Belly for Meats; so God shall destroy both it and them, 1 Cor. 6. 13. And that Man lives not by Bread alone. This Offering made by Fire, is here said to be of a sweet savour unto the Lord; and so are our Spiritual Offerings, which are made by the Fire of Holy Love, particularly that of Almsgiving, which is said to be an Odour of a sweet smell, a Sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God, Phil. 4. 18. and Heb. 13. 16. With such sacrifices God is well pleas'd. 6. The Remainder of the Meat-Offering was to be given to the Priests, v. 3, 10. It is a thing most holy, not to be eaten by the Offerers, as the Peace-Offerings, which tho' holy, were not most holy, but by the Priests only, and their Families. Thus God provided, that they who served at the Altar, should live upon the Altar, and live comfortably.

in Thunder and Lightning; but the Remedial Law of Sacrifice was given more gently from a Mercy-seat; because that was typical of the Grace of the Gospel, which is the Ministration of Life and Peace.

3 If his offering be a burnt-sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD.

4 And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him. 5 And he shall kill the bullock before the LORD; and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 6 And he shall slay the burnt-offering, and cut it into his pieces. 7 And the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire upon the altar, and lay the wood in order upon the fire. 8 And the priests, Aaron's sons, shall lay the parts, the head and the fat, in order upon the wood that is on the fire, which is upon the altar. 9 But his inwards and his legs shall he wash in water: and the priest shall burn all on the altar, to be a burnt-sacrifice, an offering made by fire of a sweet savour unto the LORD.

If a Man were rich and could afford it, it is supposed that he would bring his Burnt-Sacrifice, with which he designed to honour God, out of his Herd of larger Cattle: He that considers that God is the best that is, will resolve to give him the best he has, else he gives him not the Glory due unto his Name. Now if a Man determined to kill a Beef, not for a Feast for his Family and Friends, but for a Sacrifice to his God, these Rules must be religiously observed. 1. The Beast to be offered must be a Male, and without blemish; and the best Bull he had in his Pasture: Being designed purely for the Honour of him that is infinitely perfect, it ought to be the most perfect in its kind. This signified the complete Strength and Purity that was in Christ, the dying Sacrifice; and the Sincerity of Heart, and Unblameableness of Life, that should be in Christians, who are presented to God as living Sacrifices. But literally in Christ Jesus there is neither Male nor Female; nor is any natural Blemish in the Body a Bar to our Acceptance with God, but only the moral Defects and Deformities of the Soul by Sin. 2. The Owner must offer it of his own voluntary Will: What is done in Religion, so as to please God, must be done by no other Constraints but that of Love. God accepts the willing People, and the cheerful Giver. Ainsworth and others read it, not as the Principle, but as the End of Offering; let him offer it for his favourable Acceptation before the Lord. Let him propose this to himself, as his End in bringing his Sacrifice; and let his Eye be fixed steadily upon that End, That he may accepted of the Lord: And those only shall find Acceptance, who sincerely desire and design it, in all their religious Services, 2 Cor. 5. 9. 3. It must be offered at the Door of the Tabernacle, where the brazen Altar of Burnt-Offerings stood, which sanctified the Gift, and not elsewhere. He must offer it at the Door, as one unworthy to enter, and acknowledging that there's no Admission for a Sinner into Covenant and Communion with God but by Sacrifice; but at the Tabernacle of the Congregation, in token of his Communion with the whole Church of Israel, even in this personal Service. 4. The Offerer must put his Hand upon the Head of his Offering, v. 4. He must put both his Hands, say the Jewish Doctors, with all his might between the Horns of the Beast, signifying thereby, (1.) The transferring of all his Right to, and Interest in the Beast to God, actually and by a manual Delivery resigning it to his Service, (2.) An Acknowledgment that he deserved to die, and would have been willing to die, if God had required it for the serving of his Honour, and the obtaining of his Favour. (3.) A Dependence upon the Sacrifice, as an instituted Type of the great Sacrifice, on which the Iniquity of us all was to be laid. The mystical Signification of the Sacrifices, and especially this Rite, some think the Apostle means by the Doctrine of laying on of Hands, Heb. 6. 2. which typified Evangelical Faith. The Offerer's putting his Hand on the Head of the Offering, was to signify his Desire and Hope that it might be accepted for him to make atonement for him. Tho' the Burnt-Offerings had not respect to any particular Sin, as the Sin-Offering had, yet they were to make Atonement for Sin in general; and he that laid his Hand on its Head, was to confess, that he had left undone what he ought to have done, and had done that which he ought not to have done; and to pray, that

tho' he deserved to die himself, the Death of his Sacrifice might be accepted for the expiating of his Guilt. 5. The Sacrifice was to be killed by the Priests or Levites, before the Lord, i. e. in a devout, religious manner, and with an eye to God and his Honour. This signified that our Lord Jesus was to make his Soul, or Life, an Offering for Sin: Messiah, the Prince, must be cut off as a sacrifice, but not for himself, Dan. 9. 26. It signified also, that in Christians, who are living Sacrifices, the brutal Part must be mortified or killed, the Flesh crucified with its corrupt Affections and Lusts, and all the Appetites of the mere animal Life. 6. The Priests were to sprinkle the Blood upon the Altar, v. 5. for the Blood being the Life, that was it that made Atonement for the Soul. This signified the direct and actual Regard which our Lord Jesus had to the Satisfaction of his Father's Justice, and the securing of his injured Honour in the shedding of his Blood; He offered himself without spot to God. It also signified the pacifying and purifying of our Consciences, by the sprinkling of the Blood of Jesus Christ upon them by Faith, 1 Pet. 1. 2. Heb. 10. 22. 7. The Beast was to be flayed and decently cut up, and divided into its several Joints or Pieces, according to the Art of the Butcher; and then all the Pieces, with the Head and Fat, the Legs and Inwards, being first washed, were to be burnt together upon the Altar, v. 6, 7, 8, 9. But to what purpose (would some say) was this Waste? Why should all this good Meat, that might have been given to the Poor, and have served their hungry Families for Food a great while, be burnt together to Ashes? So was the Will of God, and it is not for us to object or find fault with it. When it was burnt for the Honour of God, in obedience to his Command, and to signify spiritual Blessings, it was really better bestowed, and better answered the End of its Creation, than when it was used as Food for Man. We must never reckon that lost, that's laid out for God. The burning of the Sacrifice signified the sharp Sufferings of Christ, and the devout Affections with which, as a holy Fire, Christians must offer up themselves, their whole Spirit, Soul, and Body, unto God. Lastly, This is said to be an Offering of a sweet Savour, or Savour of Rest unto the Lord. The burning of Flesh is unfavourable in itself, but this as an Act of Obedience to a Divine Command, and a Type of Christ, was well-pleasing to God; he was reconciled to the Offerer, and did himself take a complacency in that Reconciliation. He rested, and was refreshed with these Institutions of his Grace, as at first with his Works of Creation, Exod. 31. 17. rejoicing therein, Psal. 104. 31. Christ's offering of himself to God, is said to be of a sweet-smelling Savour, Eph. 5. 2. And the spiritual Sacrifices of Christians are said to be acceptable to God through Christ, 1 Pet. 2. 5.

10 And if his offering be of the flocks, namely, of the sheep, or of the goats, for a burnt-sacrifice, he shall bring it a male without blemish. 11 And he shall kill it on the side of the altar northward before the LORD; and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall sprinkle his blood round about upon the altar. 12 And he shall cut it into his pieces, with his head and his fat; and the priest shall lay them in order on the wood that is on the fire which is upon the altar. 13 But he shall wash the inwards and the legs with water; and the priest shall bring it all, and burn it upon the altar: it is a burnt-sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD. 14 And if the burnt-sacrifice for his offering to the LORD be of fowls, then he shall bring his offering of turtle-doves, or of young pigeons. 15 And the priest shall bring it unto the altar, and wring off his head, and burn it on the altar: and the blood thereof shall be wrung out at the side of the altar. 16 And he shall pluck away his crop with his feathers, and cast it beside the altar, on the east-part, by the place of the ashes. 17 And he shall cleave it, with the wings thereof, but shall not divide it asunder; and the priest shall burn it upon the altar, upon the wood that is upon the fire: it is a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.

Here we have the Laws concerning the Burnt-Offerings, which were of the Flock, or of the Fowls. Those of the middle Rank, that could not well afford to offer a Bullock, would bring a Sheep, or a Goat; and those that were not able to do that, should be accepted of God, if they brought a Turtle-Dove, or a Pigeon: for God in his Law, and in his Gospel, as well as in his Providence, considers the Poor. 'Tis observable,

observable, that those Creatures were chosen for Sacrifice, which were most mild and gentle, harmless and inoffensive; to typify the Innocency and Meekness that was in Christ, and to teach the Innocency and Meekness that should be in Christians. Directions are here given,

1. Concerning the *Burnt-offerings of the Flock*, v. 10. and the Method of managing these is much the same with that of the *Beeges*; only 'tis order'd here, that the Sacrifice should be kill'd on the side of the Altar northward: which, though mention'd here only, 'tis likely to be observ'd concerning the former, and other Sacrifices. Probably on that side of the Altar there was the largest vacant space, and room for the Priests to turn them in. 'Twas of old observ'd, that *Fair Weather comes out of the North*, and that the *North Wind drives away Rain*; and by these Sacrifices the Storms of God's Wrath are scatter'd, and the Light of God's Countenance is obtain'd, which is more pleasant than the brightest fairest Weather.

2. Concerning those of the *Fowls*. They must be either *Turtle-Doves*, and if so, they must be old Turtles, (say the *Jews*) or *Pidgeons*; and if so, they must be young Pidgeons. What was most acceptable at Mens Tables, must be brought to God's Altar. In the offering of these Fowls, (1.) The Head must be *wring'd off*; quite off, say some, others think only pinch'd so as to kill the Bird, and yet leave the Head hanging to the Body: but it seems more likely that it was to be quite separated, for it was to be burnt first. (2.) The Blood was to be squeez'd out on the side of the Altar. (3.) The Garbage, with the Feathers, were to be thrown by upon the Dunghill. (4.) The Body was to be open'd, sprinkled with Salt, and then burnt upon the Altar. This Sacrifice of Birds, the *Jews* say, was one of the most difficult Services the Priests had to do, to teach those that minister in Holy Things, to be as sollicitous for the Salvation of the Souls of the Poor as of the Rich; for their Services are as acceptable to God, if they come from an upright Heart, as the Services of the Rich: for he expects according to what a Man hath, and not according to what he hath not, 2 Cor. 8. 12. The poor Man's Turtle-Doves, or young Pidgeons, are here said to be an offering of a sweet-smelling Savour, as much as that of an Ox or Bullock, that hath Horns and Hoofs. Yet after all, to love God with all our Hearts, and to love our Neighbour as ourselves, is better than all Burnt-Offerings and Sacrifices, Mark 12. 33.

CHAP. II.

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AND when any will offer a meat-offering unto the LORD, his offering shall be of fine flour; and he shall pour oil upon it, and put frankincense thereon. 2 And he shall bring it to Aaron's sons, the priests: and he shall take thereof his handful of the flour thereof, and of the oil thereof, with all the frankincense thereof; and the priest shall burn the memorial of it upon the altar, to be an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD. 3 And the remnant of the meat-offering shall be Aaron's and his sons: it is a thing most holy of the offerings of the LORD made by fire. 4 And if thou bring an oblation of a meat-offering baken in the oven, it shall be unleavened cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, or unleavened wafers anointed with oil. 5 And if thy oblation be a meat offering baken in a pan, it shall be of fine flour unleavened, mingled with oil. 6 Thou shalt part it in pieces, and pour oil thereon: it is a meat-offering. 7 And if thy oblation be a meat-offering baken in the frying-pan, it shall be made of fine flour with oil. 8 And thou shalt bring the meat-offering, that is made of these things, unto the LORD: and when it is presented unto the priest,

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11 No meat-offering, which ye shall bring unto the LORD, shall be made with leaven: For ye shall burn no leaven, nor any honey, in any offering of the LORD made by fire. 12 As for the oblation of the first-fruits, ye shall offer them unto the LORD; but they shall not be burnt on the altar for a sweet savour. 13 And every oblation of thy meat-offering shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat-offering: with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt. 14 And if thou offer a meat-offering of thy first-fruits unto the LORD, thou shalt offer for the meat-offering of thy first-fruits, green ears of corn dried by the fire, even corn beaten out of full ears. 15 And thou shalt put oil upon it, and lay frankincense thereon: it is a meat-offering. 16 And the priest shall burn the memorial of it, part of the beaten corn thereof, and part of the oil thereof, with all the frankincense thereof: it is an offering made by fire unto the LORD.

Here, 1. *Leaven* and *Honey* are forbidden to be put in any of their Meat-Offerings, v. 11. *No Leaven nor any Honey in any Offering made by Fire.* (1.) The Leaven was forbidden, in remembrance of the unleavened Bread they eat when they came out of Egypt. So much Dispatch was required in the Offerings they made, that it was not convenient they should stay the leavening of them; the New Testament comparing *Pride* and *Hypocrisy* to *Leaven*, because they swell like Leaven, and *Malice* and *Wickedness*, which *sours* like Leaven: We are to understand and improve this as a Caution, to take heed of those Sins, which will certainly spoil the Acceptableness of our spiritual Sacrifices. *Pure Hands* must be lifted up without Wrath, and all our Gospel-Faiths kept with the unleavened Bread of Sincerity and Truth. (2.) *Honey* was forbidden, though *Canaan* flow'd with it, because to eat much Honey is not good, Prov. 25. 16, 27. it turns to Choler and Bitterness in the Stomach, though luscious to the Taste. Some think the chief Reason why these two Things, Leaven and Honey, were forbidden, was, because the *Gentiles* used them very much in their Sacrifices; and God's People must not learn or use the way of the Heathen, but his Service must be the Reverse of their idolatrous Services; see Deut. 12. 30, 31. Some make this Application of this double Prohibition; Leaven signifies Grief and Sadness of Spirit, (Psal. 73. 21. *My Heart was leavened.*) Honey signifies sensual Pleasure and Mirth: In our Service of God both these must be avoided, and a Mean observed between these Extremes; for the Sorrow of the World worketh Death, and a Love to the Delights of Sense is a great Enemy to Holy Love.

2. Salt is required in all their Offerings, v. 13. The Altar was the Table of the Lord, and therefore Salt being always set on our Tables, God would have it always used at his. 'Tis called the salt of the Covenant, because as Men confirm'd their Covenants with each other, by eating and drinking together, at all which Collations Salt was used; so God, by accepting his People's Gifts, and feasting them upon his Sacrifices, supping with them, and they with him, (Rev. 3. 20) did confirm his Covenant with them. Among the Antients, salt was a symbol of Friendship. The Salt for the Sacrifice was not brought by the Offerers, but was provided at the publick Charge, as the Wood was, Exod. 7. 22. And there was a Chamber in the Court of the Temple, called the Chamber of Salt, in which they laid it up. Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without Salt? God would hereby intimate to them, that their Sacrifices in themselves were unsavoury. The Saints, that are living Sacrifices to God, must have Salt in themselves, for every Sacrifice must be salted with Salt, Mark 9. 49, 50. And our Speech must be always with Grace, Col. 4. 6. so must all our Religious Performances be seasoned with that Salt. Christianity is the Salt of the Earth.

3. Directions are given about the First-Fruits.

(1.) The Oblation of their First-Fruits at Harvest, of which we read Deut. 26. 2. These were offer'd to the Lord, not to be burnt upon the Altar, but to be given to the Priests, as Perquisites of their Office, v. 12. And ye shall offer them, i. e. Leaven and Honey, in the Oblation of the First-Fruits, though they were forbidden in other Meat-Offerings; for they were proper enough to be eaten by the Priests, though not to be burnt upon the Altar. The Loaves of First-Fruits are particularly ordered to be baked with Leaven, Lev. 23. 17. And we read of the First-Fruits of Honey brought to the House of God, 2 Chron. 31. 5.

(2.) A Meat-Offering of their First-Fruits: The former was required by the Law, this was a Free-Will Offering, v. 14, 15, 16. If a Man, in a thankful Sense of God's Goodness to him, in giving him Hopes of a plentiful Crop, were disposed to bring an Offering in kind; immediately out of his Field, and present it to God, owning thereby his Dependence upon God, and Obligations to him; 1. Let him be sure to bring the first ripe and full Ears; not such as were small, and half withered. Whatever was brought for an Offering to God, must be the best in its kind, though it were but green Ears of Corn. We mock God, and deceive ourselves, if we think to put him off with a corrupt thing; while we have in our Flock a Male. 2. These green Ears must be dried by the Fire, that the Corn might be beaten out of them, such as it was. That is not expected from green Ears, which one may justly look for from those that have been left to grow full ripe. If those that are young do God's Work as well as they can, they shall be accepted, though they cannot do it so well as those that are aged and experienced. God makes the best of green Ears of Corn, and to must we. 3. Oil and Frankincense must be put upon it. Thus (as some allude to this) Wisdom and Humility must soften and sweeten the Spirits and Services of young People, and then their green Ears of Corn shall be acceptable. God takes a particular delight in the first-ripe Fruits of the Spirit, and the Expressions of early Piety and Devotion. Those that can but think and speak as Children, yet if they think and speak well, God will be well pleased with their Buds and Blossoms, and will never forget the Kindness of their Youth. 4. It must be used as other Meat-Offerings, v. 16. compare v. 9. He shall offer all the Frankincense, it is an Offering made by Fire. The Fire and the Frankincense seem to have had a special Significancy. (1.) The Fire notes the Firmness of Spirit which ought to be in all our Religious Services. In every good thing we must be zealously affected. Holy Love to God is the Fire by which all our Offerings must be made, else they are not of a sweet Savour to God. (2.) The Frankincense notes the Mediation and Intercession of Christ; by which all our Services are perfumed, and recommended to God's gracious Acceptance. Blessed be God, that we have the Substance which all these Observances were but Shadows of; the Fruit that was hid under these Leaves.

CHAP. III.

In this Chapter we have the Law concerning the Peace-Offerings, whether they were, 1. Of the Herd, a Bullock or a Heifer, v. 1—5. Or, 2. Of the Flock, either a Lamb, v. 6, 11. or a Goat, v. 12—17. The Ordinances concerning each of these are much the same, yet they are repeated, to shew the Care we ought to take, that all our Services be done according to the Appointment, and the Pleasure God takes in the Services that are so performed. 'Tis likewise to intimate what need we have of Precept upon Precept, and Line upon Line.

1 AND if his oblation be a sacrifice of peace-offering, if he offer it of the herd, whether it be a male or female, he shall offer it without blemish before the LORD. 2 And he shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering, and kill it at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and Aaron's sons, the priests, shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about. 3 And he shall offer of the sacrifice of the peace-offering, an offering made by fire unto the LORD; the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that is upon the inwards: 4 And the two kidneys, and the fat that is on them, which is by the flanks: and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall be taken away. 5 And Aaron's sons shall burn it on the altar, upon the burnt-sacrifice, which is upon the wood that is on the fire: it is an offering made by fire of a sweet savour unto the LORD.

The Burnt-Offerings had regard to God, as in himself the best of Beings, most perfect and excellent, were purely expressive of Adoration, and therefore were wholly burnt; but the Peace-Offerings had regard to God, as a Benefactor to his Creatures, and the Giver of all good things to us, and therefore these were divided between the Altar, the Priest, and the Owner. Peace signifies, 1. Reconciliation, Concord, and Communion. And so these were called Peace-Offerings, because in them God and his People did as it were feast together, in

in token of Friendship. The Priest, who was *ordained for Men in things pertaining to God*, gave part of this Peace Offering to God, (that part which he required, and 'twas fit he should be first *carved to*) burning it upon God's Altar: Part he gave to the Offerer, to be eaten by him with his Family and Friends, and part he took to himself, as the *Day's Man*, that laid his Hand upon them both. They could not thus eat together, unless they were agreed; so that it was a Symbol of Friendship and Fellowship between God and Man, and a Confirmation of the Covenant of Peace. 2. It signifies *Prosperity*, and all *Happiness*: *Peace be to you*, was as much as, *All Good be to you*. And so the Peace Offerings were offered either, (1.) By way of Supplication or Request for some Good that was wanted and desired. If a Man were in the Pursuit or Expectation of any Mercy, he would back his Prayer for it with a Peace-Offering, and probably put up the Prayer then, when he laid his Hand upon the Head of his Offering. Christ is our Peace, our Peace-Offering, for through him alone it is that we can expect to obtain Mercy, and an Answer of Peace to our Prayers; and in him an upright Prayer shall be acceptable and successful, though we bring not a Peace-Offering. The less costly our Devotions are, the more lively and serious they should be. Or, (2.) By way of Thanksgiving for some particular Mercy received, 'tis called a Peace-Offering of Thanksgiving; for so it was sometimes, as in other Cases a Vow, Lev. 7. 15, 16. And some make the original Word to signify Retribution. When they had received any special Mercy, and were enquiring, *What they should render?* this they were directed to render to the God of their Mercies, as a grateful Acknowledgment of the Benefit done to them, Psal. 116. 12. And we must offer to God the Sacrifice of Praise continually, by Christ our Peace; and then this shall please the Lord better than an Ox or Bullock.

Now, 1. As to the Matter of the Peace Offering; suppose it were of the Herd, it must be *without blemish*, and if it were so, 'twere indifferent whether it was Male or Female, v. 1. In our spiritual Offerings, it is not the Sex, but the Heart, that God looks at, Gal. 3. 28. 2. As to the Management of it: (1.) The Offerer was, by a solemn Manumission, to transfer his Interest in it to God, v. 2. and with his Hand on the Head of the Sacrifice, to acknowledge the particular Mercies for which he designed this a Thank-Offering; or if it were a Vow, to make his Prayer. (2.) It must be killed, and though that might be done in any part of the Court, yet it is said to be at the Door of the Tabernacle, because the Mercies received or expected were acknowledged to come from God, and the Prayers or Praises were directed to him, and both as it were through that Door. Our Lord Jesus hath said, *I am the Door*; for he is indeed the Door of the Tabernacle. (3.) The Priest must sprinkle the Blood upon the Altar, for it was the Blood that made Atonement for the Soul; and though it was not a Sin-Offering, yet we must be taught, that in all our Offerings we must have an eye to Christ, as the Propitiation for Sin, as those that know the best of our Services cannot be accepted, unless through him our Sins be pardoned. Penitent Confessions must always go along with our thankful Acknowledgments; and whatever Mercy we pray for, in order to it, we must first pray for the Removal of Guilt, as that which keeps Good Things from us. First, *Take away all Iniquity*, and then receive us graciously; or, *Give Good*, Hof. 14. 2. (4.) All the Fat of the Inwards, that which we call the Tallow and Suet, with the Caul that enfoldeth it, and the Kidneys in the midst of it, were to be taken away, and burnt upon the Altar, as an Offering made by Fire, v. 3, 4, 5. And that was all that was sacrificed to the Lord out of the Peace-Offering; how the rest was to be disposed of, we shall find Chap. 7. 11, &c. 'Tis ordered to be burnt upon the Burnt-Sacrifice, i. e. the daily Burnt-Offering, the Lamb which was offered every Morning before any other Sacrifice was offered; so that the Fat of the Peace-Offerings was an Addition to that, and a Continuation of it. The great Sacrifice of Peace, that of the Lamb of God, which taketh away the Sins of the World, prepares the Altar for our Sacrifices of Praise, which are not accepted till we are reconciled. Now the Burning of this Fat is supposed to signify, 1. The offering up of our good Affections to God in all our Prayers and Praises. God must have the Inwards, for we must pour out our Souls, and lift up our Hearts in Prayer, and must bless his Name with all that is within us. 'Tis required that we be inward with God in every thing wherein we have to do with him. The Fat notes the best and choicest, which must always be devoted to God, who has made for us a Feast of fat things. 2. The mortifying of our corrupt Affections and Lusts, and the burning up of them by the Fire of Divine Grace, Col. 3. 5. Then we are truly thankful for former Mercies, and prepared to receive further Mercy, when we part with our Sins, and have our Minds cleared from all Sensuality, by the Spirit of Judgment, and the Spirit of Burning, Isa. 4. 4.

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6 And if his offering for a sacrifice of peace-offering unto the LORD, be of the flock; male or female, he shall offer it without blemish. 7 If he offer a lamb for his offering, then shall he offer it before the LORD. 8 And he shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering, and kill it before the tabernacle of the congregation: and Aaron's sons shall sprinkle the blood thereof round about upon the altar. 9 And he shall offer of the sacrifice of the peace-offering, an offering made by fire unto the LORD; the fat thereof, and the whole rump, it shall he take off hard by the back-bone: and the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that is upon the inwards. 10 And the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, which is by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall he take away. 11 And the priest shall burn it upon the altar: it is the food of the offering made by fire unto the LORD. 12 And if his offering be a goat, then he shall offer it before the LORD. 13 And he shall lay his hand upon the head of it, and kill it before the tabernacle of the congregation: and the sons of Aaron shall sprinkle the blood thereof upon the altar round about. 14 And he shall offer thereof his offering, even an offering made by fire unto the LORD; the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that is upon the inwards. 15 And the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, which is by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall he take away. 16 And the priest shall burn them upon the altar: it is the food of the offering made by fire, for a sweet savour. All the fat is the LORD's. 17 It shall be a perpetual statute for your generations throughout all your dwellings, that ye eat neither fat nor blood.

Directions are here given concerning the Peace-Offering, if it were a Sheep or a Goat. Turtle-Doves, or young Pigeons, which might be brought for whole Burnt-Offerings, were not allowed for Peace-Offerings, because they have no Fat considerable to be burnt upon the Altar; and they would be next nothing, if they were to be divided according to the Law of the Peace-Offerings. The Laws concerning a Lamb or Goat, offered for a Peace-Offering, are much the same with those concerning a Beef, and little now occurs here: But, 1. That the Rump of the Mutton was to be burnt, with the Fat of the Inwards, upon the Altar; the whole Rump, v. 9. because in those Countries it was very fat and large. Some observe from this, That be a thing never so contemptible, God can make it honourable, by applying to it his Service. Thus God is said to give more abundant Honour to that part which lacked, 1 Cor. 12. 23, 24. 2. That that which was burnt upon the Altar, is called the Food of the Offering, v. 11, 16. It fed the Holy Fire; 'twas acceptable to God, as our Food is to us: and since in the Tabernacle God did as it were keep House among them, by the Offerings on the Altar he kept a good Table, as Solomon in his Court, 1 Kings 4. 22, &c. 3. Here's a general Rule laid down, that all the Fat is the Lord's, v. 16. and a Law made thereupon, that they should eat neither Fat nor Blood, no not in their private Houses, v. 17. (1.) As for the Fat, 'tis not meant of that which is interlarded with the Meat, that they might eat, Neh. 8. 10. But the Fat of the Inwards, the Suet, which was always God's Part out of the sacrificed Beasts, and therefore they must not eat of it; no not out of the Beasts that they killed for their common Use. Thus would God preserve the Honour of that which was sacred to himself. They must not only not feed upon that very Fat, which was to be the Food of the Altar; but not upon any the like, lest the Table of the Lord, (as the Altar is called) if something were not reserved peculiar to it, should become contemptible, and the Fruit thereof, even its Meat, contemptible, Mal. 1. 7, 12. (2.) The Blood was universally forbidden likewise, for the same reason that the Fat was, because it was God's Part of every Sacrifice. The Heathen drank the Blood of their Sacrifices; hence we read of their Drink-Offerings of Blood, Psal. 16. 4. But God would not permit the Blood that made Atonement to be used as a common thing, Heb.

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Heb. 10. 29. nor will he allow us, though we have the Comfort of the Atonement made, to assume to ourselves any share in the Honour of making it. He that glories, let him glory in the Lord, and to his Praise let all the Blood be poured out.

CHAP. IV.

This Chapter is concerning the Sin-Offering, which was properly intended to make Atonement for a Sin committed through Ignorance; either, 1. By the Priest himself, v. 1—12. Or, 2. By the whole Congregation, v. 13—21. Or, 3. By a Ruler, v. 22—26. Or, 4. By a private Person, v. 27—35.

1 **AND** the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a soul shall sin through ignorance against any of the commandments of the LORD, (concerning things which ought not to be done) and shall do against any of them; 3 If the priest that is anointed, do sin according to the sin of the people; then let him bring for his sin which he hath sinned, a young bullock without blemish unto the LORD for a sin-offering. 4 And he shall bring the bullock unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD; and shall lay his hand upon the bullock's head, and kill the bullock before the LORD. 5 And the priest that is anointed, shall take of the bullock's blood, and bring it to the tabernacle of the congregation. 6 And the priest shall dip his finger in the blood, and sprinkle of the blood seven times before the LORD, before the vail of the sanctuary. 7 And the priest shall put some of the blood upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the LORD, which is in the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall pour all the blood of the bullock at the bottom of the altar of the burnt-offering; which is at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 8 And he shall take off from it all the fat of the bullock for the sin-offering; the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that is upon the inwards: 9 And the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, which is by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall he take away. 10 As it was taken off from the bullock of the sacrifice of peace-offerings: and the priest shall burn them upon the altar of the burnt-offering. 11 And the skin of the bullock, and all his flesh, with his head, and with his legs, and his inwards, and his dung, 12 Even the whole bullock shall he carry forth without the camp, unto a clean place, where the ashes are poured out, and burn him on the wood with fire; where the ashes are poured out, shall he be burnt.

The Laws contained in the three first Chapters seem to have been delivered to Moses at one time: Here begin the Statutes of another Session, another Day. From the Throne of Glory between the Cherubims God delivered these Orders; and he enters now upon a Subject more new than those before. *Burnt-Offerings, Meat-Offerings, and Peace-Offerings*, it should seem, had been offered before the giving of the Law upon Mount Sinai; those Sacrifices the Patriarchs had not been altogether unacquainted with, Gen. 8. 20. Exod. 20. 24. and in those they had respect to Sin, to make Atonement for that, Job 1. 5. But the Law being now added, because of Transgressions, Gal. 3. 18. and entered, that eventually the Offence might abound, Rom. 5. 20. they were put into a way of making Atonement for Sin more particularly, by Sacrifice, which was (more than any of the Ceremonial Institutions) a Shadow of good things to come; but the Substance is Christ, and that one Offering of himself, by which he put away Sin, and perfected for ever them which are sanctified.

The general Case supposed, we have v. 2. where observe, (1.) Concerning Sin in general, That it is described to be against any of the Commandments of the Lord, for Sin is the Trans-

gression of the Law, the Divine Law: The Wits or Wills of Men, their Inventions or their Injunctions, cannot make that to be Sin, which the Law of God has not made to be so. 'Tis said likewise, if a Soul sin, for it is not Sin, if it be not some way or other the Soul's Act; hence 'tis called the Sin of the Soul, Mich. 6. 7. and 'tis the Soul that is injured by it, Prov. 8. 36. (2.) Concerning the Sins for which those Offerings were appointed: 1. They are supposed to be *Overt Acts*; for had they been to bring a Sacrifice for every sinful Thought or Word, it had been endless: Atonement was made for those in the gross, on the Day of Expiation, once a Year; but these are said to be done against the Commandments. 2. They are supposed to be Sins of *Commission*, things which ought not to be done: Omissions are Sins, and must come into Judgment; but what had been omitted at one time, might be done at another: and so to obey was better than Sacrifice. But a Commission was past Recall. 3. They are supposed to be Sins committed through Ignorance: if they were done presumptuously, and with an avowed Contempt of the Law, and the Law-maker, the Offender was to be cut off, and there remained no Sacrifice for Sin, Heb. 10. 26, 27, see Num. 15. 30. But if the Offender were either ignorant of the Law, as in divers Instances we may suppose many were, so numerous and various were the Prohibitions; or were surprised into the Sin at unawares, the Circumstances such as made it evident that his Resolution against the Sin was sincere, but he was overtaken in it, as the Expression is, Gal. 6. 1. In this case, Relief was provided by the Remedial Law of the Sin-Offering. And the Jews say, those Crimes only were to be expiated by Sacrifice, if committed ignorantly; for which the Criminal was to have been cut off, if it had been done presumptuously.

Now the Law begins with the Case of the anointed Priest, that is, the High Priest, suppose he sin through Ignorance; for the Law made Men Priests which had Infirmary: though his Ignorance was of all others least excusable, yet he is allowed to bring his Offering. His Office did not so far excuse his Offences, as that it should be forgiven him without a Sacrifice; yet it did not so far aggravate it, but that it should be forgiven him, when he did bring his Sacrifice. If he sin according to the Sin of the People; so the Case is put, v. 3. which supposeth him in this matter to stand upon the level with other Israelites, and to have no Benefit of his Clergy at all.

Now the Law concerning the Sin-Offering for the High Priest, is, 1. That he must bring a Bullock without Blemish for his Sin-Offering, v. 3. as valuable an Offering as that for the whole Congregation, v. 14. whereas for any other Ruler, or a common Person, a Kid of the Goats should serve, v. 23, 28. This intimated the Greatness of the Guilt of the Sin of a High Priest. The Eminency of his Station, and his Relation both to God and to the People, greatly aggravated his Offences: See Rom. 2. 21. 2. The Hand of the Offerer must be laid upon the Head of the Offering, v. 4. with a solemn penitent Confession of the Sin he had committed, putting it upon the Head of the Sin-Offering, Lev. 16. 21. No Remission without Confession, Psal. 32. 5. Prov. 28. 13. It signified also a Confidence in this instituted way of expiating Guilt, as a Figure of something better yet to come, which they could not steadfastly discern. He that laid his Hand on the Head of the Beast, thereby owned that he deserved to die himself; and it was God's great Mercy, that he would please to accept the Offering of this Beast to die for him. The Jewish Writers themselves say, That neither the Sin-Offering nor the Trespass-Offering made Atonement, but only for those that repent, and believe in their Atonement. 3. The Bullock must be killed, and a great deal of Solemnity there must be in disposing of the Blood, for it was the Blood that made Atonement, and without shedding of Blood there was no Remission, v. 5, 6, 7. Some of the Blood of the High Priest's Sin Offering was to be sprinkled seven times before the Veil, with an eye towards the Mercy-seat, though it was veiled; some of it was to be put upon the Horns of the Golden Altar, because at that Altar the Priest himself ministered: And thus was signified the putting away of that Pollution, which from his Sins did cleave to his Services. It likewise serves to illustrate the Influence which Christ's Satisfaction hath upon the Prevalency of his Intercession; the Blood of his Sacrifice is put upon the Altar of his Incense, and sprinkled before the Lord. When this was done, the Remainder of the Blood was poured at the foot of the brazen Altar. By this Rite the Sinner acknowledged that he deserved to have his Blood thus poured out like Water: It likewise signified the pouring out of the Soul before God in true Repentance, and typified our Saviour's pouring out his Soul unto Death. 4. The Fat of the Inwards was to be burnt upon the Altar of Burnt-Offerings, v. 8, 9, 10. By this the Intention of the Offering, and of the Atonement made by it, was directed to the Glory of God, who having been dishonoured by the Sin, was thus honoured by the Sacrifice. It signified the sharp sufferings of our Lord Jesus,

Jesus, when he was *made Sin*, that is, a Sin-Offering for us, especially the Sorrows of his Soul, and his inward Agonies. It likewise teacheth us, in Conformity to the Death of Christ, to *crucify the Flesh*. 5. The Head and Body of the Beast, Skin and all, was to be carried without the Camp, to a certain Place appointed for that purpose, and there *burnt to Ashes*, v. 11, 12. This was very significant, (1.) Of the Duty of Repentance, which is the putting away of Sin as a detestable thing, which our Soul hates. True Penitents say to their Idols, *Get ye hence; What have we to do any more with Idols?* The Sin-Offering is called Sin; what they did to that, we must do to our Sins: the *Body of Sin must be destroyed*, Rom. 6. 6. (2.) Of the Privilege of Remission. When God pardons Sin, he quite abolisheth it, casts it behind his back; *The Iniquity of Judah shall be sought for, and not found*. The Apostle takes particular notice of this Ceremony, and applies it to Christ, (Heb. 13. 11, 12, 13) who *suffered without the Gate*, in the Place of a Skull, where the *Ashes* of dead Men, as those of the Altar, were poured out.

13 And if the whole congregation of Israel sin through ignorance, and the thing be hid from the eyes of the assembly, and they have done somewhat against any of the commandments of the LORD, concerning things which should not be done, and are guilty: 14 When the sin which they have sinned against it, is known, then the congregation shall offer a young bullock for the sin, and bring him before the tabernacle of the congregation. 15 And the elders of the congregation shall lay their hands upon the head of the bullock before the LORD: and the bullock shall be killed before the LORD. 16 And the priest that is anointed shall bring of the bullock's blood to the tabernacle of the congregation. 17 And the priest shall dip his finger in some of the blood, and sprinkle it seven times before the LORD, even before the veil. 18 And he shall put some of the blood upon the horns of the Altar which is before the LORD, that is in the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall pour out all the blood at the bottom of the altar of the burnt-offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 19 And he shall take all his fat from him, and burn it upon the altar. 20 And he shall do with the bullock as he did with the bullock for a sin-offering, so shall he do with this: and the priests shall make an atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them. 21 And he shall carry forth the bullock without the camp, and burn him as he burnt the first bullock: it is a sin-offering for the congregation.

This is the Law for expiating the Guilt of a National Sin, by a Sin-Offering. If the Leaders of the People through Mistake, concerning the Law, caused them to err, when the Mistake was discovered, an Offering must be brought, that Wrath might not come upon the whole Congregation. *Observe*. 1. It is possible that the Church may err, and that her Guides may mislead her. 'Tis here supposed, that the whole Congregation may sin, and sin through Ignorance. God will always have a Church on Earth, but he never said it should be infallible, or perfectly pure from Corruption on this side Heaven. 2. When a Sacrifice was to be offered for the whole Congregation, the Elders were to lay their Hands upon the Head of it, three of them at least, as Representatives of the People, and Agents for them. The Sin we suppose to have been some common Custom taken up, and used by the Generality of the People, upon Presumption of its being lawful, which afterwards, upon Search, appeared to be otherwise: In this case, the Commonness of the Usage, received perhaps by Tradition from their Fathers, and the vulgar Opinion of its being lawful, would not so far excuse them from Sin, but that they must bring a Sacrifice to make Atonement for it. There are many ill Customs, and Forms of Speech, which are thought to have no harm in them, and yet may bring Guilt and Wrath upon a Land, which therefore it concerns the Elders both to reform, and to intercede with God for the Pardon of, Joel 2. 16. 3. The Blood of this Sin-Offering, as of the former, was to be *sprinkled seven times before the Lord*, v. 17. 'Twas not to be poured out there, but

sprinkled only; for the cleansing Virtue of the Blood of Christ was then, and is still sufficiently signified; and represented by *sprinkling*, Isa. 52. 15. 'Twas to be sprinkled *seven times*; Seven is a Number of Perfection, because when God had made the World in six Days, he rested the seventh; so this signified the perfect Satisfaction Christ made, and the complete Cleansing of the Souls of the Faithful by it: see Heb. 10. 14. The Blood was likewise to be put upon the *Horns of the Incense Altar*; to which there seems to be an Allusion, Jer. 17. 1, where the Sin of Judah is said to be *graven upon the Horns of their Altars*. They not forsaking their Sins, the putting of the Blood of their Sin-Offerings upon the Horns of their Altars; instead of taking away their Guilt, did but bind it on the faster, perpetuated the Remembrance of it, and remained a Witness against them. It is likewise alluded to, Rev. 9. 13, where a Voice is heard from the four Horns of the Golden Altar, i. e. an Answer of Peace is given to the Prayers of the Saints, which are acceptable and prevalent, only by virtue of the Blood of the Sin-Offering put upon the Horns of that Altar; compare Rev. 8. 3, 4. When the Offering is completed, 'tis said *Atonement is made*, and the Sin shall be *forgiven*, v. 20. The Promise of Remission is founded upon the Atonement. 'Tis spoken here of the Forgiveness of the Sin of the whole Congregation, i. e. the turning away of those National Judgments which the Sin deserved. Note, The saving of Churches and Kingdoms from Ruin, is owing to the Satisfaction and Mediation of Christ.

22 When a Ruler hath sinned, and done somewhat through ignorance against any of the commandments of the LORD his God, concerning things which should not be done, and is guilty; 23 Or if his sin, wherein he hath sinned, come to his knowledge, he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a male without blemish. 24 And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the goat, and kill it in the place where they kill the burnt-offering before the LORD: it is a sin-offering. 25 And the priest shall take of the blood of the sin-offering with his finger, and put it upon the horns of the altar of burnt-offering, and shall pour out his blood at the bottom of the altar of burnt-offering. 26 And he shall burn all his fat upon the altar, as the fat of the sacrifice of peace-offerings: and the priest shall make an atonement for him as concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven him.

Observe here, 1. That God takes notice of and is displeased with the Sins of Rulers. They who have power to call others to account, are themselves accountable to the Ruler of Rulers; for as high as they are, there is a higher than they. This is intimated, in that here only the Commandment transgressed is said to be the Commandment of the Lord his God, v. 22. He is a Prince to others, but let him know the Lord is a God to him. 2. The Sin of the Ruler, which he committed through Ignorance, is supposed afterwards to come to his knowledge, v. 23. which must be either by the Check of his own Conscience, or by the Reproof of his Friends; both which we should all, even the best and greatest, not only submit to, but be thankful for. What we have done amiss, we should be very desirous to come to the knowledge of: *That which I see not, teach thou me, and shew me wherein I have erred*, are Prayers we should put up to God every day; that though through Ignorance we fall into Sin, we may not through Ignorance lie still in it. 3. The Sin-Offering for a Ruler was to be a Kid of the Goats, not a Bullock, as for the Priest, and the whole Congregation; nor was the Blood of his Sin-Offering to be brought into the Tabernacle, as of the other two, but it was all bestowed upon the brazen Altar, v. 25. Nor was the Flesh of it to be burnt, as that of the other two, without the Camp; which intimated, that the Sin of a Ruler, though worse than that of a common Person, yet was not so heinous, nor of such pernicious consequence, as the Sin of the High Priest, or of the whole Congregation. A Kid of the Goats was sufficient to be offered for a Ruler, but a Bullock for a Tribe; as if the Ruler, though Major Singulis, were Minor Universis. 'Tis bad when great Men give ill Examples, but worse when all Men follow them. 4. 'Tis promised, that the Atonement shall be accepted, and the Sin forgiven, v. 26 to wit, if he repent and reform; for otherwise God swears concerning Eli, a Judge in Israel, that the Iniquity of his House should not be purged with Sacrifice nor Offering for ever, 1 Sam. 3. 14.

27 And if any one of the common people sin through ignorance, while he doth somewhat against any of the commandments of the LORD, concerning things which ought not to be done, and be guilty; 28 Or if his sin which he hath sinned, come to his knowledge: then he shall bring his Offering, a kid of the goats, a female without blemish, for his sin which he hath sinned. 29 And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin-offering, and slay the sin-offering in the place of the burnt-offering. 30 And the priest shall take of the blood thereof with his finger, and put it upon the horns of the altar of burnt-offering, and shall pour out all the blood thereof at the bottom of the altar. 31 And he shall take away all the fat thereof, as the fat is taken away from off the sacrifice of peace-offerings; and the priest shall burn it upon the altar, for a sweet savour unto the LORD, and the priest shall make an atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him. 32 And if he bring a lamb for a sin-offering, he shall bring it a female without blemish. 33 And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin-offering, and slay it for a sin-offering in the place where they kill the burnt-offering. 34 And the priest shall take of the blood of the sin-offering with his finger, and put it upon the horns of the altar of burnt-offering, and shall pour out all the blood thereof at the bottom of the altar. 35 And he shall take away all the fat thereof, as the fat of the lamb is taken away from the sacrifice of the peace-offerings, and the priest shall burn them upon the altar, according to the offerings made by fire unto the LORD: and the priest shall make an atonement for his sin that he hath committed, and it shall be forgiven him.

Here's the Law of the Sin-Offering for a common Person, which differs from that for a Ruler only in this, that a private Person might bring either a Kid or a Lamb, a Ruler only a Kid; and that for a Ruler must be a Male, the other a Female: In all the Circumstances of the Management of the Offering they agreed. *Observe*, 1. The Case supposed is, If any one of the common People sin through Ignorance, v. 27. The Prophet supposeth, that they were not so likely as the Great Men to know the Way of the Lord, and the Judgment of their God, Jer. 5. 4. and yet if they sin through Ignorance, they must bring a Sin-Offering. Note, Even Sins of Ignorance need to be atoned for by Sacrifice. To be able to plead, when we are charged with Sin, that we did it ignorantly, and through the Surprise of Temptation, will not bring us off, if we be not interested in that great Plea, *Christ hath died*, and intitled to the Benefit of that. We have all need to pray with David, (and he was a Ruler) to be cleansed from secret Faults, the Errors which we ourselves do not understand, or are not aware of *Psalm* 19. 13. 2. That the Sins of Ignorance committed by a single Person, a common obscure Person, did require a Sacrifice; for as the greatest are not above the Censure, so the meanest are not below the Cognizance of the Divine Justice. None of the common People, if Offenders, were overlooked in a Crowd. 3. That a Sin-Offering was not admitted only, but accepted even from one of the common People, and an Atonement made by it, v. 31, 35. Here Rich and Poor, Prince and Peasant, meet together, they are both alike welcome to Christ, and to an Interest in his Sacrifice upon the same Terms: see *Job* 34. 19. From all these Laws concerning the Sin-Offerings we may learn, 1. To hate Sin, and to watch against it. That is certainly a very ill thing, to make Atonement for which, so many innocent and useful Creatures must be slain and mangled thus. 2. To value Christ, the great and true Sin-Offering, whose Blood cleanseth from all Sin, which it was not possible the Blood of Bulls and Goats should take away. Now if any Man sin, Christ is the Propitiation, 1 John 2. 1, 2. not for Jews only, but for Gentiles: And perhaps there was some Allusion to this Law, concerning Sacrifices for Sins of Ignorance, in that Prayer of Christ's, just when he was offering up himself a Sacrifice; *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do*.

CHAP. V.

This Chapter, and part of the next, concern the Trespass-Offering. The Difference between this and the Sin-Offering lay not so much in the Sacrifices themselves, and the Management of them, as in the Occasions of the offering them. They were both intended to make Atonement for Sin, but the former was more general, this applied to some particular instances. *Observe* what is here said, 1. Concerning the Trespass. If a Man sin, (1.) In concealing his Knowledge when he is adjured, v. 1. (2.) In touching an unclean thing, v. 2, 3. (3.) In swearing, v. 4. (4.) In embezzeling the holy things, v. 14—16. (5.) In any Sin of Infirmity, v. 17—19. Some other Cases there are, in which these Offerings were to be offered, Chap. 6. 2, 3, 4—14. 12.—19. 21. Numb. 6. 12. 2. Concerning the Trespass-Offerings. (1.) Of the Flock, v. 5, 6. (2.) Of Fowls, v. 7—10. (3.) Of Flour, v. 11—13. But chiefly a Ram without Blemish, v. 15, 16, 18, 19.

1 AND if a soul sin, and hear the voice of swearing, and is a witness, whether he hath seen or known of it; if he do not utter it, then he shall bear his iniquity. 2 Or if a soul touch any unclean thing, whether it be a carcase of an unclean beast, or a carcase of unclean catel, or the carcase of unclean creeping things, and if it be hidden from him, he also shall be unclean and guilty. 3 Or if he touch the uncleanness of man, whatsoever uncleanness it be that a man shall be defiled withal, and it be hid from him, when he knoweth of it, then he shall be guilty. 4 Or if a soul swear, pronouncing with his lips to do evil, or to do good; whatsoever it be that a man shall pronounce with an oath, and it be hid from him; when he knoweth of it, then he shall be guilty in one of these. 5 And it shall be, when he shall be guilty in one of these things, that he shall confess that he hath sinned in that thing. 6 And he shall bring his trespass offering unto the LORD for his sin which he hath sinned, a female from the flock, a lamb or a kid of the goats, for a sin-offering; and the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his sin.

The Offences here supposed are, 1. A Man's concealing the Truth, when he was sworn as a Witness to speak the Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth; Judges among the Jews had power to adjure not only the Witnesses, as with us, but the Person suspected, (contrary to a Rule of our Law, That no Man is bound to accuse himself) as appears by the High Priest's adjuring our Saviour, who thereupon answered, though before he stood silent, *Mat.* 26. 63. Now, v. 1. If a Soul sin, (i. e. a Person, for the Soul is the Man) if he hear the Voice of Swearing, i. e. if he be adjured to testify what he knows, by an Oath of the Lord upon him, 1 Kings 8. 31. If, in such a case, for fear of offending one that either has been his Friend, or may be his Enemy, he refuseth to give Evidence, or gives it but in part, he shall bear his Iniquity: And that's a heavy Burden, which, if some Course be not taken to get it removed, will sink a Man to the lowest Hell. He that heareth Cursing, i. e. that is thus adjured, and bewrayeth it not, i. e. stifles his Evidence, and doth not utter it, he is a Partner with the Sinner, and hateth his own Soul: See *Prov.* 29. 24. Let all that are called at any time to bear Testimony, think of this Law, and be free and open in their Evidence, and take heed of prevaricating. An Oath of the Lord is a sacred thing, and not to be dallied with. 2. A Man's touching any thing that was ceremonially unclean, v. 2, 3. If a Man, polluted by such Touch, came into the Sanctuary inconsiderately, or if he neglected to wash himself according to the Law, then he was to look upon himself as under Guilt, and must bring his Offering. Though his touching the unclean thing contracted only a Ceremonial Defilement, yet his Neglect to wash himself according to the Law, was such an Instance either of Carelessness or Contempt, as contracted a Moral Guilt. If at first it be hid from him, yet when he knoweth it, he shall be guilty. Note, As soon as ever God by his Spirit convinceth our Consciences of any Sin or Duty, we must presently set in with the Conviction, and prosecute it, as those that are not ashamed to own our former Mistake. 3. Rash Swearing, that a Man will do or not do such a thing, if the Performance of his Oath afterwards prove either unlawful

or impracticable, by which he is discharged from the Obligation; yet he must bring an Offering to atone for his Folly, in swearing so rashly, as David that he would kill Nabal. And then it was that he must say before the Angel, that it was an Error, Eccl. 5. 6. *V. 4. He shall be guilty in one of these: Guilty if he do not perform his Oath; and yet, if the Matter of it were evil, guilty if he do.* Such wretched Dilemma's as these do some Men bring themselves into, by their own Rashness and Folly; go which way they will, their Consciences are wounded; Sin stares them in the Face, so sadly are they snared in the Words of their Mouth. A more sad Dilemma this is: than that of the Lepers; if we sit still, we die; if we stir, we die. Wisdom and Watchfulness before-hand would prevent these Streights.

Now in these Cases, 1. The Offender must confess his Sin, and bring his Offering, v. 5, 6. and the Offering was not accepted, unless it was accompanied with a penitential Confession, and a humble Prayer for Pardon. *Observe, The Confession must be particular, That he hath sinned in that thing;* such was David's Confession, Psal. 51. 4. *I have done this Evil;* and Achan's, Josh. 7. 20. *Thus and thus have I done.* Deceit lies in Generals; many will own in general they have sinned, for that all must own, so that it is not any particular Reproach to them; but that they have sinned in this thing, they stand too much upon their Honour to acknowledge: But the way to be well assured of Pardon, and to be well armed against Sin for the future, is to be particular in our penitent Confessions. 2. The Priest must make an Atonement for him. As the Atonement was not accepted without his Repentance, so his Repentance would not justify him without the Atonement. Thus in our Reconciliation to God, Christ's Part and ours are both needful.

7 And if he be not able to bring a lamb, then he shall bring for his trespass which he hath committed, two turtle doves or two young pigeons, unto the LORD, one for a sin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering. 8 And he shall bring them unto the priest, who shall offer that which is for the sin-offering first, and wring off his head from his neck, but shall not divide it asunder. 9 And he shall sprinkle of the blood of the sin-offering upon the side of the altar; and the rest of the blood shall be wrung out at the bottom of the altar; it is a sin-offering. 10 And he shall offer the second for a burnt-offering, according to the manner; and the priest shall make an atonement for him, for his sin which he hath sinned, and it shall be forgiven him. 11 But if he be not able to bring two turtle doves, or two young pigeons; then he that sinned shall bring for his offering the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a sin-offering: he shall put no oil upon it, neither shall he put any frankincense thereon: for it is a sin-offering. 12 Then shall he bring it to the priest, and the priest shall take his handful of it, even a memorial thereof, and burn it on the altar, according to the offerings made by fire unto the LORD; it is a sin-offering. 13 And the priests shall make an atonement for him, as touching his sin that he hath sinned in one of these, and it shall be forgiven him: and the remnant shall be the priest's, as a meat-offering.

Provision is here made for the Poor of God's People, and the pacifying of their Consciences under the Sense of Guilt. Those that were not able to bring a Lamb, might bring for a Sin-Offering a Pair of Turtle Doves, or two young Pigeons; nay, if any were so extremely poor, that they were not able to procure those so oft as they would have occasion, they might bring a Pottle of fine Flour, and that should be accepted. Thus the Expence of the Sin-Offering was brought lower than that of any other Offering, to teach us, That no Man's Poverty shall ever be a Bar in the way of his Pardon. The Poorest of all may have Atonement made for them, if it be not their own fault. Thus the Poor are Evangelized; and no Man shall say, That he had not wherewithal to bear the Charges of a Journey to Heaven.

Now, 1. If the Sinner brought two Doves, one was to be offered for a Sin-Offering, and the other for a Burnt-Offering, v. 7. *Observe, (1.)* Before he offered the Burnt-Offering, which was for the Honour and Praise of God, he must offer the

Sin-Offering to make Atonement. We must first see to it, that our Peace be made with God, and then we may expect that our Services for his Glory will be accepted. The Sin-Offering must make way for the Burnt-Offering. (2.) After the Sin-Offering, which made Atonement, came the Burnt-Offering, as an Acknowledgment of the great Mercy of God, in appointing and accepting the Atonement.

2. If he brought fine Flour, a handful of it was to be offered, but without either Oil or Frankincense, v. 11. not only because that would make it too costly for the Poor, for whose Comfort this Sacrifice was appointed, but because it was a Sin-Offering; and therefore to shew the Loathsomeness of the Sin for which it was offered, it must not be made grateful either to the Taste by Oil, or to the Smell by Frankincense. The Unfavourableness of the Offering was to intimate, that the Sinner must never relish his Sin again as he had done. God by these Sacrifices did speak, 1. Comfort to those that had offended, that they might not despair, or pine away in their Iniquity; but Peace being thus made for them with God, they might have Peace in him. 2. Caution likewise not to offend any more, remembering what an expensive troublesome thing it was to make Atonement.

14 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 15 If a soul commit a trespass, and sin through ignorance, in the holy things of the LORD; then he shall bring for his trespass unto the LORD, a ram without blemish out of the flocks, with thy estimation by shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary for a trespass-offering. 16 And he shall make amends for the harm that he hath done in the holy thing, and shall add the fifth part thereto, and give it unto the priest; and the priest shall make an atonement for him with the ram of the trespass-offering, and it shall be forgiven him. 17 And if a soul sin, and commit any of these things, which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the LORD; though he wist it not, yet is he guilty, and shall bear his iniquity. 18 And he shall bring a ram without blemish out of the flock, with thy estimation for a trespass-offering, unto the priest; and the priest shall make an atonement for him, concerning his ignorance wherein he erred, and wist it not; and it shall be forgiven him. 19 It is a trespass-offering; he hath certainly trespassed against the LORD.

Hitherto in this Chapter Orders were given concerning those Sacrifices that were both Sin-Offerings and Trespass-Offerings, for they go by both Names, v. 6. Here we have the Law concerning those that were properly and peculiarly Trespass-Offerings, which were offered to atone for Trespasses done against a Neighbour; those Sins we commonly call Trespasses. Now Injuries done to another may be either in holy things, or in common things; of the former we have the Law in these Verses, of the latter in the beginning of the next Chapter. If a Man did harm (as it is v. 16.) in the holy things of the Lord, he thereby committed a Trespass against the Priests, the Lord's Ministers, who were entrusted with the Care of these holy things, and had the Benefit of them. Now if a Man did alienate or convert to his own Use any thing that was dedicated to God, unwittingly, he was to bring this Sacrifice: As suppose, he had ignorantly made use of the Tythes, or First-Fruits, or First-Born of his Cattel, or (which it should seem by Lev. 22. 14, 15, 16. is principally meant here) had eaten any of those Parts of the Sacrifices, which were appropriated to the Priests; this was a Trespass. 'Tis supposed to be done through Mistake, or Forgetfulness, for want either of Care or Zeal; for if it were done presumptuously, and in contempt of the Law, the Offender died without Mercy, Heb. 10. 28. But in case of Negligence and Ignorance, this Sacrifice was appointed; and Moses is told,

1. What must be done, in case the Trespass appeared to be certain. The Trespasser must, (1.) Bring an Offering to the Lord, which in all those that were purely Trespass-Offerings, must be a Ram without Blemish, of the second Year, say the Jewish Doctors. (2.) He must likewise make Restitution to the Priest, according to a just Estimation of the thing which he had so alienated, adding a fifth part to it, that he might learn to take more heed next time of embarrassing what was sacred to God, finding to his Cost, that there

there was nothing got by it, and that he paid dear for his Overights.

2. What must be done in case it were doubtful, whether he had trespassed or no; he had cause to suspect it, but he wist it not, v. 17. i. e. he was not very certain: in this Case, because it is good to be sure, he must bring his Trespas-Offering, and the Value of that which he feared he had embezzled; only he was not to add the first part to it. Now this was designed to shew the very great Evil there is in Sacrilege; Achan, that was guilty of it presumptuously, died for it, so did Ananias and Sapphira. But this goes further, to shew the Evil of it, that if a Man had but thro' Ignorance, and unwittingly alienated the Holy Things, nay, if he did but suspect that he had done so, he must be at the Expence not only of a full Restitution with Interest, but of an Offering, at the Trouble of bringing it, and must take Shame to himself, by making Confession of it: so ill a thing it is to invade God's Property, and so cautious should we be to abstain from all Appearances of this Evil. We are also taught here to be jealous over ourselves with a godly Jealousy, to ask pardon for the Sin, and make satisfaction for the Wrong we do but suspect ourselves guilty of. In doubtful Cases we should take and keep the safer side.

CHAP. VI.

The seven first Verses of this Chapter would fitly have been added to the foregoing Chapter, being a Continuation of the Law of the Trespas-Offering, and the putting of other Cases in which it was to be offered; and with this end the Instructions God gave concerning the several kinds of Sacrifices that should be offered: And then at v. 8. (which in the Original begins a new Section of the Law) he comes to appoint the several Rites and Ceremonies concerning these Sacrifices, which had not been mention'd before.
1. The Burnt-Offering, v. 8—13. 2. The Meat-Offering, v. 14—18, particularly that at the Consecration of the Priest, v. 19—23. 3. The Sin-Offering, v. 24—30.

1 **AND** the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 If a soul sin, and commit a trespass against the LORD, and lye unto his neighbour in that which was delivered him to keep, or in fellowship, or in a thing taken away by violence, or hath deceived his neighbour; 3 Or have found that which was lost, and lyeth concerning it, and sweareth falsely; in any of all these that a man doth, sinning therein: 4 Then it shall be, because he hath sinned, and is guilty, that he shall restore that which he took violently away, or the thing which he hath deceitfully gotten, or that which was delivered him to keep, or the lost thing which he found, 5 Or all that about which he hath sworn falsely; he shall even restore it in the principal, and shall add the fifth part more thereto, and give it unto him to whom it appertaineth, in the day of his trespas-offering. 6 And he shall bring his trespas-offering unto the LORD, a ram without blemish out of the flock, with thy estimation, for a trespas-offering, unto the priest. 7 And the priest shall make an atonement for him, before the LORD; and it shall be forgiven him, for any thing of all that he hath done, in trespassing therein.

This is the latter part of the Law of the Trespas-Offering: The former part, which concern'd Trespases about Holy Things, we had in the close of the foregoing Chapter; this concerns Trespases in common Things. Observe here, 1. The Trespas supposed, v. 2, 3. Tho' all the Instances relate to our Neighbour, yet it is call'd a Trespas against the Lord, because tho' the Injury be done immediately to our Neighbour, yet an Affront is thereby given to his Maker, and our Master: He that speaks Evil of his Brother, is said to speak Evil of the Law, and consequently of the Law-Maker, James 4. 11. Tho' the Person injured be never so mean and despicable, and every way our inferior, yet the Injury reflects upon that God, who has made the Command of loving our Neighbour second to that of loving himself. The Trespases instanced in are, 1. Denying a Trust; If a Man lye unto his Neighbour in that which was delivered him to keep: or which is worse, which was lent him for his Use. If we claim that as our own, which is only borrow'd, left in our Custody, or committed to our Care; this is a Trespas against the Lord, who, for the Benefit of human Society, will have Property and Truth maintain'd. 2. Defrauding a Partner; If a Man

lye in Fellowship, claiming a sole Interest in that wherein he has but a Joint-Interest. 3. Disowning a manifest Wrong; If a Man hath the Front to lye in a thing taken away by Violence, which ordinarily cannot be hid. 4. Deceiving in Commerce; or, as some think, by false Accusation; if a Man hath deceitfully oppress'd his Neighbour, as some read it, either withholding what is due, or extorting what is not. 5. Detaining what is found, and denying it, v. 3. If a Man has found that which was lost, he must not call it his own presently, but endeavour to find out the Owner, to whom it must be returned; this is doing as we would be done by: But he that lyes concerning it, that faith he knows nothing of it, when he doth, especially if he back that lye with a false Oath, he trespasseth against the Lord, who to every thing that is said is a Witness, but to an Oath he is the Party appeal'd to; and highly affronted when he is call'd to witness to a Lye.

(2.) The Trespas-Offering appointed: 1. In the day of his Trespas-Offering he must make Satisfaction to his Brother: This must be first done, if thy Brother hath ought against thee, v. 4, 5. because he hath sinned, and is guilty, i. e. is convicted of his Guilt by his own Conscience, is touch'd with Remorse for it; seeing himself guilty before God, let him faithfully restore all that he has got by Fraud or Oppression, with a fifth part added, to make amends to the Owner, for the Loss and Trouble he had sustain'd in the mean time: let him account both for Debt and Damages. Note, Where Wrong has been done, Restitution must be made; and till it is made to the utmost of our power, or an Equivalent accepted by the Person wrong'd, we cannot have the Comfort of the Forgiveness of the Sin; for the keeping of what is unjustly got, avows the taking, and both together are but one continued Act of Unrighteousness. To repent, is to undo what we have done amiss, which (whatever we pretend) we cannot be said to do, till we restore what has been got by it, as Zaccheus, Luke 19. 8. and make satisfaction for the Wrong done. 2. He must then come and offer his Gift, must bring his Trespas-Offering to the Lord, whom he had offended, and the Priest must make an Atonement for him, v. 6, 7. This Trespas-Offering could not of itself make Satisfaction for Sin, or Reconciliation between God and the Sinner, but as it signified the Atonement that was to be made by our Lord Jesus, when he should make his Soul an Offering for Sin, a Trespas-Offering, 'tis the same word that is here used, Isa. 53. 10. The Trespases here mention'd are Trespases still against the Law of Christ, which insists as much upon Justice and Truth, as ever the Law of Nature, or the Law of Moses did; and tho' now we may have them pardon'd without a Trespas-Offering, yet not without true Repentance, Restitution, Reformation, and a humble Faith in the Righteousness of Christ: And if any make the more bold with these Sins, because they are not now put to the Expence of a Trespas-Offering for them, they turn the Grace of God into Wantonness, and so bring upon themselves a swift Destruction. The Lord is the Avenger of all such, 1 Thess. 4. 6.

8 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 9 Command Aaron and his sons, saying, This is the law of the burnt-offering: (It is the burnt-offering, because of the burning upon the altar all night unto the morning, and the fire of the altar shall be burning in it) 10 And the priest shall put on his linnen garment, and his linnen breeches shall he put upon his flesh, and take up the ashes which the fire hath consumed, with the burnt-offering on the altar, and he shall put them besides the altar. 11 And he shall put off his garments, and put on other garments, and carry forth the ashes without the camp, unto a clean place. 12 And the fire upon the altar shall be burning in it, it shall not be put out: and the priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and lay the burnt-offering in order upon it, and he shall burn thereon the fat of the peace-offerings. 13 The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar: it shall never go out.

Hitherto are the Instructions given to Moses concerning the Sacrifices he was to give to the People; but here begin the Instructions he was to give to the Priests: he must command Aaron and his Sons, v. 9. The Priests were Rulers in the House of God, but these Rulers must be ruled, and they that had the Command of others, must themselves be commanded. Let Ministers remember, that not only Commissions, but Commands were given to Aaron and his sons, who must be in subjection to them.

In these Verses we have the Law of the Burnt-Offering, as far as it was the peculiar Care of the Priests. The daily Sacrifice

fice of a Lamb, which was offer'd Morning and Evening for the whole Congregation, is here chiefly refer'd to. 1. The Priest must take care of the *Ashes* of the Burnt-Offering, that they be decently dispos'd of, v. 10, 11. He must clear the Altar of them every Morning, and put them on the East-side of the Altar, which was furthest from the Sanctuary; this he must do in his Linnen Garment, which he always wore when he did any Service at the Altar: and then he must shift himself, and put on *other Garments*, either such as were his common Wear, or (as some think) other priestly Garments less honourable, and must carry the *Ashes* to a clean place without the Camp. Now, (1.) God would have this done for the Honour of his Altar, and the Sacrifices that were burnt upon it; even the *Ashes* of the Sacrifices must be preserved, to testify the Regard God had to it: By the Burnt-Offering he was honoured, and therefore thus it was honoured. And some think this Care that was taken of the *Ashes* of the Sacrifice, typified the Burial of our Saviour; his dead Body (the *Ashes* of the Sacrifice) was carefully laid up in a Garden, in a new Sepulchre, which was a clean Place. It was also requisite that the Altar should be kept as clean as might be, the Fire upon it would burn the better; and 'tis decent in a House to have a clean Fire-side. (2.) God would have the Priests themselves to do it, to teach them and us, to stoop to the meanest Services for the Honour of God, and of his Altar. The Priest himself must not only kindle the Fire, but clean the Hearth, and carry out the *Ashes*. God's Servants must think nothing below them but Sin.

2. The Priest must take care of the Fire upon the Altar, that that should be kept always burning. This is much insisted on here, v. 9, 12 and this express Law given, v. 13. *The Fire shall ever be burning upon the Altar, it shall never go out.* We may suppose no Day pass'd without some extraordinary Sacrifices, which were always offer'd between the Morning and Evening Lamb; so that from Morning to Night the Fire on the Altar was kept up of course: but to preserve it all Night unto the Morning, v. 9. required some Care. Those that keep good Houses, never let their Kitchen-Fire go out; therefore God would thus give an Instance of his good House-keeping. The first Fire upon the Altar came from Heaven, Lev. 9. 24. so that by keeping that up continually, with constant Supply of Fuel, all their Sacrifices throughout all their Generations might be said to be consumed with that Fire from Heaven, in token of God's Acceptance. If thro' Carelessness they should ever let it go out, they could not expect to have it so kindled again. Accordingly, the Jews tell us, that the Fire never did go out upon the Altar till the Captivity in Babylon. This is refer'd to Isa. 31. 9. where God is said to have his Fire in Zion, and his Furnace in Jerusalem. By this Law we are taught to keep up in our Minds a constant Disposition to all Acts of Piety and Devotion, an habitual Affection to Divine Things, so as to be always ready to every good Word and Work. We must not only not quench the Spirit, but we must stir up the Gift that is in us. Tho' we be not always sacrificing, yet we must keep the Fire of Holy Love always burning; and thus we must pray always.

14 And this is the law of the meat-offering: the sons of Aaron shall offer it before the LORD, before the altar. 15 And he shall take of it his handful, of the flour of the meat-offering, and of the oil thereof, and all the frankincense which is upon the meat-offering, and shall burn it upon the altar, for a sweet savour, even the memorial of it unto the LORD. 16 And the remainder thereof shall Aaron and his sons eat; with unleavened bread shall it be eaten in the holy place: in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation they shall eat it. 17 It shall not be baken with leaven; I have given it unto them for their portion of my offerings made by fire: it is most holy, as is the sin-offering, and as the trespass-offering. 18 All the males among the children of Aaron shall eat of it: it shall be a statute for ever in your generations concerning the offerings of the LORD made by fire: every one that toucheth them shall be holy. 19 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 20 This is the offering of Aaron, and of his sons, which they shall offer unto the LORD, in the day when he is anointed; the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a meat-offering perpetual, half of it in the morning, and half thereof at night. 21 In a pan it shall be made with oil, and when it is baken,

thou shalt bring it in; and the baken pieces of the meat-offering shalt thou offer for a sweet savour unto the LORD. 22 And the priest of his sons that is anointed in his stead, shall offer it; it is a statute for ever unto the LORD, it shall be wholly burnt. 23 For every meat-offering for the priest shall be wholly burnt; it shall not be eaten.

The Meat-offering was either that which was offer'd by the People, or that by the Priests at their Consecration. Now, 1. As to the common Meat-offering, only a handful of it was to be burnt upon the Altar, all the rest was allow'd to the Priests for their Food. The Law of the Burnt-offerings was such as impos'd upon the Priest a great deal of Care and Work, but allowed them little Profit; for the Flesh was wholly burnt, and the Priest had nothing but the Skin; but to make them amends, the greatest part of the Meat-offering was their own. The burning of a handful of it upon the Altar, v. 13 was order'd before, chap. 2. 9. Here the Remainder of it is consign'd to the Priests, the Servants of God's House: I have given it unto them, for their Portion of my Offerings, v. 17. Note, It is the Will of God, that his Ministers should be well provided for with Food convenient; and what is given to them, he accepts, as offered to himself, if it be done with a single Eye. 2. All Christians being spiritual Priests, do themselves share in the spiritual Sacrifices they offer. 'Tis not God that is the Gainer by them; the Handful burnt upon the Altar was not worth speaking of, in comparison with the Priest's Share: We ourselves are the Gainers by our Religious Services. Let God have all the Frankincense, and the Priests shall have the Flour and the Oil: What we give to God the Praise and Glory of; we may take to ourselves the Comfort and Benefit of.

The Laws concerning the eating of it were, 1. That it must be eaten unleavened, v. 16. What was offer'd to God must have no Leaven in it, and the Priests must have it as the Altar had it, and no otherwise. Thus must we keep the Feasts of the Lord with the unleavened Bread of Sincerity and Truth. 2. It must be eaten in the Court of the Tabernacle (here called the Holy Place) in some Room prepared by the Side of the Court for this purpose: 'Twas a great Crime to carry any of it out of the Court. The very eating of it was a sacred Rite, by which they were to honour God; and therefore it must be done in a Religious Manner, and with a Holy Reverence, which was preserved, by confining it to the Holy Place. 3. The Males only must eat of it, v. 18. Of the lesser Holy Things, as the First-Fruits and Tythes, and the Shoulder and Breasts of the Peace-offerings, the Daughters of the Priests might eat, for they might be carry'd out of the Court; but this was of the most Holy Things, which being to be eaten only in the Tabernacle, the Sons of Aaron only might eat of it. 4. The Priests only that were clean might eat of it; Every one that toucheth them shall be holy, v. 18. Holy Things for Holy Persons. Some read it, Every Thing that touches it shall be holy: All the Furniture of the Table on which these Holy Things were eaten, must be appropriated to that Use only, and never after used as common Things.

2. As to the Consecration Meat-Offering, which was offer'd for the Priests themselves, as it was to be wholly burnt, and none of it eaten, v. 23. It comes in here as an Exception from the foregoing Law. It should seem that this Law concerning the Meat-offering of Initiation, did only oblige the High Priest to offer it, and on that day only that he was anointed, and so for his Successors in the day they were anointed. But the Jewish Writers say, that by this Law every Priest, on the day he first enter'd upon his Ministry, was bound to offer this Meat-Offering; and that the High Priest was bound to offer it every day of his Life, from the day in which he was anointed: and that it was to be offer'd besides the Meat-Offering that attended the Morning and Evening Sacrifice, because it is said here to be a Meat-Offering perpetual, v. 20. Josephus saith, the High Priest sacrificed twice every day at his own Charges, and this was his Sacrifice. Note, Those whom God hath advanced above others in Dignity and Power, ought to consider, that he expects more from them than from others, and should take every the least Intimation of Service to be done for him. The Meat-Offering of the Priest was to be baken as if it were to be eaten, and yet it must be wholly burnt. Tho' the Priest that minister'd was to be paid for serving the People, yet no reason he should be paid for serving the High Priest, who was the Father of the Family of the Priests, and whom therefore any Priest should take a pleasure in serving gratis. Nor was it fit that the Priests should eat of the Offerings of a Priest; for as the Sins of the People were typically transferred to the Priests, which was signify'd by their eating of their Offerings, (Hos. 4. 8.) so the Sins of the Priests must be typically transferred to the Altar, which therefore must eat up all their Offerings. We are all un-

done, both Ministers and People, if we must bear our own Iniquity; nor could we have had any Comfort or Hope, if God had not laid on his dear Son the Iniquity of us all, and he is both the Priest, and the Altar.

24 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 25 Speak unto Aaron and to his sons, saying, This is the law of the sin-offering; in the place where the burnt-offering is killed, shall the sin-offering be killed before the LORD: it is most holy. 26 The priest that offereth it for sin, shall eat it; in the holy place shall it be eaten, in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation. 27 Whatsoever shall touch the flesh thereof shall be holy; and when there is sprinkled of the blood thereof upon any garment, thou shalt wash that whereon it was sprinkled in the holy place. 28 But the earthen vessel wherein it is sodden, shall be broken; and if it be sodden in a brazen pot, it shall be both scoured, and rinsed in water. 29 All the males among the priests shall eat thereof; it is most holy. 30 And no sin-offering, whereof any of the blood is brought into the tabernacle of the congregation to reconcile withal in the holy place, shall be eaten, it shall be burnt in the fire.

We have here so much of the Law of the Sin-offering, as did peculiarly concern the Priests that offer'd it. As, 1. That it must be killed in the Place where the Burnt-offering was killed, v. 25, that was on the North-side of the Altar, chap. 1. 11, which some think typified the crucifying of Christ on Mount Calvary, which was on the North-side of Jerusalem. 2. That the Priest who offer'd it for the Sinner, was (with his Sons, or other Priests, v. 29.) to eat the Flesh of it, after the Blood and Fat had been offer'd to God, in the Court of the Tabernacle, v. 26. Hereby they were to bear the Iniquity of the Congregation, as it is explain'd chap. 10. 17. 3. The Blood of the Sin-offering was with great Reverence to be washed out of the Clothes on which it happen'd to light, v. 27. which signified the awful Regard we ought to have to the Blood of Christ, not counting it a common thing. That Blood must be sprinkled on the Conscience, not on the Raiment. 4. The Vessel in which the Flesh of the Sin-offering was boiled, must be broken, if it were an earthen one, and if a brazen one, well washed, v. 28. This intimated, that the Defilement was not wholly taken away by the Offering, but did rather cleave to it, such was the Weakness and Deficiency of those Sacrifices; but the Blood of Christ thoroughly cleanteth from all Sin, and after it there needs no Cleansing. 5. That all this must be understood of the common Sin-offerings, not of those for the Priest, or the Body of the Congregation, either occasional, or stated upon the Day of Atonement; for it had been before ordained, and it was now ratified, that if the Blood of the Offering was brought into the Holy Place, as it was in those extraordinary Cases, the Flesh was not to be eaten, but burnt without the Camp, v. 30. Hence the Apostle infers the Advantage we have under the Gospel, above what they had under the Law; for tho' the Blood of Christ was brought into the Tabernacle, to reconcile with in the Holy Place, yet we have a Right by Faith to eat of the Altar, Heb. 13. 10, 11, 12, and so to take the Comfort of the great Propitiation.

CHAP. VII.

Here's, 1. The Law of the Trespass-offering, v. 1—7, with some further Directions concerning the Burnt-offering and the Meat-offering, v. 8—10. 2. The Law of the Peace-offering. The eating of it, v. 11—21, on which occasion the Prohibition of eating of Fat or Blood is repeated, v. 22—27. And the Priests Share of it, v. 28—34. 3. The Conclusion of these Institutions, v. 35—38.

1 Likewise this is the law of the trespass-offering; it is most holy. 2 In the place where they kill the burnt-offering, shall they kill the trespass-offering; and the blood thereof shall be sprinkled round about upon the altar. 3 And he shall offer it all the fat thereof; the rump, and the fat that covereth the inwards. 4 And the two kidneys, and the fat that is on them, which is by the flanks, and the caul that is above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall he take away. 5 And the priest shall burn them upon

the altar, for an offering made by fire unto the LORD: it is a trespass-offering. 6 Every male among the priests shall eat thereof; it shall be eaten in the holy place: it is most holy. 7 As the sin-offering is, so is the trespass-offering; there is one law for them: the priest that maketh atonement therewith, shall have it. 8 And the priest that offereth any man's burnt-offering, even the priest shall have to himself the skin of the burnt-offering which he hath offered. 9 And all the meat-offering that is baken in the oven, and all that is dressed in the frying-pan, and in the pan, shall be the priest's that offereth it. 10 And every meat-offering mingled with oil, and dry, shall all the sons of Aaron have, one as much as another.

Observe here, 1. Concerning the Trespass-offering, that being much of the same nature with the Sin-offering, it was to be govern'd by the same Rules, v. 6. when the Blood and Fat were offer'd to God to make Atonement, the Priests were to eat the Flesh, as that of the Sin-offering, in the Holy Place. The Jews have a Tradition (as we have it from the Learned Bishop Patrick) concerning the sprinkling of the Blood of the Trespass-offering round about upon the Altar, that there was a scarlet Line, which went round about the Altar exactly in the middle, and the Blood of the Burnt-offerings was sprinkled round about above the Line; but that of the Trespass-offerings and Peace-offerings round about below the Line. As to the Flesh of the Trespass-offering, the Right to it belonged to the Priest that offer'd it, v. 7. He that did the Work, must have the Wages: This was an Encouragement to the Priests, to give diligent Attendance to the Altar; the more ready and busy they were, the more they got. Note, The more diligent we are in the Services of Religion, the more we shall reap of the Advantages of it. But any of the Priests, and the Males of their Families, might be invited by him, to whom it belonged, to partake with him, v. 6. Every Male among the Priests shall eat thereof; i. e. may eat thereof in the Holy Place. And no doubt it was the Usage to treat one another with those Perquisites of their Office, by which Friendship and Fellowship was kept up among the Priests. Freely they had received, and must freely give. It seems the Offerer was not himself to have any share of his Trespass-offering, as he was to have of his Peace-offering, but it was all divided between the Altar and the Priest. They offer'd Peace-offerings in Thankfulness for Mercy, and then it was proper to feast; but they offer'd Trespass-offerings in Sorrow for Sin, and then Fasting was more proper, in token of holy Mourning, and a Resolution to abstain from Sin.

2. Concerning the Burnt-offering, it is here appointed that the Priest that offer'd it shall have the Skin, v. 8. which no doubt he might make Money of. This (the Jews say) is meant only of the Burnt-offerings which were offer'd by particular Persons; for the Profit of the Skins of the daily Burnt-offerings for the Congregation went to the Repair of the Sanctuary. Some suggest, that this Appointment will help us to understand God's clothing our first Parents with Coats of Skins, Gen. 3. 21. The Beasts, whose Skins they were, 'tis probable were offer'd in Sacrifice as whole Burnt-offerings, and that Adam was the Priest that offer'd them; and then God gave him the Skins, as his Fee, to make Clothes of for himself and his Wife; in remembrance of which, the Skins ever after pertained to the Priest: and see Gen. 27. 16.

3. Concerning the Meat-offering: if it was dressed, 'twas fit to be eaten presently, and therefore the Priest that offer'd it was to have it, v. 9. It was dry, there was not so much haste of using it, and therefore an equal Dividend of it must be made among all the Priests that were then in waiting, v. 10.

11 And this is the law of the sacrifice of peace-offerings, which he shall offer unto the LORD. 12 If he offer it for a thanksgiving, then he shall offer with the sacrifice of thanksgiving, unleavened cakes mingled with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and cakes mingled with oil, of fine flour, fried. 13 Besides the cakes, he shall offer for his offering, leavened bread, with the sacrifice of thanksgiving of his peace-offerings. 14 And of it he shall offer one out of the whole oblation, for a heave-offering unto the LORD, and it shall be the priest's that sprinkleth the blood of the peace-offerings. 15 And the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings

ings for thanksgiving, shall be eaten the same day that it is offered: he shall not leave any of it until the morning. 16 But if the sacrifice of his offering be a vow, or a voluntary offering, it shall be eaten the same day that he offereth his sacrifice; and on the morrow also the remainder of it shall be eaten. 17 But the remainder of the flesh of the sacrifice on the third day, shall be burnt with fire. 18 And if any of the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace-offerings be eaten at all on the third day, it shall not be accepted, neither shall it be imputed unto him that offereth it; it shall be an abomination, and the soul that eateth of it, shall bear his iniquity. 19 And the flesh that toucheth any unclean thing, shall not be eaten, it shall be burnt with fire; and as for the flesh, all that be clean shall eat thereof. 20 But the soul that eateth of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace-offerings, that pertain unto the LORD, having his uncleanness upon him, even that soul shall be cut off from his people. 21 Moreover, the soul that shall touch any unclean thing, as the uncleanness of man, or any unclean beast, or any abominable unclean thing, and eat of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace-offerings which pertain unto the LORD, even that soul shall be cut off from his people. 22 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 23 Speak unto the children of Israel saying, Ye shall eat no manner of fat, of ox, or of sheep, or of goat. 24 And the fat of the beast that dieth of itself, and the fat of that which is torn with beasts, may be used in any other use; but ye shall in no wise eat of it. 25 For whosoever eateth the fat of the beast, of which men offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD, even the soul that eateth it, shall be cut off from his people. 26 Moreover, ye shall eat no manner of blood, whether it be of fowl, or of beast, in any of your dwellings. 27 Whatsoever soul it be that eateth any manner of blood, even that soul shall be cut off from his people. 28 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 29 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, He that offereth the sacrifice of his peace-offerings unto the LORD, shall bring his oblation unto the LORD, of the sacrifice of his peace-offerings. 30 His own hands shall bring the offerings of the LORD, made by fire, the fat with the breast it shall he bring, that the breast may be waved, for a wave-offering before the LORD. 31 And the priest shall burn the fat upon the altar; but the breast shall be Aaron's and his sons. 32 And the right shoulder shall ye give unto the priest for an heave-offering, of the sacrifices of your peace-offerings. 33 He among the sons of Aaron that offereth the blood of the peace-offerings, and the fat, shall have the right shoulder for his part. 34 For the wave-breast and the heave-shoulder have I taken of the children of Israel, from off the sacrifices of their peace-offerings, and have given them unto Aaron the priest, and unto his sons, by a statute for ever, from among the children of Israel.

All this relates to the *Peace-offerings*; 'tis the Repetition and Explication of what we had before, with divers Additions: 1. The Nature and Intention of the Peace-offerings is here more distinctly opened. They were offered, either, (1.) In *Thankfulness* for some special Mercy received, such as Recovery from Sickness, Preservations in a Journey, Deliverance at Sea, Redemption out of Captivity; all which are instanced in *Psal. 107*: and for them Men are called upon to offer the Sacrifice of Thanksgiving, *v. 22*. Or, (2.) In Performance of some *Vow*; which a Man made when he was in Distress, *v. 16*. and this was less *honourable* than the former,

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tho' the Omission of it would have been more *culpable*. Or, (3.) In Supplication for some special Mercy, which a Man was in the Pursuit and Expectation of; here called a *voluntary Offering*: This accompanied a Man's Prayers, as the former did his Praises. We do not find that Men were bound by the Law, unless they had bound themselves by Vow, to offer these Peace-offerings, upon such Occasions, as they were to bring their Sacrifices of Atonement, in case of Sin committed; not but that Prayer and Praise are as much our Duty as Repentance is: but here in the Expressions of their Sense of Mercy, God left them more to their Liberty, than in the Expressions of their Sense of Sin, to try the Generosity of their Devotion; and that their Sacrifices being *Freewill-offerings*, they might be the more laudable and acceptable: and by obliging them to bring the Sacrifices of Atonement, God would shew the Necessity of the great Propitiation.

2. The Rites and Ceremonies about it are enlarged upon.

(1.) If it were offered for a Thanksgiving, a *Meat-offering* must be offered with it, *Cakes* of several sorts; and *Wafers*, *v. 12*. and (which was peculiar to the *Peace-offerings*) *leavened Bread* must be offered, not to be burnt upon the Altar, that was forbidden, *chap. 2. 11*. but to be eaten with the Flesh of the Sacrifice, that nothing might be wanting to make it a compleat and pleasant Feast, for unleavened Bread was less grateful to the Taste; and therefore tho' enjoined in the Passover, for a particular Reason, yet in other Festivals *leavened Bread*, which was lighter and more pleasant, was appointed; that Men might feast at God's Table, as well as at their own. And some think, that a *Meat-offering* is required to be brought with every *Peace-offering*, as well as with that of Thanksgiving, by that Law here, *v. 29*. which requires an *Oblation* with it, that the Table might be as well furnished as the Altar. (2.) The Flesh of the Peace-offerings, both that which was the Priest's share, and that which was the Officer's, must be eaten quickly, and not kept long, either raw, or dress'd cold. If it were a Peace-offering for Thanksgiving, it must be all eaten the same day, *v. 15*. If a Vow or a voluntary Offering, it must be eaten either the same day, or the day after, *v. 16*. If any were left beyond the time limited, it was to be burnt, *v. 17*. And if any Person eat of it, it should be animadverted upon as a very high Misdemeanour, *v. 18*. Tho' they were not obliged to eat it in the *Holy Place*, as those Offerings that are called *most Holy*; but might take it to their own Tents, and feast upon it there; yet God would by this Law make them to know a Difference between that and other Meat, and religiously to observe it; that whereas they might keep other Meat cold in the House as long as they thought fit, and warm it again, if they pleased, and eat it three or four days after, they might not do so with the Flesh of their *Peace-offerings*; that must be eaten presently. 1. Because God would not have that *Holy Flesh* to be in danger of putrefying, or being fly-blown; to prevent which, it must be *salted with Fire*, (as the Expression is, *Mark 9. 49*) if it were kept, as if it was used it must be *salted with Salt*. 2. Because God would not have his People to be niggardly, and sparing, and distrustful of Providence; but cheerfully to enjoy what God gives them, (*Ezek. 3. 15*.) and to do good with it, and not to be anxiously solicitous for the Morrow. 3. The Flesh of the Peace-offerings was God's Treat, and therefore God would have the Disposal of it, and he orders it to be used *generously* for the Entertainment of their Friends, and *charitably* for the Relief of the Poor; to shew that he is a bountiful Benefactor, gives us all things richly to enjoy, the Bread of the day in its day. If the Sacrifice were a Thanksgiving, they were especially obliged thus to testify their holy Joy in God's Goodness by their holy Feasting. This Law is made very strict, *v. 18*. That if the Offerer did not take care to have all his Offering eaten by himself, or his Family, his Friends or the Poor, within the time limited by the Law; and if there were any left, to burn it; (which was the most decent way of disposing of it, the Sacrifices upon the Altar being consumed by Fire) then his Offering should not be accepted, nor imputed to him. Note, All the Benefit of our Religious Services is lost, if we do not improve them, and manage ourselves aright afterwards. They are not acceptable to God, if they have not a due Influence upon ourselves. If a Man seem'd generous in bringing a Peace-offering, and yet afterwards proved sneaking and paltry in the using of it, it was as if he had never brought it; nay, it shall be an Abomination. Note, There is no Mean between God's Acceptance and his Abhorrence. If our Persons and Performances be sincere and upright, they are accepted; if not, they are an Abomination, *Prov. 15. 2*. He that eat it after the time appointed, shall bear his iniquity; i. e. he shall be cut off from his People, as 'tis explained *chap. 19. 7*. where this Law is repeated. This Law of eating the Peace-offerings before the third day, that they might not putrefy, is applicable to the Resurrection of Christ after two days; that being God's holy one, he might not see Corruption, *Psal. 16. 10*. And some think it gives us an Instruction, speedily and without delay

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delay to partake of Christ, and his Grace, feeding and feasting thereupon by Faith; *to Day, while it is called to Day*, Heb. 3. 13, 14. for it will be too late shortly.

3. Both the Flesh, and those that eat it, must be pure. 1. The Flesh must *touch no unclean thing*; if it did, it must not be eaten, but burnt, v. 19. If in carrying it from the Altar to the Place where it was eaten, suppose a Dog touched it, or it touched a dead Body, or any other unclean thing, it was then unfit to be used in a religious Feast. Every thing we honour the holy God with, must be pure, and carefully kept from all Pollution. It is a Case adjudg'd, Hag. 2. 12. that the Holy Flesh could not by its Touch communicate Holiness to what was common; but by this Law it is determined, that by the Touch of that which was unclean, it receiv'd Pollution from it: which intimates, that the Infection of Sin is more easily and more frequently communicated, than the Saviour of Grace. 2. It must not be eaten by any unclean Person. He that was upon any account ceremonially unclean, it was at his Peril, if he presum'd to eat of the Flesh of the Peace-offerings, v. 20, 21. Holy Things are only for holy Persons: the Holiness of the Food being Ceremonial, those were incapacitated to partake of it, who lay under any Ceremonial Uncleaness; but we are hereby taught to preserve ourselves pure from all the Pollutions of Sins, that we may have the Benefit and Comfort of Christ's Sacrifice, 1 Pet. 2. 1, 2. Our Consciences must be purged from dead Works, that we may be fit to serve the living God, Heb. 9. 14. But if any dare to partake of the Table of the Lord, under the Pollution of Sin unrepented of, and so profane Sacred Things, they eat and drink Judgment to themselves, as those did that eat of the Peace-offerings in their Uncleaness, 1 Cor. 11. 29. A good Reason for the Strictness of this Law is intimated in the Description given of the Peace-offerings, v. 20. and again, v. 21. that they pertain unto the Lord. Whatever pertains to the Lord is sacred, and must be used with great Reverence, and not with unhallowed Hands. Be ye holy, for God is holy, and ye pertain to him.

4. The eating of Blood and the Fat of the Inwards is here again prohibited; and the Prohibition is annex'd as before to the Law of the Peace-offerings, chap. 3. 17.

1. The Prohibition of the Fat seems to be confin'd only to those Beasts which were us'd for Sacrifice, the Beesves, Sheep, and Goats: But of the Roebuck, and of the Hart, and other clean Beasts, they might eat the Fat, for those only of which Offerings were brought are mentioned here, v. 23. and v. 25. This was to preserve in their Minds a Reverence for God's Altar, on which the Fat of the Inwards was burn'd. The Jews say, if a Man eat so much as an Olive of forbidden Fat, if he do it presumptuously, he is in danger to be cut off by the Hand of God; if ignorantly, he is to bring a Sin-offering, and so to pay dear for his Carelessness. To eat of the Flesh of that which died of itself, or was torn of Beasts, was unlawful; but to eat of the Fat of such was doubly unlawful, v. 24.

2. The Prohibition of Blood is more general, v. 26, 27. Because the Fat was offered to God only by way of Acknowledgment; but the Blood made Atonement for the Soul, and so typified Christ's Sacrifice, much more than the Burning of the Fat did; to this therefore a greater Reverence must be paid, till these Types had their Accomplishment in the Offering up of the Body of Christ once for all. The Jews rightly expound this Law as forbidding only the Blood of the Life; as they express it, not that which we call the Gravy, for of that they suppos'd it was lawful to eat.

5. The Priest's Share of the Peace-offerings is here cut out for himself; out of every Beast that was offer'd for a Peace-offering, the Priest that offer'd it was to have to himself the Breast and the right Shoulder, v. 30.—34. Observe here, 1. That when the Sacrifice was killed, the Offerer himself must, with his own Hands, present God's Part of it, that he might signify thereby his cheerful giving it up to God, and his Desire that it might be accepted: he was with his own Hands to lift it up, in token of his Regard to God as the God of Heaven; and then to wave it to and fro, in token of his Regard to God as the Lord of the whole Earth; to whom thus, as far as he could reach, he offered it, shewing his good Will to do him Honour. Now that which was thus heaved and waved, was the Fat, and the Breast, and the Right Shoulder; 'twas all offered to God: and then he ordered the Fat to his Altar, and the Breast and Shoulder to his Priest, both being his Receivers. 2. That when the Fat was burn'd, the Priest took his Part, on which he and his Family were to feast, as well as the Offerer and his Family. In holy Joy and Thanksgiving, it is good to have our Ministers to go before us, and to be our Mouth to God. The Melody is then sweet, when he that sows, and they that reap, rejoice together. Some observe a Significancy in the Parts assign'd to the Priests. The Breast and the Shoulder intimate the Affections and the Actions, which must be devoted to the Honour of God by all his People, and to the Service also of the Church by all his Priests. Christ our great Peace-offering feasts all his Spiritual Priests with the Breast and Shoulder, with the dearest Love, and the

sweetest and strongest Support, for he is the Wisdom of God, and the Power of God. When Saul was design'd for a King, Samuel order'd the Shoulder of the Peace-offering to be set before him, 1 Sam. 9. 24. which gave him a hint of something great and sacred intended him. Jesus Christ is our great Peace-offering; for he made himself a Sacrifice, not only to atone for Sin, and to save us from the Curse, but to purchase a Blessing for us, and all Good. By our joyful partaking of the Benefits of Redemption, we feast upon the Sacrifice; to signify which, the Lord's Supper was instituted.

35 This is the portion of the anointing of Aaron, and of the anointing of his sons, out of the offerings of the LORD made by fire, in the day when he presented them to minister unto the LORD in the priests office: 36 Which the LORD commanded to be given them of the children of Israel in the day that he anointed them, by a statute for ever throughout their generations. 37 This is the law of the burnt-offering, of the meat-offering, and of the sin-offering, and of the trespass offering, and of the consecrations, and of the sacrifice of the peace-offerings: 38 Which the LORD commanded Moses in mount Sinai, in the day that he commanded the children of Israel to offer their oblations unto the LORD; in the wilderness of Sinai.

Here's the Conclusion of these Laws concerning the Sacrifices, though some of them are afterwards repeated and explain'd. They are to be consider'd, 1. As a Grant to the Priests, v. 35, 36. In the Day they were ordain'd to that Work and Office, this Provision was made for their comfortable Maintenance. Note, God will take care that those that are employ'd for him be well paid and well provided for. They that receive the Anointing of the Spirit to minister unto the Lord, shall have their Portion, and it shall be a worthy Portion, out of the Offerings of the Lord: for God's Work is his own Wages, and there is a present Reward of Obedience in Obedience. 2. As a Statute for ever to the People, that they should bring these Offerings, according to the Rules prescrib'd, and cheerfully give the Priests their Share out of them. God commanded the Children of Israel to offer their Oblations, v. 38. Note, The solemn Acts of Religious Worship are commanded: They are not things that we are left to our liberty in, and which we may do or not do at our pleasure: but we are under indispensable Obligations to perform them in their Season, and it is at our Peril if we omit them. The Observance of the Laws of Christ cannot be less necessary, than the Observance of the Laws of Moses was.

CHAP. VIII.

This Chapter gives us an Account of the solemn Consecration of Aaron and his Sons to the Priest's Office. 1. It was done publicly, and the Congregation was call'd together to be Witnesses of it, v. 1—4. 2. It was done exactly according to God's Appointment, v. 5. 1. They were washed and dress'd, v. 1—9, 13. 2. The Tabernacle, and the Vessels of it were anointed, and then the Priests, v. 10—12. 3. A Sin-offering was offer'd for them, v. 14—17. 4. A Burnt-offering, v. 18—21. 5. The Ram of Consecration, v. 22—30. 6. The Continuance of this Solemnity for seven Days, v. 31—36.

1 AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments, and the anointing oyl, and a bullock for the sin-offering, and two rams, and a basket of unleavened bread. 3 And gather thou all the congregation together unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 4 And Moses did as the LORD commanded him, and the assembly was gathered together unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 5 And Moses said unto the congregation, This is the thing which the LORD commanded to be done. 6 And Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water. 7 And he put upon him the coat, and girded him with the girdle, and clothed him with the robe, and put the ephod upon him, and he girded him with the curious girdle of the ephod, and bound it unto him therewith. 8 And he put the breast-plate upon him: also he put in the

the breast-plate the Urim and Thummim. 9 And he put the mitre upon his head: also upon the mitre, even upon his fore-front did he put the golden plate, the holy crown, as the LORD commanded Moses. 10 And Moses took the anointing oyl, and anointed the tabernacle, and all that was therein, and sanctified them. 11 And he sprinkled thereof upon the altar seven times, and anointed the altar, and all his vessels, both the laver and his foot, to sanctify them. 12 And he poured of the anointing oyl upon Aaron's head, and anointed him to sanctify him. 13 And Moses brought Aaron's sons, and put coats upon them, and girded them with girdles, and put bonnets upon them, as the LORD commanded Moses.

God had given Moses Orders to consecrate Aaron and his Sons to the Priest's Office, when he was with him the first time upon Mount Sinai, Exod 28. and 29. where we have also the particular Instructions he had how to do it. Now here we have,

1. The Orders repeated; what was there commanded to be done, is here commanded to be done now, v. 2, 3. The Tabernacle was newly set up, which, without Priests, would be as a Candlestick without a Candle. The Law concerning Sacrifices was newly given, but could not be observ'd without Priests; for though Aaron and his Sons had been nominated to the Office, they could not officiate till they were consecrated, which yet must not be done, till the Place of their Ministration was prepar'd, and the Ordinances instituted, that they might apply themselves to work as soon as ever they were consecrated, and might know they were not ordain'd only to the Honour and Profit, but to the Business of the Priesthood. Aaron and his Sons were near Relations to Moses, and therefore he would not consecrate them till he had farther Orders, lest he should seem too forward to bring Honour into his Family.

2. The Congregation called together, at the door, i. e. in the Court of the Tabernacle, v. 4. The Elders and principal Men of the Congregation, who represented the Body of the People, were summon'd to attend; for the Court would hold but a few of the many thousands of Israel. 'Twas done thus publicly, 1. Because it was a solemn Transaction between God and Israel: the Priests were to be ordained for Men in things pertaining to God, for the maintaining of a settled Correspondence, and the negotiating all Affairs between the People and God, and therefore it was fit both Sides should appear to own the Appointment at the Door of the Tabernacle of Meeting. 2. The Spectators of the Solemnity could not but be possess'd by the sight of it with a great Veneration for the Priests, and their Office, which was necessary among a People so wretchedly prone as they were to Envy and Discontent. 'Twas strange that any of those who were Witnesses of what was here done, should afterwards say, as some of them did, *Ye take too much upon you, ye Sons of Levi*: But what would they have said, if it had been done clandestinely? Note, It is very fit, and of good Use, that Ministers should be ordain'd publicly, *plebe presente*, according to the Usage of the Primitive Church.

3. The Commission read, v. 5. Moses, who was God's Representative in this Solemnity, produc'd his Orders before the Congregation, *This is the thing which the Lord commanded to be done*. Though God had crown'd him King in *Jeshurun*, when he made his Face to shine in the Sight of all Israel, yet he did not institute or appoint any thing in God's Worship, but what God himself had commanded. The Priesthood he deliver'd to them, was that which he had receiv'd from the Lord. Note, All that minister about Holy Things, must have an eye to God's Command, as their Rule and Warrant; for it is only in the Observance of that, that they can expect to be own'd and accepted of God. Thus we must be able to say in all Acts of Religious Worship, *This is the thing which the Lord commanded to be done*.

4. The Ceremony perform'd according to the Divine Ritual. 1. Aaron and his Sons were wash'd with Water, v. 6. to signify that they ought now to purify themselves from all sinful Dispositions and Inclinations, and ever after to keep themselves pure. Christ washed those from their Sins in his own Blood, whom he makes to our God Kings and Priests, Rev. 1. 5, 6. and those that draw near to God must be washed in pure Water, Heb. 10. 22. Though they were never so clean before, and no Filth was to be seen upon them, yet they must be wash'd, to signify their Purification from Sin, with which their Souls were polluted, how clean forever their Bodies were.

2. They were cloth'd with the Holy Garments; Aaron with his, v. 7, 8, 9. which typified the Dignity of Christ our great High Priest; and his Sons with theirs, v. 12. which typified the Decency of Christians, who are Spiritual Priests. Christ wears the Breast-plate of Judgment, and the Holy Crown; for the Church's High Priest is her Prophet and King: All Believers are cloth'd with the Robe of Righteousness, girt with the Girdle of Truth, Resolution, and close Application; and their Heads bound, as the word here is, with the Bonnet, or Diadem of Beauty, the Beauty of Holiness.

3. The High Priest was anointed, and it should seem the Holy Things were anointed at the same time; some think that was done before, but is mention'd here, because Aaron was anointed with the same Oil that they were. But the manner of relating it here, makes it more probable that it was done at the same time, and that the seven Days of the consecrating of the Altar were co-incident with the seven Days of the Priest's Consecration. The Tabernacle, and all its Utensils, had some of the anointing Oil put upon them with Moses's Finger, v. 10. So had the Altar, v. 11. these were to sanctify the Gold, and the Gift, (Mat. 23. 17, 19.) and therefore must themselves be thus sanctified; but he pour'd it out more plentifully upon the Head of Aaron, v. 12. so that it ran down to the Skirts of his Garments, because his Unction was to typify the anointing of Christ with the Spirit, which was not given by Measure to him. Yet all Believers also have received the Anointing, which puts an indelible Character upon them, 1 John 2. 27.

14 And he brought the bullock for the sin-offering, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the bullock for the sin-offering.

15 And he slew it, and Moses took the blood, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about with his finger, and purified the altar; and poured the blood at the bottom of the altar, and sanctified it, to make reconciliation upon it. 16 And he took all the fat that was upon the inwards, and the caul above the liver, and the two kidneys, and their fat, and Moses burn'd it upon the altar. 17 But the bullock and his hide, his flesh and his dung, he burnt with fire without the camp; as the LORD commanded Moses. 18 And he brought the ram for the burnt-offering: and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the ram. 19 And he killed it, and Moses sprinkled the blood upon the altar round about. 20 And he cut the ram into pieces, and Moses burnt the head, and the pieces, and the fat. 21 And he washed the inwards and the legs in water; and Moses burnt the whole ram upon the altar: it was a burnt-sacrifice for a sweet savour, and an offering made by fire unto the LORD, as the LORD commanded Moses. 22 And he brought the other ram, the ram of consecration: and Aaron and his sons laid their hand upon the head of the ram. 23 And he slew it, and Moses took of the blood of it, and put it upon the tip of Aaron's right ear, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot. 24 And he brought Aaron's sons, and Moses put the blood upon the tip of their right ear, and upon the thumbs of their right hands, and upon the great toes of their right feet: and Moses sprinkled the blood upon the altar round about. 25 And he took the fat, and the rump, and all the fat that was upon the inwards, and the caul above the liver, and the two kidneys, and their fat, and the right shoulder. 26 And out of the basket of unleavened bread, that was before the LORD, he took one unleavened cake, and a cake of oyled bread, and one wafer, and put them on the fat, and upon the right shoulder. 27 And he put all upon Aaron's hands, and upon his sons hands, and waved them for a wave-offering before the LORD. 28 And Moses took them from off their hands, and burnt them on the altar upon

upon the burnt-offering: they were consecrations for a sweet savour: it is an offering made by fire unto the LORD. 29 And Moses took the breast and waved it for a wave-offering before the LORD: for of the ram of consecration it was Moses' part; as the LORD commanded Moses. 30 And Moses took of the anointing oil, and of the blood which was upon the Altar, and sprinkled it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon his sons' garments with him: and sanctified Aaron, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him.

The Covenant of Priesthood must be made by Sacrifice, as well as other Covenants, *Psal. 50. 5.* And thus Christ was consecrated by the sacrifice of himself, once for all. Sacrifices of each kind must be offered for the Priests, that they might with the more Tenderness and Concern offer their Gifts and Sacrifices of the People, with Compassion on the Ignorant, and on them that were out of the way, not insulting over those for whom Sacrifices were offered, remembering that they themselves had had Sacrifices offered for them, being compassed with Infirmary.

1. A Bullock, the largest Sacrifice, was offered for a Sin-offering, *v. 14.* that hereby Atonement might be made, and they might not bring any of the Guilt of the Sins of their former State into the new Character they were now to put on. When *Isaiah* was sent to be a Prophet, he was told to his comfort, *Thine Iniquity is taken away. Isa. 6. 7.* Ministers that are to declare the Remission of Sins to others, should give diligence to get it made sure to themselves in the first place, that their own Sins are pardon'd. Those to whom is committed the Ministry of Reconciliation, must first be reconciled to God themselves, that they may deal for the Souls of others as for their own.

2. A Ram was offered for a Burnt-offering, *ver. 18—21.* By this they gave to God the Glory of this great Honour, which was now put upon them, and return'd him Praise for it, as *Paul* thank'd Christ Jesus for putting him into the Ministry, *1 Tim. 1. 13.* They also signified the Devoting of themselves and all their Services to the Honour of God.

3. Another Ram, call'd the Ram of Consecration, was offer'd for a Peace-offering, *v. 22, &c.* The Blood of it was part put on the Priests, their Ears, Thumbs, and Toes, and part sprinkled upon the Altar, and thus he did (as it were) marry them to the Altar, which they must all their days give attendance upon. All the Ceremonies about this Offering, as those before, were appointed by the express Command of God; and if we compare this Chapter with *Exod. 29.* we shall find that the Performance of the Solemnity exactly agrees with the Precept there, and in nothing varies. Here therefore, as in the Account we had of the Tabernacle and its Vessels, it is again and again repeated, *As the LORD commanded Moses.* And thus Christ, when he sanctified himself with his own Blood, had an eye to his Father's Will in it, *As the Father gave me Commandment, so I do, John 14. 31.—10. 18.—6. 38.*

31 And Moses said unto Aaron, and his sons, Boil the flesh at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and there eat it with the bread that is in the basket of consecrations, as I commanded, saying, Aaron and his Sons shall eat it. 32 And that which remaineth of the flesh and of the bread, shall ye burn with fire. 33 And ye shall not go out of the door of the tabernacle of the congregation in seven days, until the days of your consecration be at an end: for seven days shall he consecrate you. 34 As he hath done this day, so the LORD hath commanded to do, to make an atonement for you. 35 Therefore shall ye abide at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, day and night, seven days, and keep the charge of the LORD, that ye die not, for so I am commanded. 36 So Aaron and his sons did all things which the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses.

Moses having done his part of the Ceremony, he now leaves Aaron and his Sons to do theirs. 1. They must boil the flesh of their Peace-offerings, and eat it in the Court of the Tabernacle, and what remain'd they must burn with fire, *v. 32.* This signified their thankful Consent to the Consecration: When God gave *Ezekiel* his Commission, he bid him eat the Roll, *Ezek. 3. 1, 2.* 2. They must not stir out

of the Court of the Tabernacle, of seven days, *v. 33.* The Priesthood being a good Warfare, they must thus learn to endure Hardness, and to disentangle themselves from the Affairs of this Life, *2 Tim. 2. 4.* Being consecrated to their Service, they must give themselves wholly to it, and attend continually on this very thing. Thus Christ's Apostles were appointed to wait for the Promise of the Father, *Acts 1. 4.* During this Time appointed for their Consecration, they were daily to repeat the same Sacrifices, which were offered the first day, *v. 34.* This shews the Imperfection of the Legal Sacrifices, which because they could not take away Sin, were oft repeated, *Heb. 10. 1, 2.* but were here repeated seven times (a Number of Perfection) because they typified that one Offering, which perfected for ever them that were sanctified. The Work lasted seven Days, for it was a kind of Creation; and this Time was appointed in honour of the Sabbath, which probably was the last Day of the seven, for which they were to prepare during the six Days. Thus the Time of our Life, like the six Days, must be our Preparation, for the Perfection of our Consecration to God in the everlasting Sabbath: They attend Day and Night, *v. 33.* and so constant should we be in our Meditation on God's Law, *Psal. 1. 1.* They attended to keep the Charge of the Lord. We have every one of us a Charge to keep, an eternal God to glorify, an immortal Soul to provide for, needful Duty to be done, our Generation to serve, and it must be our daily Care to keep this Charge, for it is the Charge of the Lord, our Master, who will shortly call us to an account about it, and it is at our utmost peril if we neglect it. Keep it that ye die not: 'Tis Death, Eternal Death, to betray the Trust we are charged with, by the Consideration of this we must be kept in awe. Lastly, we are told, *v. 36.* That Aaron and his Sons did all that was commanded. Thus their Consecration was completed; and thus they set an Example before the People, of an exact Obedience in the Laws of Sacrifices now newly given, and then they could with the better Grace teach them.

Thus the Covenant of Peace, *Numb. 25. 12.* of Life and Peace, *Mal. 2. 5.* was made with Aaron and his Sons; but after all the Ceremonies that were used in their Consecration, there was one Point of Ratification, which was reserv'd to be the Honour and Establishment of Christ's Priesthood, which was this, that they were made Priests without an Oath, but Christ with an Oath, *Heb. 7. 21.* for neither such Priests, nor their Priesthood could continue, but Christ's is a perpetual and unchangeable Priesthood.

Gospel-Ministers are compared to them who served at the Altar, for they minister about holy things, *1 Cor. 9. 13.* they are God's Mouth to the People, and the People's to God, the Pastors and Teachers Christ has appointed to continue in the Church, to the End of the World: They seem to be meant in that Promise which points at Gospel-Times, *Isa. 66. 21.* I will take of them for Priests and for Levites. No Man may take this Honour to himself, but he who upon Trial is found to be clothed and anointed by the Spirit of God with Gifts and Graces to qualify him for it, and who with Purpose of Heart devotes himself intirely to the Service; and is then by the Word and Prayer, (for so every thing is sanctified) and the Imposition of the Hands of those that give themselves to the Word and Prayer, set apart to the Office, and recommended to Christ as a Servant, and to the Church as a Steward and Guide. And they that are thus solemnly dedicated to God, ought not to depart from his Service, but faithfully to abide in it all their days; and they that do so, and continue labouring in the Word and Doctrine, are to be counted worthy of double Honour, double to that of the Old-Testament Priests.

CHAP. IX.

Aaron and his Sons having been solemnly consecrated to the Priesthood, are in this Chapter entering upon the Execution of their Office, the very next Day after their Consecration was completed. 1. Moses (no doubt by Direction from God) appoints a Meeting between God and his Priests, as the Representatives of his People, ordering them to attend him, and assuring them that he would appear to them, *v. 1—7.* 2. The Meeting holds according to the Appointment. 1. Aaron attends on God by Sacrifice, offering a Sin-offering and a Burnt-offering for himself, *v. 8—14.* and then the Offering for the People, whom he blessed in the Name of the Lord, *v. 15—22.* 2. God signifies his Acceptance, (1.) Of their Persons by shewing them his Glory, *v. 23.* (2.) Of their Sacrifices, by consuming them with Fire from Heaven, *v. 24.*

1. AND it came to pass on the eighth day, that Moses called Aaron and his sons, and the elders of Israel: 2. And he said unto Aaron, Take thee a young calf for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt-offering, without blemish, and offer them before the LORD. 3. And unto the children

dren of Israel thou shalt speak, saying, Take ye a kid of the goats for a sin-offering, and a calf, and a lamb, both of the first year without blemish, for a burnt-offering. 4 Also a bullock and a ram, for peace-offerings, to sacrifice before the LORD; and a meat-offering mingled with oil: for to-day the LORD will appear unto you. 5 And they brought that which Moses commanded before the tabernacle of the congregation: and all the congregation drew near and stood before the LORD. 6 And Moses said, This is the thing which the LORD commanded that ye should do: and the glory of the LORD shall appear unto you. 7 And Moses said unto Aaron, Go unto the altar, and offer thy sin-offering, and thy burnt-offering, and make an atonement for thyself, and for the people: and offer the offering of the people, and make an atonement for them; as the LORD commanded.

Orders are here given for another Solemnity upon the eighth Day, for the new ordained Priests were set to work immediately, after the Days of their Consecration were finished; to let them know, that they were not ordain'd to be idle: *He that desires the Office of a Bishop, desires a good Work;* which must be look'd at with Desire, more than the Honour and Benefit. The Priests had not so much as one Day's Respite from Service allow'd them, that they might divert themselves, and receive the Compliments of their Friends upon their Elevation, but were busily employ'd the very next day after, for their Consecration was the filling of their Hands. God's Spiritual Priests have constant Work cut out for them, which the Duty of every Day requires, and they that would give up their Account with Joy, must redeem Time: see Ezek. 43. 26.

Now, 1. Moses raiseth their Expectation of a glorious Appearance of God to them this Day; v. 4. *To-day the Lord will appear to you,* that are the Priests. And when all the Congregation are gathered together, and stand before the Lord, he tells them, v. 6. *The Glory of the Lord shall appear to you.* Though they had Reason enough to believe God's Acceptance of all that which they had done according to his Appointment, upon the general Assurance we have that he is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek him, though he had not given them any sensible Token of it, yet that if possible they and theirs might be effectually obliged to the Service and Worship of God, and might never turn aside to Idols, the Glory of God appear'd to them, and visibly own'd what they had done. We are not now to expect such Appearances; we Christians walk more by Faith, and less by Sight, than they did: but we may be sure that God doth draw nigh to those who draw nigh to him, and that the Offerings of Faith are really acceptable to him, though the Sacrifices being Spiritual, the Tokens of the Acceptance are, as it is fit they should be, Spiritual likewise. To them who are duly consecrated to God, he will undoubtedly manifest himself.

2. He put both Priests and People upon preparing to receive this Favour God design'd them. Aaron and his Sons, and the Elders of Israel are all summon'd to attend, v. 1. Note, God will manifest himself in the solemn Assemblies of his People and Ministers; and those that would have the Benefit and Comfort of God's Appearances, must in them give their Attendance.

1. Aaron is ordered to prepare his Offerings, v. 2. a young Calf for a Sin-Offering. The Jewish Writers suggest, that therefore a Calf was appointed for his Sin-Offering, to mind him of his Sin in making the Golden Calf, by which he had render'd himself for ever unworthy of the Honour of the Priesthood, and which he had reason to reflect upon with Sorrow and Shame, in all the Atonements he made.

2. Aaron must direct the People to get theirs ready. Hitherto Moses had told the People what they must do, but now Aaron, as High-Priest over the House of God, must be their Teacher in things pertaining to God, v. 3. unto the Children of Israel thou shalt speak: Now he was to speak from them to God in the Sacrifices (the Language of which he that appointed them very well understood) he must speak from God to them in the Laws about the Sacrifices. Thus Moses would engage the People's Respect and Obedience to him, as one that was set over them in the Lord, to admonish them.

3. Aaron must offer his own first, and then the People's, v. 7. Aaron must now go to the Altar, Moses having shew'd him the way to it: and there, 1. He must make an Atonement for himself; for the High-Priest being compass'd with Infirmary, ought, as for the People, so also for himself, to offer for Sins, Heb. 5. 2, 3. and for himself first, for how can we expect to be ac-

cepted in our Prayers for others, if we ourselves be not reconciled to God: nor is any Service pleasing to God, till the Guilt of Sin be removed by our Interest in the Great Propitiation. Those that have the Care of the Souls of others are also hereby taught to look to their own in the first place; this Charity must begin at home, though it must not end there: 'Tis the Charge of Timothy, to take care to save himself first, and then those that heard him, 1 Tim. 4. 16. The High-Priest made Atonement for himself, as one that was joined with Sinners; but we have a High-Priest that was separated from Sinners, and needed it not: when Messiah the Prince was cut off as Sacrifice, 'twas not for himself, for he knew no Sin: 2. He must make an Atonement for the People, by offering their Sacrifices. Now he was made a High-Priest, he must lay to heart the Concerns of the People, and this as their great Concern, their Reconciliation to God, and the putting away of Sin which had separated between them and God. He must make Atonement as the Lord commanded. See here the wonderful Condescension of the Mercy of God, that he not only allows an Atonement to be made, but commands it; not only admits, but requires us to be reconciled to him. No room therefore is left to doubt, but that the Atonement which is commanded will be accepted.

8 Aaron therefore went unto the altar, and slew the calf of the sin-offering, which was for himself. 9 And the sons of Aaron brought the blood unto him: and he dip't his finger in the blood, and put it upon the horns of the altar, and poured out the blood at the bottom of the altar. 10 But the fat, and the kidneys, and the caul above the liver of the sin-offering he burnt upon the altar; as the LORD commanded Moses. 11 And the flesh and the hide he burnt with fire without the camp. 12 And he slew the burnt-offering, and Aaron's sons presented unto him the blood, which he sprinkled round about upon the altar. 13 And they presented the burnt-offering unto him, with the pieces thereof, and the head, and he burnt them upon the altar. 14 And he did wash the inwards, and the legs, and burnt them upon the burnt-offering on the altar. 15 And he brought the people's offering, and took the goat which was the sin-offering for the people, and slew it, and offered it for sin, as at the first. 16 And he brought the burnt-offering, and offered it according to the manner. 17 And he brought the meat-offering, and took an handful thereof and burnt it upon the altar beside the burnt-sacrifice of the morning. 18 He slew also the bullock and the ram, for a sacrifice of peace-offering, which was for the people: and Aaron's sons presented unto him the blood (which he sprinkled upon the altar round about.) 19 And the fat of the bullock, and of the ram, the rump, and that which covereth the inwards, and the kidneys, and the caul above the liver. 20 And they put the fat upon the breasts, and he burnt the fat upon the altar. 21 And the breasts and the right shoulder Aaron waved for a wave-offering, before the LORD; as Moses commanded. 22 And Aaron lift up his hand towards the people, and blessed them: and came down from offering the sin-offering, and the burnt-offering, and the peace-offerings.

These being the first Offerings that ever were offer'd by the Levitical Priesthood, according to the new enacted Law of Sacrifices, the manner of offering them is particularly related, that it might appear how exactly they agree with the Institution. (1.) Aaron with his own Hands slew the Offering, v. 8. and did the Work of the inferior Priests; for as great as he was, he must not think any Service below him, which he could do for the Honour of God: And as Moses had shew'd him how to do this Work decently and solemnly, so he shew'd his Sons, that they might do likewise, for that's the best way of teaching, and thus Parents should instruct their Children by Example. Therefore as Moses before, so Aaron now offer'd some of each of the several sorts of Sacrifices that were appointed, whose Rites differ'd, that they might

might be *thoroughly furnished for every good Work*. (2.) He offer'd these *beside the Burnt-Sacrifice of the Morning*, which was every day offer'd first, v. 17. *Note*, Our accustomed Devotions Morning and Evening alone, and in our Families, must not be omitted upon any pretence whatsoever, no not when extraordinary Services are to be perform'd; whatever is *added*, those must not be *diminished*. (3.) It is not clear whether, when it is said he *burnt* such and such Parts of the Sacrifices upon the Altar, v. 10, 14, 17, 20. the meaning is that he burnt them immediately with ordinary Fire as formerly, or that he laid them upon the Altar ready to be burnt with the Fire from Heaven which they expected, v. 24. Or whether, as Bishop Patrick thinks, he burnt the Offerings for himself with ordinary Fire, but that when they were burnt out, he laid the People's Sacrifices upon the Altar, which were kindled and consumed by the Fire of the Lord. I would rather conjecture, because it is said of all these Sacrifices, that he *burnt* them (except the Burnt-Offering for the People, of which yet it is said, that he offered it *according to the manner*, v. 16. which seems to be equivalent) that he did kindle the Fire to burn them, but that then the Fire from the Lord fastened upon them, put out the Fire that he had kindled, (as we know a greater Fire puts out a lesser) and *suddenly consum'd* the Remainder, which the Fire he had kindled would have *consum'd slowly*. (4.) When Aaron had done all that on his part was to be done about the Sacrifices, he *lifted up his Hand toward the People, and blessed them*, v. 22. This was one Part of the Priest's Work, in which he was a Type of Christ, who came into the World to *bless* us, and when he was parted from his Disciples, at his Ascension, *lifted up his Hands, and blessed them*, and in them his whole Church, of which they were his Elders and Representatives, as the Great High-Priest of our Profession. Aaron lifted up his Hands in blessing them, to intimate whence he desired and expected the Blessing to come, even from Heaven, which is God's Throne; Aaron could but *crave* a Blessing, 'tis God's Prerogative to *command* it. Aaron when he had blessed *came down*, Christ when he blessed *went up*.

23 And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out, and blessed the people, and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the people. 24 And there came a fire out from before the LORD, and consumed upon the altar the burnt-offering, and the fat: which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces.

We are not told what Moses and Aaron went into the Tabernacle to do, v. 23. Some of the Jewish Writers say, they went in to pray for the Appearance of the Divine Glory; most probably they went in, that Moses might instruct Aaron how to do the Service that was to be done there, burn Incense, light the Lamps, set the Shew-bread, &c. that he might instruct his Sons in it. But when they came out, they both join'd in blessing the People, who stand expecting the promised Appearance of the Divine Glory; and now it was that they had what they waited for, when Moses and Aaron concurr'd in praying. *Note*, God's Manifestations of himself and his Glory and Grace are commonly given in, in answer to Prayer. When Christ was praying, the Heavens were open'd, Luke 3. 21. The Glory of God appeared, not while the Sacrifices were in offering, but when the Priests prayed, as 2 Chron. 5. 13. when they praised God; which intimates, that the Prayers and Praises of God's Spiritual Priests are more pleasing to God than all Burnt-Offerings and Sacrifices.

Now when the Solemnity was finished, the Blessing pronounced, and the Congregation ready to be dismiss'd in the Close of the Day, then God testified his Acceptance, which gave them such Satisfaction as was well worth waiting for.

1. The Glory of the Lord appeared unto all the People, v. 23. When the Appearance of it was, we are not told; no doubt it was such as carried its own Evidence along with it. That Glory which fill'd the Tabernacle, Exod. 40. 34. now shew'd itself at the Door of the Tabernacle to those that attended there, as a Prince shews himself to the expecting Crowd, to gratify them. God hereby testified of their Gifts, and shew'd them that he was worthy for whom they should do all this. *Note*, Those that diligently attend upon God in the Way he has appointed; shall have such a sight of his Glory, as shall be abundantly to their satisfaction. They that dwell in God's House with an Eye of Faith, may behold the Beauty of the Lord.

2. There came a Fire out from before the Lord, and consumed the Sacrifice, v. 24. Here the learned Bishop Patrick has a very probable Conjecture, that Moses and Aaron staid in the Tabernacle, till it was time to offer the Evening-Sacrifice, which Aaron did; but it is not mentioned, because it was done of course, and that that was it which the Fire that came out

from the Lord consumed. Whether this Fire came from Heaven, or out of the most Holy Place, or from that visible Appearance of the Glory of God, which all the People saw, it was a manifest Token of God's Acceptance of their Services, as afterwards of Solomon's Sacrifice, 2 Chron. 7. 1. and Elijah's 2 Kings 18. 36. The Fire did (1.) *consume* (for, as the word is, *eat up*) the present Sacrifice. And two Ways this was a Testimony of Acceptance. 1. It signified the *turning away* God's Wrath from them. God's Wrath is a consuming Fire; this Fire might justly have fastened upon the People, and consumed them, for their Sins; but its fastening upon the Sacrifice, and consuming that, signified God's Acceptance of that, as an Atonement for the Sinner. 2. It signified God's *entering into Covenant and Communion* with them: They eat their part of the Sacrifice, and this Fire of the Lord eat up his part; and thus he did as it were *sup with them, and they with him*, Rev. 3. 20. (2.) This Fire did as it were *take possession* of the Altar: The Fire was thus kindled in God's House, which was to continue as long as the House stood, as we read before, Chap. 6. 13. This also was a Figure of good things to come: The Spirit descended upon the Apostles in Fire, Acts 2. 3: so ratifying their Commission, as this here did the Priests. And the Descent of that holy Fire into our Souls, to kindle in them pious and devout Affections towards God, and such a holy Zeal as burns up the Flesh, and the Lusts of it, is a certain Token of God's gracious Acceptance of our Persons and Performances. That redounds to God's Glory which is the Work of his own Grace in us. *Hereby we know that we dwell in God, and God in us, because he hath thus given us of his Spirit*, 1 John 4. 13. Now from hence forward, 1. All their Sacrifices and Incense must be offer'd with this Fire. *Note*, Nothing comes to God but what comes from him. We must have Grace, that Holy Fire, from the God of Grace, else we cannot serve him acceptably, Heb. 12. 28. 2. The Priests must keep it burning with constant Supply of Fuel, and the Fuel must be Wood, the cleanest Fuel: Thus those to whom God has given Grace, must take heed of quenching the Spirit.

Lastly, We are here told how the People were affected with this Discovery of God's Glory and Grace. They receiv'd it (1.) with the highest Joy, they *shouted*; so stirring up themselves, and one another, to a Holy Triumph in the Assurance now given them, that they had *God nigh unto them*; which is spoken of as the Grandeur of their Nation, Deut. 4. 7. (2.) With the lowest Reverence; they *fell on their Faces*, humbly adoring the Majesty of that God, who vouchsafed thus to manifest himself to them. That's a sinful Fear of God which drives us from him, a gracious Fear makes us bow before him. Very good Impressions were made upon their Minds for the present, but they soon wore off; as those commonly do, which are made by that which is only sensible, while the Influences of Faith are durable.

CHAP. X.

The Story of this Chapter is as sad an Interruption to the Institutions of the Levitical Law, as that of the Golden Calf was to the Account of the erecting of the Tabernacle. Here's, 1. The Sin and Death of Nadab and Abihu, the Sons of Aaron, v. 1, 2. 2. The quieting of Aaron under this sore Affliction, v. 3. 3. Orders given and observ'd about the Funeral, and Mourning, v. 4-7. 4. A Command to the Priests not to drink Wine when they went in to minister, v. 8-11. 5. The Care Moses took that they should go on with their Work, notwithstanding this Ruffe, v. 12-20.

1 AND Nadab and Abihu, the Sons of Aaron, took either of them his censor, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. 2 And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.

Here's, 1.-The Great Sin that Nadab and Abihu were guilty of, and a great Sin we must call it, how little soever it appears in our eye, because it is evident by the Punishment of it that it was highly provoking to the God of Heaven, whose Judgment we are sure is according to Truth. But what was their Sin? All the Account here given of it is, that they offered strange Fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not, v. 1. and the same, Numb. 3. 4. It doth not appear that they had any Orders to burn Incense at all at this time. 'Tis true, their Consecration was completed the Day before, and as Priests it was part of their Work to serve at the Altar of Incense; but it should seem the whole Service of this solemn Day of Inauguration was to be performed by Aaron himself, for he slew the Sacrifices, Chap. 9. 8, 13, 18. and his Sons were only to attend him, v. 9. 12, 18. therefore Moses and Aaron only went into the Tabernacle, v. 23. But Nadab and Abihu

Abihu were so proud of the Honour they were newly advanced to, and so ambitious of doing the highest and most honourable part of their Work presently, that though the Service of this Day was extraordinary, and all done by particular Direction from *Moses*; yet without receiving Orders, or so much as asking leave from him, they took their Censers, and they would enter into the Tabernacle, at the Door of which they thought they had attended long enough, and would burn Incense. And then their offering strange Fire is the same with offering strange Incense, which is expressly forbidden, *Exod.* 30. 9. *Moses* we may suppose, had the Custody of the Incense which was prepared for this purpose, *Exod.* 39. 38. and they doing this without his leave, had none of the Incense which should have been offer'd, but common Incense, so that the Smoke of their Incense came from a strange Fire. God had indeed required the Priests to burn Incense, but at this time 'twas what he commanded them not; and so their Crime was like that of *Uzziah* the King, *2 Chron.* 26. 16. The Priests were to burn Incense only when it was their Lot, *Luke* 1. 9. and at this time it was not theirs. 2. Presuming thus to burn Incense of their own without Order, no marvel that they made a farther Blunder, and instead of taking the Fire from the Altar, which was newly kindled from before the Lord, and which from henceforward must be used in offering both Sacrifice and Incense, (*Rev.* 8. 3.) they took common Fire, probably from that with which the Flesh of the Peace-Offerings was boil'd, and this they made use of in burning Incense: not being Holy Fire, it is call'd strange Fire; and though not expressly forbidden, 'twas Crime enough that God commanded it not: For, (as Bishop Hall well observes here) 'It is a dangerous thing in the Service of God to decline from his own Institutions; we have to do with a God who is wise to prescribe his own Worship, just to require what he has prescribed, and powerful to revenge what he has not prescribed'. 3. Incense was always to be burn'd but by one Priest at a time, but here they would both go in together to do it. 4. They did it rashly, and with precipitation. They snatch'd their Censers, so some read it, in a brisk frolicksome way, without due Reverence and Seriousness: When all the People fell upon their faces, before the Glory of the Lord, they thought the Dignity of their Office was such, as to exempt them from such Abasements. The Familiarity they were admitted to, bred a Contempt of the Divine Majesty, and now they were Priests they thought they might do what they pleas'd. 5. There is reason to suspect they were drunk when they did it, because of the Law which was given upon this occasion, *v.* 8. They had been feasting upon the Peace-Offerings, and the Drink-Offerings that attended them, and so their Heads were light, or at least their Hearts were merry with Wine, they drank and forgot the Law, (*Prov.* 31. 5.) and were guilty of this fatal Miscalriage. 6. No doubt it was done presumptuously; for if it had been done through Ignorance, they had been allow'd the Benefit of the Law lately made, even for the Priests, that they should bring a Sin-Offering, *chap.* 4. 2, 3. But the Soul that doeth aught presumptuously, and in contempt of God's Majesty, Authority, and Justice, that Soul shall be cut off, *Numb.* 15. 30.

2. The dreadful Punishment of this Sin, *v.* 2. There went out Fire from the Lord, and devoured them. This Fire which consumed the Sacrifices came the same way with that which had consumed the Sacrifices, *chap.* 9. 24. which shew'd what Justice would have done to all the guilty People, if Infinite Mercy had not found and accepted a Ransom; and if that Fire struck such an Awe upon the People, much more would this. Observe, 1. They died. Might it not have sufficed if they had been only struck with a Leprosy as *Uzziah*, or struck dumb as *Zechariah*, and both by the Altar of Incense? No, they were both struck dead. The Wages of this Sin was Death. 2. They died suddenly, in the very Act of their Sin, and had not time so much as to cry, Lord have mercy upon us! Though God is long-suffering to us-ward, yet sometimes he makes quick work with Sinners; Sentence is executed speedily: Presumptuous Sinners bring upon themselves a swift Destruction, and are justly denied even Space to repent. 3. They died before the Lord, i. e. before the Veil that cover'd the Mercy-Seat; for even Mercy itself will not suffer its own Glory to be affronted. They that sinn'd before the Lord, died before him. Damned Sinners are said to be tormented in the Presence of the Lamb, intimating that he doth not interpose on their behalf, *Rev.* 14. 10. 4. They died by Fire, as by Fire they sinn'd. They lighted the Fire that came from before the Lord to consume the Sacrifices, and though other Fire would do every jot as well, and now God justly made them feel the Power of that Fire which they did not reverence. Thus they that hate to be refin'd by the Fire of Divine Grace, will undoubtedly be ruin'd by the Fire of Divine Wrath. The Fire did not burn them so *After*, as it had done the Sacrifices, nor so much as singe their Coats, *v.* 3. but like Lightning struck them dead in an instant: By these different Effects of the same Fire, God would shew that it was no com-

mon Fire, but kindled by the Breath of the Almighty, *Isa.* 30. 33. 'Tis twice taken notice of in Scripture that they died childless, *Numb.* 3. 4. and *1 Chron.* 24. 2. By their Presumption they had reproach'd God's Name, and God justly blotted out their Names, and laid that Honour in the Dust, which they were proud of.

But why did the Lord deal thus severely with them? Were they not the Sons of *Aaron*, the Saints of the Lord, Nephews to *Moses*, the great Favourite of Heaven? Was not the holy anointing Oil sprinkled upon them, as Men whom God had set apart for himself? Had they not diligently attended during the seven Days of their Consecration, and kept the Charge of the Lord? and might not that atone for this Rashness! Would it not excuse them that they were young Men, and yet unexperienced in these Services; that it was the first Offence, and done in a Transport of Joy for their Elevation? And besides, never could Men be worse spared: A great deal of Work was now lately cut out for the Priests to do, and the Priesthood was confided to *Aaron* and his Seed; he has but four Sons, if two of them die, there will not be Hands enough to do the Service of the Tabernacle: if they die childless, the House of *Aaron* will become weak and little, and the Priesthood will be in danger of being lost for want of Heirs. But none of all these Considerations shall serve either to excuse the Offence, or bring off the Offenders. For, 1. The Sin was greatly aggravated. 'Twas a manifest Contempt of *Moses*, and the Divine Law that was given by *Moses*. Hitherto it had been expressly observed concerning every thing that was done, that they did it as the Lord commanded *Moses*; in opposition to which, it is here said, they did that which the Lord commanded them not, but they did it of their own Heads. God was now teaching his People Obedience, and to do every thing by Rule, as becomes Servants; for Priests therefore to break Rules, and disobey, was such a Provocation as must by no means go unpunished. Their Character made their Sin more exceeding sinful: For the Sons of *Aaron*, his eldest Sons, whom God had chosen to be immediate Attendants upon him, for them to be guilty of such a Piece of Presumption, it cannot be suffer'd. There was in their Sin a Contempt of God's Glory, which had now newly appear'd in Fire; as if that Fire were needless, they had as good of their own before.

2. Their Punishment was a piece of necessary Justice, now at the first settling of the Ceremonial Institutions. 'Tis oft threaten'd in the Law, that such and such Offenders should be cut off from their People; and here God explain'd the Threatning, with a witness. Now the Laws concerning Sacrifices were newly made; lest any should be tempted to think lightly of them, because they descended to many Circumstances which seem'd very minute; these that were the first Transgressors were thus punish'd; for warning to others; and to shew how jealous God is in the Matters of his Worship: Thus he magnified the Law, and made it honourable; and let his Priests know, that the Caution which so often occurs in the Laws concerning them, that they must do so, that they die not, was not a mere Bugbear, but fair Warning of their Danger, if they did the Work of the Lord negligently. And no doubt this exemplary Piece of Justice at first, prevented many Irregularities afterwards. Thus *Anania* and *Saphira* were punished, when they presumed to lye to the Holy Ghost, that new-defended Fire. Lastly, As the People's falling into Idolatry, presently after the Moral Law was given, shews the Weakness of the Law, and its Insufficiency to take away Sin, so the Sin and Punishment of these Priests shew'd the Imperfection of that Priesthood from the very Beginning, and its Inability to shelter any from the Fire of God's Wrath, otherwise than as it was typical of Christ's Priesthood, in the Execution of which there never was, nor can be any Irregularity, or false Step taken.

3 Then *Moses* said unto *Aaron*, This is it that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified: and *Aaron* held his peace. 4 And *Moses* called *Misael* and *Elzaphan*, the sons of *Uzziel*, the uncle of *Aaron*, and said unto them, Come near, carry your brethren from before the sanctuary, out of the camp. 5 So they went near, and carried them in their coats out of the camp; as *Moses* had said. 6 And *Moses* said unto *Aaron*, and unto *Eleazar*, and unto *Ithamar* his sons, Uncover not your heads, neither rend your clothes, lest you die, and lest wrath come upon all the people: but let your brethren, the whole house of *Israel*, bewail the burning which the LORD hath kindled. 7 And ye shall not

go out from the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, lest you die; for the anointing oil of the LORD is upon you: And they did according to the word of Moses.

We may well think when Nadab and Abihu were struck with Death, all about them were struck with Horror, and every Face, as well as theirs, gather'd Blackness: A mighty Consternation no doubt seiz'd them, and they were all full of Confusion; but whatever the rest were, Moses was compos'd, and knew what he said and did; was not displeas'd, as David was in a like Case, 2 Sam. 6. 8. But though it touch'd him in a very tender part, and was a dreadful Damp to one of the greatest Joys he ever knew, yet he kept possession of his own Soul, and took care to keep good Order, and a due Decorum in the Sanctuary.

[1.] He endeavours to pacify Aaron, and to keep him in a good Frame under this sad Dispensation, v. 3. Moses was a Brother, that was born for Adversity, and has taught us by his Example, with seasonable Counsels and Comforts, to support the weak, and strengthen the feeble-minded.

Observe here, 1. What it was that Moses suggested to his poor Brother upon this occasion, *This is it that the Lord spake. Note.* 1. The most quieting Considerations under Affliction, are those that are fetch'd from the Word of God. So and so the Lord hath said, and it is not for us to gainsay it. 2. In all God's Providences it is good to observe the fulfilling of Scripture, and to compare God's Word and his Works together; which if we do, we shall find an admirable Harmony and Agreement between them, and that they mutually explain and illustrate each other. But, 1. Where did God speak this? We do not find the very Words, but to this purpose he had said, *Exod. 19. 22. Let the Priests which come near the Lord, sanctify themselves, lest the Lord break forth upon them.* Indeed the whole Scope and Tenour of his Law spake this, that being a Holy God, and a Sovereign Lord, he must always be worshipped with Holiness and Reverence, and exactly according to his own Appointment; and if any jest with him, it is at their peril: Much has been said to this purpose, as *Exod. 29. 43. 44—34. 14. Lev. 8. 35.* 2. What was it that God spake? 'Tis this; (The Lord by his Grace speak it to all our Hearts!) *I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, whoever they are, and before all the People I will be glorified. Note.* 1. Whenever we worship God, we come nigh unto him, as Spiritual Priests. This Consideration ought to make us very reverend and serious in all Acts of Devotion, that in them we approach to God, and present our selves before him. 2. It concerns us all when we come nigh to God to sanctify him, that is, to give him the Praise of his Holiness; to perform every Religious Exercise, as those that believe the God with whom we have to do is a Holy God, a God of spotless Purity, and transcendent Perfection, *Isa. 8. 13.* 3. When we sanctify God, we glorify him, for his Holiness is his Glory; and when we sanctify him in our solemn Assemblies, we glorify him before all the People, confessing our own Belief of his Glory, and desiring that others also may be affected with it. 4. If God be not sanctified and glorified by us, he will be sanctified and glorified upon us: He will take vengeance on those that profane his sacred Name, by trifling with him. If his Rent be not paid, it shall be distraint'd for. 3. But what was this to the present Case? What was there in this to quiet Aaron? Two things: (1.) This must silence him, that his Sons deserv'd their Death; for they were thus cut off from their People, because they did not sanctify and glorify God. The Acts of necessary Justice, how hard soever they may seem to bear upon the Persons concern'd, are not to be complain'd of, but submitted to. (2.) This must satisfy him, that the Death of his Sons redounded to the Honour of God, and his impartial Justice would for it be adored throughout all Ages.

2. What good Effects this had upon him, Aaron held his peace, i. e. he presently submitted to the Holy Will of God in this sad Providence, was dumb, and opened not his mouth, because God did it. Something he was ready to say by way of Complaint, as Lovers think they may have leave to speak; but he wisely suppress'd it, laid his hands upon his mouth, and said nothing, for fear lest he should offend with his Tongue, now his Heart was hot within him. *Note.* 1. When God corrects us or ours for Sin, it is our Duty to be silent under the Correction, not to quarrel with God, arraign his Justice, or charge him with Folly, but to acquiesce in all that God doth; not only bearing, but accepting the Punishment of Iniquity, and saying as Eli in a Case not much unlike this here, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good,* 1 Sam. 3. 18. If our Children have sinned against God, (as Bildad puts the Case, *Job. 8. 4.*) and he have cast them away for their Transgression, though it must needs be grievous to think that the Children of our Love should be the Children of God's Wrath, yet we must awfully adore the Divine Justice, and make no Exceptions against its Processes. 2. The most effectual Arguments to quiet a gracious Spirit

under Afflictions, are those that are fetch'd from God's Glory; this silenced Aaron. 'Tis true, he is a Loner in his Comforts by this severe Execution; but Moses has shew'd him that God is a Gainer in his Glory, and therefore he has not a word to say against it: If God be sanctified, Aaron is satisfied. Far be it from him that he should honour his Sons more than God, or with that God's Name, or House, or Law should be expos'd to Reproach or Contempt, for the preserving of the Reputation of his Family: No; now, as well as in the matter of the Golden Calf, Levi doth not acknowledge his Brethren, nor know his own Children; and therefore they shall teach Jacob thy Judgments, and Israel thy Law, *Deut. 33. 9. 10.* Ministers and their Families are sometimes exercised with fore Trials, that they may be Examples to the Believers of Patience, and Resignation to God, and may comfort others with that, with which they themselves have been comforted.

[2.] Moses gives orders about the dead Bodies. 'Twas not fit they should be left to lie where they fell; yet their own Father and Brethren, the amaz'd Spectators of this dismal Tragedy, durst not offer to lift them up; no not to see whether there were any Life left in them; they must neither be diverted from, nor disquieted for the great Work that was now upon their hands. Let the Dead bury their Dead, but they must go on with their Service, i. e. rather let the Dead be unburied, if there be no body else to do it, than that Work for God should be left undone by those whom he hath called to it. But Moses takes care of this matter, that though they died by the Hand of Justice in the Act of Sin, yet they should be decently buried, and they were so, v. 4, 5. 1. Some of their nearest Relations were employ'd in it, who were Cousins-germans to their Father, and are here named, who would perform this Office with Tenderness and Respect. They were Levites only, and might not have come into the Sanctuary, no not upon such an occasion as this, if they had not had a special Command for it. 2. They carried them out of the Camp to be buried, so far were they from burying them in the Place of Worship, or the Court of it, according to our modern Usage, though they died there, that they did not bury them, nor any of their Dead within the Lines of their Camp, as afterwards their Burying-Places were out of their Cities. The Tabernacle was pitch'd in the midst of the Camp, so that they could not carry these dead Priests to their Graves, but they must carry them through one of the Squadrons of the Camp; and doubtless it was a very awful affecting Sight to the People. The Names of Nadab and Abihu were become very great and honourable among them, none more talk'd of, nor more expected to appear abroad after the Days of their Consecration, to receive the Honours and Careless of the Crowd, who used to adore the rising Sun; and next to Moses and Aaron, who were old and going off, Nadab had Abihu (who had been in the Mount with God, *Exod. 24. 1.*) were look'd upon as the great Favourites of Heaven, and the Hopes of their People; and now of a sudden, when scarce the Tidings of the Event had reach'd their Ears, to see them both carried out dead, with the visible Marks of Divine Vengeance upon them, as Sacrifices to the Justice of God, they could not chuse but cry out, *Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?* 1 Sam. 6. 20. 3. They carried them out, (and 'tis likely buried them) in their Coats, the Garments of their Priesthood, which they had lately put on, and perhaps were too proud of. Thus the Impartiality of God's Justice was proclaim'd, and all the People were made to know, that even Priests Garments would not protect an Offender from the Wrath of God. And it was easy to argue, if they escape not when they transgress, can we expect to go unpunished? And the Priests Clothes being so soon made Grave Clothes, might intimate both that the Law worketh Death, and that in process of time that Priesthood it self should be abolished, and buried in the Grave of the Lord Jesus.

[3.] He gives Directions about the Mourning.

1. That the Priests must not mourn; Aaron and his two surviving Sons, though sad in Spirit, must not use any outward Expressions of Sorrow upon this sad Occasion, nor so much as follow the Corps one step from the Door of the Tabernacle, v. 7. 'Twas afterwards forbidden to the High Priest to use the Ceremonies of Mourning for the Death of any Friend whatsoever, though 'twere a Father or Mother, *Lev. 21. 11.* yet it was allow'd at the same time to the inferior Priests, to mourn for their near Relations, v. 2, 3. But here it was forbidden both to Aaron and his Sons; because, (1.) They were now actually in waiting, doing a great Work, which must by no means cease, *Neb. 6. 3.* and it was very much for the Honour of God, that their Attendance on him should take place of their Respects to their nearest Relations, and that all Services should give way to those of their Ministry. By this they must make it to appear, that they had a greater Value and Affection for their God, and their Work, than for the best Friend they had in the World; as Christ did, *Mat. 12. 47, 48.* And we are hereby taught, when we are serving God in Holy Duties, to keep our Minds, as much as

may

may be, intent and engaged, and not suffer them to be diverted by any worldly Thoughts, or Cares, or Passions. Let us always attend upon the Lord without Distraction. (2.) Their Brethren were cut off for their Transgression by the immediate Hand of God, and therefore they must not mourn for them, lest they should seem to countenance the Sin, or impeach the Justice of God in the Punishment. Instead of lamenting their own Loss, they must be wholly taken up in applauding the Sentence, and subscribing to the Equity of it. *Note*, The public Concerns of God's Glory ought to lie nearer our Hearts than any private Affections of our own. *Observe*, How Moses frightens them into this Submission, and holds the Rod over them to still their Crying, *v. 6. lest ye die likewise, and lest Wrath come upon all the People*, who may be in danger of suffering for your Irreverence and Disobedience, and ungovern'd Passions; and again, *v. 7. lest you die*. See here what Use we are to make of the Judgments of God upon others, we must double our Guard over our selves, *lest we likewise perish*. The Death, especially the sudden Death of others, instead of moving our Passion, should compose us into a holy Reverence of God, a cautious Separation from all Sin, and a serious Expectation of our own Death. The Reason given them is, because the Anointing Oil of your God is upon you, the Honour of which must be carefully preserv'd, by your doing the Duty of your Office with Cheerfulness. *Note*, Those that through Grace have received the Anointing ought not to disturb themselves with the Sorrow of the World, which worketh Death. 'Twas very hard, no doubt, for Aaron and his Sons to contain themselves upon such an extraordinary Occasion from inordinate Grief; but Reason and Grace master'd the Passion, and they bore the Affliction with an obedient Patience; they did according to the Word of Moses, because they knew it to be the Word of God. Happy they who thus are themselves under God's Government, and have their Passions under their own Government.

2. The People must mourn. *Let the whole House of Israel bewail the burning which the Lord has kindled*. The Congregation must lament not only the Loss of their Priests, but especially the Displeasure of God, which appear'd in it. They must bewail the Burning that was kindled, that it might not burn further. Aaron and his Sons were in danger of being too much affected with the Providence, and therefore they are forbidden to mourn: The House of Israel were in danger of being too little affected with it, and therefore they are commanded to lament. Thus Nature must always be govern'd by Grace, according as it needs to be either constrain'd, or restrain'd.

8 And the LORD spake unto Aaron, saying, 9 Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations: 10 And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy; and between unclean and clean: 11 And that ye may reach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses.

Aaron having been very observant of what God said to him by Moses, now God doth him the Honour to speak to him immediately, *v. 8. The Lord spake unto Aaron*, and the rather, because what was now to be said, Aaron might perhaps have taken amiss from Moses, as if he had suspected him to have been a gluttonous Man, and a Wine-bibber, so apt are we to resent Cautions as Accusations: Therefore God saith it himself to him, *Do not drink Wine, nor strong Drink, when ye go into the Tabernacle*, and this is at their Peril, *lest ye die*, *v. 9*. Probably they had seen the ill effect of it in Nadab and Abihu, and therefore must take Warning by them.

Observe here, 1. The Prohibition it self, *Do not drink Wine nor strong Drink*. At other times they were allow'd it: 'Twas not expected that every Priest should be a Nazarine, but during the time of their Ministration they were forbidden it. This was one of the Laws in Ezekiel's Temple, *Ezek. 44. 31*. and so it is required of Gospel Ministers that they be *not given to Wine*, *1 Tim. 3. 3*. *Note*, Drunkenness is bad in any, but it is especially scandalous and pernicious in Ministers, who of all Men ought to have the clearest Heads, and the cleanest Hearts.

2. The Penalty annex'd to the Prohibition, *Lest ye die, lest ye die* when you are in-drink, and so that Day come upon you unawares, *Luke 21. 34*. or, lest ye do that which will make you liable to be cut off by the Hand of God. The Danger of Death we are continually in, should engage us to be sober, *1 Pet. 4. 7*. 'Tis pity it should ever be us'd for the support of Licentiousness, as it is by those who argue, *Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die*.

3. The Reasons assign'd for this Prohibition: They must needs be sober, else they could not duly discharge their Office; they will be in danger of erring through Wine, *1sa 28. 7*. They must be sure to keep sober, (1.) That they might be able to

distinguish themselves in their Ministrations, between that which was sacred, and that which was common, and might never confound them, *v. 10*. It concerns the Lord's Ministers to put a Difference between Holy and Unholy, both Things and Persons, that they may separate between the precious and the vile, *Jer. 15. 19*. (2.) That they might be able to teach the People, *v. 11*. for that was a part of the Priest's Work, *Deut. 33. 10*, and those that are addicted to Drunkenness are very unfit to teach People God's Statutes, both because they that live after the Flesh can have no experimental Acquaintance with the Things of the Spirit, and because such Teachers pull down with one Hand what they build up with t'other.

12 And Moses spake unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar, and unto Ithamar, his sons that were left, Take the meat-offering that remaineth of the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and eat it without leaven beside the altar; for it is most holy. 13 And ye shall eat it in the holy place, because it is thy due, and thy sons due, of the sacrifices of the LORD made by fire: for so I am commanded. 14 And the wave-breast and heave-shoulder shall ye eat in a clean place, thou, and thy sons, and thy daughters with thee; for they be thy due, and thy sons due, which are given out of the sacrifices of peace-offerings of the children of Israel. 15 The heave-shoulder and wave-breast shall they bring, with the offerings made by fire of the fat, to wave it for a wave-offering before the LORD, and it shall be thine, and thy sons with thee, by a statute for ever, as the LORD hath commanded. 16 And Moses diligently sought the goat of the sin-offering, and behold it was burnt: and he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, the sons of Aaron, which were left alive, saying, 17 Wherefore have ye not eaten the sin-offering in the holy place, seeing it is most holy, and God hath given it you, to bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the LORD? 18 Behold, the blood of it was not brought in, within the holy place: ye should indeed have eaten it in the holy place, as I commanded. 19 And Aaron said unto Moses, Behold this day have they offered their sin-offering, and their burnt-offering before the LORD; and such things have befallen me: and if I had eaten the sin-offering to-day, should it have been accepted in the sight of the LORD? 20 And when Moses heard that, he was content.

Moses is here directing Aaron to go on with his Service after this Interruption. Afflictions should rather quicken us to our Duty, than take us off from it. *Observe*, *v. 12*. he spake unto Aaron, and to his Sons that were left. The Notice taken of their Survivorship intimates, 1. That Aaron should take Comfort under the Loss of two of his Sons from this Consideration; that God had graciously spar'd him the other two, and he had Reason to be thankful for the Remnant that was left; that all his Sons were not dead, and in token of his Thankfulness to God, to go on cheerfully in his Work. 2. That God's sparing them should be an Engagement upon them so proceed in his Service, and not to fly off from it. Here were four Priests consecrated together, two were taken away, and two left, therefore the two that were left should endeavour to fill up the Places of them that were gone, by double Care and Diligence in the Services of the Priesthood.

Now, 1. Moses repeats the Directions he had formerly given them about eating their Share of the Sacrifices, *v. 12, 13, 14, 15*. The Priests must learn not only to put a Difference between the Holy and the Unholy, as they had been taught, *v. 10*. but also to distinguish between that which was most Holy and that which was only Holy, of the Things they were to eat. That Part of the Meat-Offering which remain'd to the Priest was most Holy, and therefore must be eaten in the Courts of the Tabernacle, and by Aaron's Sons only, *v. 12, 13*. But the Breast and Shoulder of the Peace-Offerings might be eaten in any decent Place out of the Courts of the Tabernacle, and by the Daughters of their Families. The Meat-Offings being annexed to the Burnt-Offerings, were intended only and wholly for the Glory of God, but the Peace-Offings were ordain'd for the Furtherance of Mens Joy and Comfort; the former therefore were the more sacred, and to be had more in Veneration. This Distinction the Priests must carefully observe, and take

heed of making any Blunders. Moses doth not pretend to give any Reasons for this Difference, but refers himself to his Instructions; for so am I commanded, v. 13. That was Reason enough: He had received of the Lord all that he deliver'd unto them, 1 Cor. 11. 23.

2. He enquires concerning one Deviation from the Appointment, which it seems had happened upon this Occasion, which was this: There was a Goat to be sacrific'd as a Sin-Offering for the People, chap. 9. 15. Now the Law of the Sin-Offerings was, that if the Blood of them were brought into the Holy Place, as that of the Sin-Offerings for the Priest was, then the Flesh was to be burnt without the Camp; otherwise it was to be eaten by the Priest in the Holy Place, chap. 6. 30. The Meaning of which is here explained, v. 17. that the Priests did hereby bear the Iniquity of the Congregation, i. e. they were Types of him who was to be made Sin for us, and on whom God would lay the Iniquity of us all. Now the Blood of this Goat was not brought into the Holy Place, and yet it seems it was burnt without the Camp.

Now observe here, 1. The gentle Reproof Moses gives to Aaron and his Sons for this Irregularity. Here again Aaron's Sons are said to be those that were left alive, v. 16. who therefore ought to take Warning; and Moses was angry with them: Though he was the meekest Man in the World, it seems he could be angry; and when he thought God was disobey'd and dishonour'd, and the Priesthood endanger'd, he wou'd be angry. Yet observe how very mildly he deals with Aaron and his Sons, considering their present Affliction. He only tells them, They should indeed have eaten it in the Holy Place; but is willing to hear what they have to say for themselves, being loth to speak to the Grief of those whom God had wounded.

2. The plausible Excuse which Aaron makes for this Mistake: Moses charg'd the Fault upon Eleazer and Ithamar, v. 16. but 'tis likely what they did, was by Aaron's Direction, and therefore he apologiz'd for it. He might have pleaded that this was a Sin-Offering for the Congregation, and if it had been a Bullock, it must have been wholly burnt, chap. 4. 21, and therefore why not now it was a Goat? But it seems 'twas otherwise ordered at this time, and therefore he makes his Affliction his Excuse, v. 19. Observe 1. How he speaks of Affliction, Such Things have befallen me; such sad Things, which could not but go near his Heart, and make it very heavy. He was a High Priest taken from among Men, and could not put off natural Affection then, when he put on the Holy Garments. He held his peace, v. 3. yet his Sorrow was stirr'd, as David's, Psal. 39. 2. Note, There may be a deep Sense of Affliction even there, where there is a sincere Resignation to the Will of God in the Affliction. Such Things as never beset me before; and as I little expected now, my Spirits cannot but sink, when I see my Family sinking: I must needs be heavy, when God is angry. Thus it's easy to say a great deal to aggravate an Affliction; but it's better say little. 2. How he makes that an Excuse for his varying from the Appointment about the Sin-Offering. He could not have eaten it but in his Mourning, and with a sorrowful Spirit, and would that have been accepted? He doth not plead that his Heart was so full of Grief he had no Stomach to it, but that he fear'd it would not be accepted. Note 1. Acceptance with God is the great Thing we should desire and aim at in all our Religious Services, particularly in the Lord's Supper, which is our eating of the Sin-Offering. 2. The Sorrow of the World is a very great Hindrance to our acceptable Performance of Holy Duties, both as it is discomposing to our selves, takes off our Chariot-Wheels, and makes us drive heavily, 1 Sam. 1. 7, 8. and as it is displeasing to God, whose Will it is that we should serve him cheerfully, Deut. 12. 7. Mourners Bread was polluted, Hos. 9. 4. See Mal. 2. 13.

3. Moses acquiesces in the Excuse, v. 20. he was content. Perhaps he thought it justified what they had done. God had provided that what could not be eaten might be burnt. Our Unfitness for Duty, when it is natural, and not sinful, will have great Allowances made for it; and God will have Mercy, and not Sacrifice. At least he thought it did very much extenuate the Fault: The Spirit indeed was willing, but the Flesh was weak. God by Moses shew'd that he considered his Frame. It appear'd that Aaron sincerely aim'd at God's Acceptance; and those that do so with an upright Heart, shall find he is not extreme to mark what they do amiss. Nor must we be severe in our Animadversions upon every Mistake, considering our selves, lest we also be tempted.

CHAP. XI.

The Ceremonial Law is describ'd by the Apostle (Heb. 9. 9, 10.) to consist not only in Gifts and Sacrifices, which hitherto have been treated of in this Book, but in Meats and Drinks, and divers Washings from Ceremonial Uncleaness: The Laws concerning which begin with this Chapter, which puts a Difference between some sorts of Flesh-meats and others, allowing some to be eaten as clean, and forbidding others as unclean. There is one kind of Flesh of Men. Nature starts at the Thought of eating that,

and none do it but such as are arriv'd to the highest Degree of Barbarity, and are become but one Remove from Brutes; therefore there needed no Law against that. But there is another kind of Flesh of Beasts, concerning which the Law directs here, v. 1—8. another of Fishes, v. 9—12, another of Birds, v. 13—19. and another of Creeping Things, which are distinguish'd into two sorts, Flying Creeping Things, v. 20—28. and Creeping Things upon the Earth, v. 29—43. And the Law concludes with the general Rule of Holiness, and Reasons for it, v. 44—47.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses and to Aaron, saying unto them, 2 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, These are the beasts which ye shall eat among all the beasts that are on the earth. 3 Whatsoever parteth the hoof, and is cloven-footed, and cheweth the cud among the beasts, that shall ye eat. 4 Nevertheless, these shall ye not eat, of them that chew the cud, or of them that divide the hoof: as the camel, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he is unclean unto you. 5 And the coney, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he is unclean unto you. 6 And the hare, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he is unclean unto you. 7 And the swine, though he divide the hoof, and be cloven-footed, yet he cheweth not the cud; he is unclean to you. 8 Of their flesh ye shall not eat, and their carcase shall ye not touch: they are unclean to you.

Now Aaron was consecrated a High-Priest over the House of God; God spake to him with Moses, and appoints them both as Joint-Commissioners to deliver his Will to the People. He spake both to Moses and to Aaron about this Matter; for it was particularly requir'd of the Priests that they should put a Difference between Clean and Unclean, and teach the People to do so. After the Flood God enter'd into Covenant with Noah and his Sons, he allow'd them to eat Flesh, Gen. 9. 3. whereas before they were confined to the Products of the Earth. But the Liberty allow'd to the Sons of Noah is here limited to the Sons of Israel. They might eat Flesh, but not all kinds of Flesh: Some they must look upon as unclean, and forbidden to them; others as clean, and allowed them. The Law in this Matter is both very particular, and very strict. But what Reason can be given for this Law? Why may not God's People have as free a Use of all the Creatures as other People? 1. It is Reason enough that God would have us so: His Will, as it is Law sufficient, so it is Reason sufficient; for his Will is his Wisdom. He saw good thus to try and exercise the Obedience of his People, not only in the Solemnities of his Altar, but in Matters of daily Occurrence at their own Table, that there they might remember they were under Authority. Thus God had tried the Obedience of Man in Innocency, by forbidding him to eat of one particular Tree. 2. Most of the Meats forbidden as unclean, are such as were really unwholesome, and not fit to be eaten; and those of them that we think wholesome enough, and use accordingly, as the Coney, the Hare, and the Swine, perhaps in those Countries, and to their Bodies, might be hurtful. And then God in this Law did by them but as a wise and loving Father doth by his Children, whom he restrains from eating that which he knows will make them sick. Note, The Lord is for the Body; and it is not only Folly, but Sin against God, to prejudice our Health for the pleasing of our Appetite. 3. God would thus teach his People to distinguish themselves from other People, not only in their Religious Worship, but in the common Actions of Life. Thus he would shew them that they must not be numbered among the Nations. It should seem there had been before this some Difference between the Hebrews and other Nations in their Food, kept up by Tradition; for the Egyptians and they would not eat together, Gen. 43. 32. And even before the Flood there was a Distinction of Beasts into clean and not clean, Gen. 7. 2. which Distinction was quite lost, with many other Instances of Religion, among the Gentiles. But by this Law 'tis reduced to a Certainty, and order'd to be kept up among the Jews; that thus by having a Diet peculiar to themselves, they might be kept from familiar Conversation with their idolatrous Neighbours, and might typify God's Spiritual Israel, who not in these little Things, but in the Temper of their Spirits, and the Course of their Lives, should be governed by a sober Singularity; and not be conform'd to this World. The Learned observed further, That most of the Creatures which by this Law were to be abominated as unclean, were such as were had in mighty Veneration among the Heathen, not so much for Food

Food as for Divination, and Sacrifice to their Gods; and therefore those are here mentioned as *unclean*, and an *Abomination*, which yet they would not be in any Temptation to eat, that they might keep up a religious Loathing of that which the *Gentiles* had a superstitious Value for. The Swine with the later *Gentiles* was sacred to *Venus*, the Owl to *Minerva*, the Eagle to *Jupiter*, the Dog to *Hecate*, &c. and all these are here made *unclean*.

As to the Beasts, there is a general Rule laid down, that those Beasts which did both *part the Hoof*, and *chew the Cud*, were clean, and those only: They are particularly mention'd in the Repetition of this Law, *Deut. 14. 4, 5.* where it appears that they had Variety enough allowed them, and needed not to complain of the Confinement they were under. Those Beasts that did not both *chew the Cud*, and *divide the Hoof*, were unclean: By which Rule the Flesh of Swine, and of Hares, and of Rabbits, were prohibited to them, though commonly used among us. Therefore particularly at the eating of any of these, we should give Thanks for the Liberty granted us by the Gospel in this Matter, which teacheth us, that *every Creature of God is good*, and we are to *call nothing common or unclean*. Some observe a Significancy in the Rule laid down here for them to distinguish by, or at least think it may be alluded to. Meditation, and other Acts of Devotion, done by the hidden Man of the Heart, may be signified by the *chewing of the Cud*, digesting our spiritual Food: Justice and Charity towards Men, and the Acts of a good Conversation, may be signified by the *dividing of the Hoof*: Now either of these without the other will not serve to recommend us to God, but both must go together; good Affections in the Heart, and good Works in the Life: If either be wanting, *we are not clean, surely we are not clean*. Of all the Creatures here forbidden as unclean, none has been more dreaded and detested by the pious *Jews*, than Swine's Flesh. Many were put to death by *Antiochus* because they would not eat it. This probably they were most in danger of being tempted to, and therefore possess'd themselves and their Children with a particular Antipathy to it, calling it not by its proper Name, but a *strange Thing*. It should seem the *Gentiles* used it superstitiously, *1sa. 65. 4.* *they eat Swine's Flesh*; and therefore God forbids all Use of it to his People, lest they should learn of their Neighbours to make that ill Use of it. Some suggest, that the Prohibition of these Beasts, as unclean, was intended to be a Caution to the People against the ill Qualities of these Creatures. We must not be filthy, nor wallow in the Mire as Swine, nor timorous and faint-hearted as Hares, nor dwell in the Earth as Rabbits; let not Man that is in Honour, make himself like these Beasts that perish. The Law forbid not only the eating of them, but the very touching of them: for those that would be kept from any Sin, must be careful to avoid all Temptations to it, and every thing that looks towards it, or leads to it.

9 These shall ye eat of all that *are* in the waters: whatsoever hath fins and scales in the waters, in the seas, and in the rivers, them shall ye eat. 10 And all that have no fins nor scales in the seas, and in the rivers, of all that move in the waters, and of any living thing, which *is* in the waters, they shall be an abomination unto you. 11 They shall be even an abomination unto you: ye shall not eat of their flesh, but you shall have their carcases in abomination. 12 Whatsoever hath no fins nor scales in the waters, that *shall be* an abomination unto you. 13 And these *are they which* ye shall have in abomination among the fowls, they shall not be eaten, they *are* an abomination, the eagle, and the osprey, 14 And the vulture, and the kite after his kind: 15 Every raven after his kind: 16 And the owl, and the night-hawk, and the cuckow, and the hawk after his kind: 17 And the little owl, and the cormorant, and the great owl, 18 And the swan, and the pelican, and the giereagle, 19 And the stork, the heron after her kind, and the lapwing, and the bar.

Here's, 1. A general Rule concerning Fishes which were clean, and which not. All that had *Fins and Scales* they might eat, and were forbidden only those odd sorts of Water-Animals that have not, *v. 9, 10.* The Ancients counted *Fish* the most delicate Food, so far were they from allowing it on Fasting-Days, or making it an Instance of Mortification to eat Fish: Therefore God did not lay much Restraint upon his People in them; for he is a Master that allows his Servants not only for Necessity, but for Delight. Concerning

the prohibited Fish, 'tis said *they shall be an Abomination to you, v. 10, 11, 12. i. e.* ye shall count them unclean, and not only not eat of them, but keep at a distance from them. *Note.* Whatever is unclean, should be to us an Abomination; *Touch not the unclean thing.* But observe, 'tis to be an Abomination only to you, that are *Jews*; but the Neighbour Nations were under none of these Obligations, nor are they to be an Abomination to us Christians; The *Jews* were honoured with peculiar Privileges, and therefore lest they should be proud of those, (*transcunt cum opere*) they were likewise laid under peculiar Restraints. Thus God's spiritual *Israel*, as they are dignified above others by the Gospel-Covenant of Adoption and Friendship; so they must be mortified more than others by the Gospel-Commands of Self-Denial, and bearing the Cross.

2. Concerning Fowls here's no general Rule given; but a particular Enumeration of those Fowls that they must abstain from as unclean, which implies an Allowance of all other. The Critics here have their hands full, to find out what's the true Signification of the *Hebrew* Words here used; some of which still remain uncertain; some sort of Fowls being peculiar to some Countries. Were the Law in Force now, we should be concerned to know for certain what are prohibited by it; and perhaps if we did, and were better acquainted with the Nature of the Fowls here mentioned; we should admire the Knowledge of *Adam*, in giving them Names expressive of their Natures, *Gen. 2. 20.* But the Law being repealed, and the Learning in a great measure lost, it is sufficient for us to observe that of the Fowls here forbidden. 1. Some are *Birds of Prey*, as the Eagle, Vulture, &c. and God would have his People to abhor every thing that's barbarous and cruel, and not to live by Blood and Rapine. *Doves* that are preyed upon, were fit to be Food for Man, and Offerings to God; but Kites and Hawks, that prey upon them, must be looked upon as an *Abomination to God and Man*: For the Condition of those that are persecuted for Righteousness's sake, appears to an Eye of Faith every way better than that of their Persecutors. 2. Others of them are *solitary Birds*, that abide in dark and desolate Places, as the Owl and the Pelican, *Psal. 102. 6.* and the *Cormorant* and *Raven*, *1sa. 34. 11.* for God's *Israel* should not be a *melancholy* People, nor affect Sadness and constant Solitude. 3. Others of them feed upon that which is impure, as the *Stork on Serpents*; others of them on Worms; and we must not only abstain from all Impurity ourselves, but from Communion with those that allow themselves in it. 4. Others of them were used by the *Egyptians* and other *Gentiles* in their Divinations; some Birds were reckon'd fortunate, others ominous: and their Soothsayers had great regard to the Flights of these Birds; all which therefore must be an Abomination to God's People, who must not learn the way of the Heathen.

20 All fowls that creep, going upon all four, shall be an abomination unto you. 21 Yet these may ye eat of every flying creeping thing that goeth upon all four, which have legs above their feet, to leap withal upon the earth: 22 Even these of them ye may eat; the locust after his kind, and the bald locust after his kind, and the beetle after his kind, and the grasshopper after his kind. 23 But all other flying creeping things, which have four feet, shall be an abomination unto you. 24 And for these ye shall be unclean; whosoever toucheth the carcase of them, shall be unclean until the even. 25 And whosoever beareth ought of the carcase of them, shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even. 26 The carcases of every beast which divideth the hoof, and is not cloven-footed, nor cheweth the cud, are unclean unto you; every one that toucheth them, shall be unclean. 27 And whatsoever goeth upon his paws, among all manner of beasts, that go on all four, those are unclean unto you; whoso toucheth their carcase, shall be unclean until the even. 28 And he that beareth the carcase of them, shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even; they are unclean unto you. 29 These also shall be unclean unto you among the creeping things that creep upon the earth; the weasel, and the mouse, and the tortoise after his kind. 30 And the ferret, and the camelion, and the lizard, and the snail, and the mole. 31 These are unclean to you among all that creep;

whosoever doth touch them when they are dead, shall be unclean until the even. 32 And upon whatsoever any of them when they are dead, doth fall, it shall be unclean, whether it be any vessel of wood, or raiment, or skin, or sack, whatsoever vessel it be, wherein any work is done, it must be put into water, and it shall be unclean until the even; so it shall be cleansed. 33 And every earthen vessel wherewith any of them falleth, whatsoever is in it shall be unclean, and ye shall break it. 34 Of all meat which may be eaten, that on which such water cometh, shall be unclean, and all drink that may be drunk in every such vessel, shall be unclean. 35 And every thing, whereupon any part of their carcase falleth, shall be unclean; whether it be oven, or ranges for pots, they shall be broken down; for they are unclean, and shall be unclean unto you. 36 Nevertheless, a fountain or pit wherein there is plenty of water, shall be clean; but that which toucheth their carcase shall be unclean. 37 And if any part of their carcase fall upon any sowing seed which is to be sown; it shall be clean. 38 But if any water be put upon the seed, and any part of their carcase fall thereon; it shall be unclean unto you. 39 And if any beast of which ye may eat, die: he that toucheth the carcase thereof, shall be unclean until the even. 40 And he that eateth of the carcase of it, shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even; he also that beareth the carcase of it, shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even. 41 And every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, shall be an abomination; it shall not be eaten. 42 Whatsoever goeth upon the belly, and whatsoever goeth upon all four, or whatsoever hath more feet among all creeping things that creep upon the earth, them ye shall not eat; for they are an abomination.

Here's the Law, 1. Concerning *flying Insects*, as Flies, Wasps, Bees, &c. these they might not eat, v. 20. nor indeed are they fit to be eaten; but there were several sorts of *Locusts*, which in those Countries were very good Meat, and much used; *John Baptist* lived upon them in the Desert, and they are here allowed them, v. 21. 2. Concerning the *creeping things on the Earth*, these were all forbidden, v. 29, 30, and again, v. 41, 42. for 'twas the Curse of the Serpent, that upon his Belly he should go, and therefore between him and Man there was an Enmity put, Gen. 3, 15. which was preserved by this Law. Dust is the Meat of the *creeping things*, and therefore they are not fit to be Man's Meat. 3. Concerning the *dead Carcasses* of all these unclean Animals: (1.) Every one that toucheth them was to be unclean until the Even, v. 24, 25, 27, 28. This Law is oft repeated, to possess them with a Dread of every thing that was prohibited, tho' no particular Reason for the Prohibition did appear, but only the Will of the Law-Maker. Not that they were to be looked upon as defiling to the Conscience, or that it was a Sin against God to touch them, unless done in Contempt of the Law: In many cases somebody must of necessity touch them, to remove them; but 'twas a Ceremonial Uncleanness they contracted, which for the time forbade them to come into the Tabernacle, or to eat of any of the Holy Things, or so much as to converse familiarly with their Neighbours. But the Uncleanness continued only till the Even, to signify that all Ceremonial Pollutions were to come to an end by the Death of Christ in the Evening of the World. And we must learn, by daily renewing our Repentance every Night for the Sins of the Day, to cleanse ourselves from the Pollution we contract by them, that we may not lie down in our Uncleanness. Even unclean Animals they might touch while they were alive, without contracting any Ceremonial Uncleanness by it, as Horses and Dogs, because they were allowed to use them for Service; but not when they were dead, because they might not eat their Flesh: and what must not be eaten, must not be touch'd, Gen. 3, 3. (2.) Even the Vessels, or other things they fell upon, were thereby made unclean until the Even, v. 32. and if it were an earthen Vessel, it must be broke, v. 33. This taught them carefully to avoid every thing that was polluting, even in their common Actions. Not only the Vessels of the Sanctuary, but every Pot in Jerusalem and Ju-

dah, must be Holiness to the Lord, Zech. 14, 20, 21. The Laws in these cases are very critical, and the Observance of them would be difficult, as we would think if every thing that suppose a dead Mouse or Rat falls upon, must be unclean; and if it were an Oven, or Ranges for Pots, they must all be broken down upon it, v. 35. The Exceptions also were very nice, v. 36, &c. All which was designed to exercise them to a constant Care and Exactness in their Obedience; and to teach us, who by Christ are delivered from these burdensome Observances, not to be less circumspect in the more weighty Matters of the Law. We ought as industriously to preserve our precious Souls from the Pollutions of Sin, and as speedily to cleanse them when they are polluted, as they were to preserve and cleanse their Bodies and Household-Goods from those Ceremonial Pollutions.

43 Ye shall not make yourselves abominable with any creeping thing that creepeth, neither shall ye make yourselves unclean with them, that ye should be defiled thereby. 44 For I am the LORD your God; ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy, for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 45 For I am the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God; ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy. 46 This is the law of the beasts, and of the fowl, and of every living creature that moveth in the waters, and of every creature that creepeth upon the earth: 47 To make a difference between the unclean and the clean, and between the beast that may be eaten, and the beast that may not be eaten.

Here's, 1. The Reddition of this Law, or a Key to set us into the Meaning of it. 'Twas not intended merely for a Bill of Fare, or as the Directions of a Physician about their Diet; but God would hereby teach them to *sanctify themselves*, and to be holy, v. 44. that is, (1.) They must hereby learn to put a Difference between Good and Evil, and to reckon it could not be all alike what they did, when it was not all alike what they eat. (2.) To maintain a constant Observance of the Divine Law, and to govern themselves by that in all their Actions, even those that are common, which ought to be done after a godly sort, 1 Joh. 8, even Eating and Drinking must be by Rule, and to the Glory of God, 1 Cor. 10, 31. (3.) To distinguish themselves from all their Neighbours, as a People set apart for God, and obliged not to walk as other Gentiles; and all this is Holiness. Thus these Rudiments of the World were their Tutors and Governours (Gal. 4, 2, 3.) to bring them to that which is the Revival of our first State in Adam, and the Earnest of our best State with Christ, that is, Holiness, without which no Man shall see the Lord. This is indeed the great Design of all the Ordinances, that by them we may *sanctify ourselves*, and learn to be holy. Even this Law concerning their Food, which seem'd to stoop so very low, aim'd thus high; for it was the Statute-Law of Heaven under the Old Testament as well as the New, That without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord. The Caution therefore, v. 43. is, Ye shall not make yourselves abominable. Note, By having Fellowship with Sin, which is abominable, we make ourselves abominable. That Man is truly miserable, who is in the fight of God abominable; and that none are, but those that make themselves so. The Jewish Writers themselves suggest, that the Intendment of this Law was to forbid them all Communion by Marriage, or otherwise, with the Heathen, Deut. 7, 2, 3. And thus the Moral of it is obliging to us, forbidding us to have Fellowship with the unfruitful Works of Darkness; and without this real Holiness of the Heart and Life, He that offereth an Oblation, is as if he offer'd Swine's Blood (Isa. 66, 3.) and it were such a Provocation for a Man to eat Swine's Flesh himself, much more must it be so to offer Swine's Blood at God's Altar, see Prov. 15, 8.

2. The Reasons of this Law; and they are all taken from the Law-Maker himself, to whom we must have Respect in all Acts of Obedience. (1.) I am the Lord your God, v. 44. Therefore you are bound to do thus in pure Obedience, God's Sovereignty over us, and Propriety in us, obligeth us to do whatever he commands us, how much soever it crosseth our own Inclinations. (2.) I am holy, v. 44. and again, v. 45. If God be holy, we must be so, else we cannot expect to be accepted of him. His Holiness is his Glory, (Exod. 15, 11.) and therefore it becomes his House for ever, Psal. 93, 5. This great Precept thus enforc'd, though it comes in here in the midst of abrogated Laws, is quoted and stamp'd for a Gospel-Precept, 1 Pet. 1, 16. where it is intimated that all these Ceremonial Restraints were design'd to teach us, that we must

not fashion ourselves according to our former Lusts in our Ignorance, v. 14. (3.) I am the Lord that bringeth you out of the Land of Egypt, v. 45. This was a Reason why they should cheerfully submit to distinguishing Laws, who had of late been so wonderfully dignified with distinguishing Favours. He that had done more for them than for any other People, might justly expect more from them.

3. The Conclusion of this Statute, v. 46, 47. *This is the Law of the Beasts and of the Fowl, &c.* This Law was to them a Statute for ever, i. e. as long as that Oeconomy lasted, but under the Gospel we find it expressly repealed by a Voice from Heaven to Peter, Acts 10. 15. as it had before been virtually set aside by the Death of Christ, with other the Ordinances that perished in the using, *Touch not, Taste not, Handle not*, Col. 2. 21, 22. And now we are sure that *Meat commands us not to God*, 1 Cor. 8. 8. and that *nothing is unclean of itself*, Rom. 14. 14. nor doth that defile a Man which goes into his Mouth, but that which comes out from the Heart, Mat. 15. 11. Let us therefore, (1.) Give Thanks to God that we are not under this Yoke, but that to us every Creature of God is allowed as good, and nothing to be refused. (2.) Stand fast in the Liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and take heed of those Doctrines which command to abstain from Meats, and so would revive Moses again, 1 Tim. 4. 3, 4. (3.) Be strictly and conscientiously temperate in the Use of the good Creatures God has allowed us. If God's Law has given us Liberty, let us lay Restraints upon ourselves, and never feed ourselves without Fear, lest our Table be a Snare. Set a Knife to thy Throat, if thou be a Man given to Appetite; and be not desirous of Dainties or Varieties, Prov. 23. 2, 3. Nature is content with a little, Grace with less, but Lust with nothing.

CHAP. XII.

After the Law concerning clean and unclean Food, comes the Law concerning clean and unclean Persons; and the first is in this Chapter concerning the Ceremonial Uncleanness of Women in Child-birth, v. 1—5. And concerning their Purification from that Uncleanness, v. 6—8.

1 AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, **2** Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a woman have conceived seed, and born a man child, then she shall be unclean seven days: according to the days of the separation for her infirmity shall she be unclean. **3** And in the eighth day, the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. **4** And she shall then continue in the blood of her purifying three and thirty days: she shall touch no hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purifying be fulfilled. **5** But if she bear a maid child, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her separation, and she shall continue in the blood of her purifying threescore and six days.

The Law here pronounces Women lying in ceremonially unclean. The Jews say, the Law extended even to an Abortion, if the Child was so form'd, as that the Sex was distinguishable. 1. There was some time of strict Separation immediately after the Birth, which continued seven Days for a Son, and fourteen Days for a Daughter, v. 2—5. During these Days she was separated from her Husband and Friends, and those that necessarily attended her were ceremonially unclean, which was one Reason why the Males were not circumcised till the eighth Day, because they participated of the Mother's Pollution during the Days of her Separation. 2. There was also a longer time appointed for their purifying, thirty-three Days more, (forty in all) if the Birth were a Male, and double that time if a Female, v. 4, 5. During this time they were only separated from the Sanctuary, and forbidden to eat of the Passover, or Peace-Offerings, or if a Priest's Wife, to eat of any thing that was holy to the Lord. Why the time of both these was double for a Female to what it was for a Male, I see no Reason can be assigned, but the Will of the Law-Maker; in Christ Jesus no Difference is made of Males and Females, Col. 3. 11. But this Ceremonial Uncleanness, which the Law laid Women in Childbed under, was to signify the Pollution of Sin which we are all conceived and born in, Psal. 51. 5. For if the Root be impure, so is the Branch; Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? If Sin had not entered, nothing but Purity and Honour had attended all the Products of that great Blessing, *Be fruitful and multiply*; but now the Nature of Man is degenerated; the Propagation of that Nature is laid under these Marks of Disgrace, because of the Sin and Corruption that is propagated with it;

and in remembrance of the Curse upon the Woman that was first in the Transgression, that in Sorrow [to which 'tis here further added, in Shame] she should bring forth Children. And the Exclusion of the Woman for so many Days from the Sanctuary, and all Participation of the Holy Things, signified that our Original Corruption (that sinning Sin which we brought into the World with us) would have excluded us for ever from the Enjoyment of God and his Favours, if he had not graciously provided for our purifying.

6 And when the days of her purifying are fulfilled, for a son, or for a daughter; she shall bring a lamb of the first year for a burnt-offering, and a young pidgeon, or a turtle-dove for a sin-offering, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, unto the priest: **7** Who shall offer it before the LORD, and make an atonement for her, and she shall be cleansed from the issue of her blood. This is the law for her that hath born a male or a female. **8** And if she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtles, or two young pidgeons; the one for the burnt-offering, and the other for a sin-offering: and the priest shall make an atonement for her, and she shall be clean.

A Woman that had lain in, when the Time set for her Return to the Sanctuary was come, she was not to attend there empty, but must bring her Offerings, v. 6. 1. A Burnt Offering; a Lamb, if she were able; if poor, a Pidgeon. This she was to offer in Thankfulness to God for his Mercy to her, in bringing her safely thro' the Pains of Child-bearing, and all the Perils of Child-bed; and in Desire and Hopes of God's further Favour both to her and to the Child. When a Child is born, there is Joy and there is Hope, and therefore 'twas proper to bring this Offering, which was of a general Nature; for what we rejoice in, we must give thanks for, and what we are in hopes of, we must pray for. But besides this, 2. She must offer a Sin-Offering, which must be the same for Poor and Rich, a Turtle-Dove, or a young Pidgeon; for whatever Difference there may be between Rich and Poor in the Sacrifices of Acknowledgment, that of Atonement is the same for both. This Sin-Offering was intended either, 1. To complete her Purification from that Ceremonial Uncleanness, which tho' it was not in itself sinful, yet was typical of moral Pollution: Or, 2. To make Atonement for that which was really Sin, either an inordinate Desire of the Blessing of Children, or Discontent and Impatience under the Pains of Child-bearing. 'Tis only by Christ the great Sin-Offering, that the Corruption of our Nature is done away, and to that it is owing that we are not for ever excluded by it from the Sanctuary, and from eating of the Holy Things.

According to this Law we find, that the Mother of our Blessed Lord, tho' he was not conceived in Sin as others, yet accomplished the Days of her Purification; and then presented her Son to the Lord, being her First-born, and brought her own Offering, a pair of Turtle-Doves, Luke 2. 22, 23, 24. So poor were Christ's Parents, that they were not able to bring a Lamb for a Burnt-Offering; and so early was Christ made under the Law, to redeem them that were under it. The Morality of this Law obligeth those Women that have received Mercy from God in Child-bearing, with all Thankfulness to own God's Goodness to them, acknowledging themselves unworthy of it, and (which is the best Purification of Women that have been saved in Child-bearing, 1 Tim. 2. 15.) to continue in Faith, and Charity, and Holiness with Sobriety, for this shall please the Lord better than the Turtle-Doves, or the young Pidgeons.

CHAP. XIII.

The next Ceremonial Uncleanness is that of the Leprosy; concerning which the Law was very large and particular: the Discovery of it in this Chapter, and the Cleansing of the Leger in the next. Scarce any one thing in all the Levitical Law takes up so much room as this: (1.) Rules are here given, by which the Priest must judge whether a Man had the Leprosy or no, according as the Symptom was that appear'd. 1. If it was a Swelling, a Scab, or a bright Spot, v. 1—17. 2. If it was a Boil, v. 18—23. 3. If it was an Inflammation, v. 24—28. 4. If it was in the Head or Beard, v. 29—37. 5. If it was a bright Spot, v. 38, 39. 6. If it was in a Bald Head, v. 40—44. (2.) Direction is given how the Leger must be dispos'd of, v. 45, 46. (3.) Concerning the Leprosy in Garments, v. 47—59.

1 AND the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, saying, **2** When a man shall have in

in the skin of his flesh a rising, a scab or bright spot, and it be in the skin of his flesh *like* the plague of leprosy, then he shall be brought unto Aaron the priest, or unto one of his sons the priests. 3 And the priest shall look on the plague in the skin of the flesh: and when the hair in the plague is turned white, and the plague in sight be deeper than the skin of his flesh; it is a plague of leprosy: and the priest shall look on him, and pronounce him unclean. 4 If the bright spot be white in the skin of his flesh, and in sight be not deeper than the skin, and the hair thereof be not turned white; then the priest shall shut up him *that hath* the plague, seven days. 5 And the priest shall look on him the seventh day: and behold if the plague in his sight be at a stay, and the plague spread not into the skin; then the priest shall shut him up seven days more. 6 And the priest shall look on him again the seventh day: and behold, if the plague be somewhat dark, and the plague spread not in the skin; the priest shall pronounce him clean: it is but a scab, and he shall wash his clothes, and be clean. 7 But if the scab spread much abroad in the skin, after that he hath been seen of the priest for his cleansing; he shall be seen of the priest again. 8 And if the priest see, that behold the scab spreadeth in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean: it is a leprosy. 9 When the plague of leprosy is in a man, then he shall be brought unto the priest. 10 And the priest shall see him: and behold, if the rising be white in the skin, and it have turned the hair white, and *there be* quick raw flesh in the rising; 11 It is an old leprosy in the skin of his flesh, and the priest shall pronounce him unclean, and shall not shut him up: for he is unclean. 12 And if a leprosy break out abroad in the skin, and the leprosy cover all the skin of him *that hath* the plague, from his head even to his foot, wheresoever the priest looketh; 13 Then the priest shall consider: and behold, if the leprosy have covered all his flesh, he shall pronounce him clean *that hath* the plague: it is all turned white: he is clean. 14 But when raw flesh appeareth in him, he shall be unclean. 15 And the priest shall see the raw flesh, and pronounce him to be unclean: for the raw flesh is unclean: it is a leprosy. 16 Or if the raw flesh turn again, and be changed unto white, he shall come unto the priest: 17 And the priest shall see him: and behold, if the plague be turned into white, then the priest shall pronounce him clean *that hath* the plague: he is clean.

Concerning the Plague of Leprosy we may observe in general, 1. That it was rather an *Uncleaness* than a *Disease*; at least so the Law considered it, and therefore employed not the Physicians, but the Priests about it. Christ is said to cleanse Lepers, not to cure them. We do not read of any that died of it, but it rather *buried* them alive, by rendering them unfit for Conversation with any, but such as were infected like themselves: Yet there is a Tradition, That that Pharaoh who sought to kill Moses, was the first that ever was struck with this Disease, and that he died of it. 'Tis said to have begun first in Egypt, from whence it spread into Syria: 'Twas very well known to Moses, when he put his own Hand into his Bosom, and took it out leprous. 2. That it was a Plague inflicted immediately by the Hand of God, and came not from natural Causes, as other Diseases, and therefore it must be managed according to a Divine Law. Miriam's Leprosy, and Gehazi's, and King Uzziah's, were all the Punishments inflicted on particular Sins: And if generally it was so, no marvel there was so much care taken to distinguish it from a common Distemper, that none might be look'd upon as lying under this extraordinary Token of Divine Pleasure, but those that really were so. 3. That it is a Plague, now not known in the World; what is commonly call'd the *Leprosy*, is of

quite a different nature: This seems reserved as a particular Scourge for the Sinners of those Times and Places; the Jews retained the Idolatrous Customs they had learn'd in Egypt, and therefore God justly caus'd this, with some other of the Diseases of Egypt, to follow them. Yet we read of Naaman the Syrian, who was a *Lepers*, 2 Kings 5. 1. 4. That there were other Breakings-out in the Body, which did very much resemble the Leprosy, but were not it; which might make a Man sore, and loathsome, and yet not Ceremonially unclean. Justly are our Bodies call'd *vile Bodies*, which have in them the Seeds of so many Diseases, by which the Lives of many are made bitter to them. 5. That the Judgment of it was referred to the Priests: Lepers were look'd upon as stigmatiz'd by the Justice of God, and therefore 'twas left to his Servants the Priests, who might be presumed to know his Mark best, to pronounce who were Lepers, and who were not. And the Jews say, any Priest, though disabled by a Blemish to attend the Sanctuary, might be Judge of the Leprosy, provided the Blemish were not in his Eye. And he might (they say) take a common Person to assist him in the Search, but the Priest only must pronounce the Judgment. 6. That it was a Figure of the Moral Pollutions of Mens Minds by Sin, which is the Leprosy of the Soul, defiling to the Conscience, and from which Christ alone can *cleanse* us; for herein the Power of his Grace infinitely transcends that of the Legal Priesthood, that the Priests could only *convict* the Leper, for by the Law is the Knowledge of Sin; but Christ can *cure* the Lepers, he can *take away* Sin; Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean, which was more than the Priest could do, Mat. 8. 2. Some think the Leprosy signified not so much Sin in general, as a *State of Sin*, by which Men are separated from God, their Spot not being the Spot of God's Children; and scandalous Sin, for which Men are to be shut out from the Communion of the Faithful. It is a Work of great Importance, but of great Difficulty, to judge of our Spiritual State; we have all cause to suspect ourselves, being conscious to ourselves of Sores and Spots, but whether clean or unclean, is the Question. A Man might have a *Scab* (v. 6.) and yet be clean; the Best have their Infirmities: but as there were certain Marks by which to know that it was a Leprosy, so there are Characters of such as are in the Gall of Bitterness; and the Work of Ministers is to declare the *Judgment of Leprosy*, and to assist those that suspect themselves in the Trial of their Spiritual State, *remitting or retaining* Sin. And hence the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven are said to be given them, because they are to separate between the precious and the vile, and to judge who are fit as clean to partake of the Holy Things, and who as unclean to be debar'd them. Now (1.) Several Rules are here laid down, by which the Priest must go in making his Judgment. 1. If the Sore were but *Skin-deep*, it was to be hoped it was not the Leprosy, v. 4. But if it was *deeper than the Skin*, the Man must be pronounced *unclean*, v. 9. The Infirmities that consist with Grace, do not sink deep into the Soul, but the Mind still serves the Law of God and the inward Man delights in it, Rom. 7. 22, 25. But if the matter be really worse than it shews, and the Inwards be infected, the Case is dangerous. 2. If the Sore stand as a *stay*, and do not spread, it's no Leprosy, v. 5, 6. But if it spread much abroad, and continue to do so after several Inspections, the Case is bad; v. 7, 8. If Men do not grow worse, but a stop is put to the course of their Sins, and their Corruptions are check'd, 'tis to be hoped they will grow better; but if Sin get ground, and they are worse every day than other, they are going down hill. 3. If there were *proud raw flesh* in the Rising, the Priest needed not to wait any longer, it was certainly a Leprosy, v. 10, 11. Nor is there any surer Indication of the Badness of a Man's Spiritual State, than the Heart's rising in Self-Conceit, Confidence in the Flesh, and Resistance of the Reproofs of the Word, and Strivings of the Spirit. 4. If the Eruption, whatever it was, covered all the Skin from Head to Foot, it was no Leprosy, v. 12, 13. for it was an Evidence that the Vitals were sound and strong, and Nature hereby help'd itself, throwing out what was burdensome and pernicious. There is Hopes in the Small-Pox, when they come out well. So if Men freely confess their Sins, and hide them not; there is no Danger comparable to theirs that cover their Sins. Some gather this from it, That there is more Hopes of the Prophane than of Hypocrites. The Publicans and Harlots went into the Kingdom of Heaven before Scribes and Pharisees. In one Instance, the sudden Breakings out of Passion, though bad enough, are not so dangerous as Malice concealed. Others thus, That if we judge ourselves, we shall not be judged; if we see and own that there is no *Health in us, no Soundness in our Flesh*, by reason of Sin, we shall find Grace in the eyes of the Lord. (2.) The Priest must take time in making his Judgment, and not give it rashly: If the matter looked suspicious, he must shut up the Patient *seven Days*, and then *seven Days* more, that his Judgment might be according to Truth. This teacheth all, both Ministers and People, not to be hasty in their Censures, nor to judge any thing

thing before the time. If some Mens Sins go before unto Judgment, others follow after, and so Mens good Works, therefore let nothing be done suddenly, 1 Tim. 5. 22, 24, 25. (3.) If the Person suspected were found to be clean, yet he must wash his Clothes, v. 6. because he had been under the Suspicion, and there had been in him that which gave ground for the Suspicion. Even the Prisoner that's acquitted must go down on his Knees. We have need to wash in the Blood of Christ from our Spots, though they be not Leprosy Spots: for we can say, *I am pure from Sin*, though there are those who through Grace are innocent from the great Transgression.

18 The flesh also, in which, even in the skin thereof, was a boyl, and is healed, 19 And in the place of the boyl there be a white rising, or a bright spot white, and somewhat reddish, and it be shewed to the priest; 20 And if when the priest seeth it, behold, it be in sight lower than the skin, and the hair thereof be turned white; the priest shall pronounce him unclean: it is a plague of leprosy broken out of the boyl. 21 But if the priest look on it, and behold, there be no white hairs therein, and if it be not lower than the skin, but be somewhat dark; then the priest shall shut him up seven days. 22 And if it spread much abroad in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is a plague. 23 But if the bright spot stay in his place, and spread not, it is a burning boyl; and the priest shall pronounce him clean. 24 Or if there be any flesh, in the skin whereof there is a hot burning, and the quick flesh that burneth have a white bright spot, somewhat reddish, or white; 25 Then the priest shall look upon it: and behold, if the hair in the bright spot be turned white, and it be in sight deeper than the skin; it is a leprosy broken out of the burning: wherefore the priest shall pronounce him unclean: it is the plague of leprosy. 26 But if the priest look on it, and behold, there be no white hair on the bright spot, and it be no lower than the other skin, but be somewhat dark; then the priest shall shut him up seven days. 27 And the priest shall look upon him the seventh day: and if it be spread much abroad in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean: it is the plague of leprosy. 28 And if the bright spot stay in his place, and spread not in the skin, but it be somewhat dark; it is a rising of the burning, and the priest shall pronounce him clean: for it is an inflammation of the burning. 29 If a man or a woman hath a plague upon the head or the beard; 30 Then the priest shall see the plague: and behold, if it be in the sight deeper than the skin, and there be in it a yellow thin hair; then the priest shall pronounce him unclean: it is a dry scall, even a leprosy upon the head or beard; 31 And if the priest look on the plague of the scall, and behold, it be not in sight deeper than the skin, and that there is no black hair in it; then the priest shall shut up him that hath the plague of the scall, seven days. 32 And in the seventh day the priest shall look on the plague: and behold, if the scall spread not, and there be in it no yellow hair, and the scall be not in sight deeper than the skin; 33 He shall be shaven, but the scall shall he not shave: and the priest shall shut up him that hath the scall seven days more. 34 And in the seventh day the priest shall look on the scall: and behold, if the scall be not spread in the skin, nor be in sight deeper than the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him clean: and he shall wash his clothes, and be clean. 35 But if the scall spread much in the skin after his cleansing; 36 Then the priest shall look on him; and behold, if the scall be

spread in the skin, the priest shall not seek for yellow hair: he is unclean. 37 But if the scall be in his sight at a stay, and that there is black hair grown up therein; the scall is healed, he is clean: and the priest shall pronounce him clean.

The Priest is here instructed what Judgment to make if there were any Appearance of a Leprosy, either (1.) in an old Ulcer, or Boyl, that has been healed, v. 18, &c. When old Sores, that seem to have been cured, break out again, 'tis to be fear'd there's a Leprosy in them, such is the Danger of those that having escaped the Pollutions of the World, are again entangled therein, and overcome. Or, (2.) in a Burn, by accident, for that seems to be meant, v. 24, &c. The Burning of Strife and Contention often proves the Occasion of the rising up and breaking out of that Corruption, which witnesseth to Mens faces that they are unclean. (3.) In a Scall Head. And in this commonly the Judgment turn'd upon a very small matter. If the Hair in the Scall were black, 'twas a sign of Soundness; if yellow, 'twas an Indication of a Leprosy, v. 30—37. Other of the Rules in these Cases, are the same with those mentioned before.

In reading of these several sorts of Ailments, it will be good for us, 1. To lament the calamitous State of Human Life; which lies exposed to so many Grievances. What Troops of Diseases are we beset with on every side, and by Sin they all enter'd. 2. To give thanks to God, if he has never afflicted us with any of these Sores: If the Constitution be healthful, the Body lively and easy, we are bound to glorify God with our Bodies.

38 If a man also or a woman have in the skin of their flesh bright spots, even white bright spots; 39 Then the priest shall look: and behold, if the bright spots in the skin of their flesh be darkish white; it is a freckled spot that groweth in the skin: he is clean. 40 And the man whose hair is fallen off his head, he is bald: yet is he clean. 41 And he that hath his hair fallen off, from the part of his head toward his face, he's forehead bald: yet is he clean. 42 And if there be in the bald head, or bald forehead, a white reddish sore; it is a leprosy sprung up in his bald head, or his bald forehead. 43 Then the priest shall look upon it; and behold, if the rising of the sore be white reddish in his bald head, or in his bald forehead, as the leprosy appeareth in the skin of the flesh; 44 He is a leprous man, he is unclean: the priest shall pronounce him utterly unclean, his plague is in his head. 45 And the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean. 46 All the days wherein the plague shall be in him, he shall be defiled: he is unclean; he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be.

Here's, 1. Proviso's, that neither a freckled Skin nor a bald Head should be mistaken for a Leprosy, v. 38—41. Every deformity must not presently be made a Ceremonial Defilement. *Elisha* was fear'd for his bald Head, 2 Kings 2. 23. but they were the Children of *Bethel*, who turn'd it to his Reproach, that he knew not the Judgments of their God.

2. A particular Brand set upon the Leprosy, if at any time it did appear in a bald Head, v. 42. The Plague is in his Head, he is utterly unclean. If the Leprosy of Sin have seiz'd the Head, if the Judgment be corrupted, and wicked Principles embraced, which countenance and support wicked Practices, 'tis an utter Uncleaness, from which few are ever cleansed. Soundness in the Faith keeps the Leprosy from the Head, and saves Conscience from being shipwreck'd.

3. Directions what must be done with the convicted Leper. When the Priest, upon mature Deliberation, had solemnly pronounced him unclean, 1. He must pronounce himself so, v. 43. He must put himself into the posture of a Mourner, and cry, Unclean, Unclean. The Leprosy was not itself a sin, but it was a sudden Token of God's Displeasure, and a sore Affliction to him that was under it. 'Twas a Reproach to his Name, put a full stop to his Business in the World, cut him off from Conversation with his Friends and Relations; and dem'd him to Banishment till he was cleansed, shut him out from the Sanctuary, and was in effect the Ruin of all the Comfort he could have in this World. *Human*, it should seem, either was a Leper, or alludes to the melancholy Condition of

of a Leper, *Psal. 88. 8, &c.* He must therefore (1.) Humble himself under the mighty Hand of God, not insinuating upon his Cleanness, when the Priest had pronounced him *unclean*, but justify God, and accepting the *Punishment of his Iniquity*. He must signify this by *rending his Clothes, uncovering his Head, and covering his upper Lip*, all Tokens of Shame, and Confusion of Face, and very significant of that Self loathing and Self-abasement which should fill the Hearts of Penitents, the Language of which is Self-judging. Thus must we take to our selves the Shame that belongs to us, and with broken Hearts call our selves by our own Name, *Unclean, unclean*: Heart unclean, Life unclean, unclean by original Corruption, unclean by actual Transgression: *Unclean*, and therefore unworthy to be for ever excluded from Communion with God, and all Hope of Happiness in him. We are all as an unclean Thing, *Isa. 64. 6.* *Unclean*, and therefore *undone*, if infinite Mercy do not interpose. (2.) He must give warning to others, to take heed of coming near him. Wherever he went, he must cry to those he saw at a distance, *I am unclean, unclean*, take heed of touching me. Not that the Leprosy was catching, but by the Touch of a Leper a ceremonial Uncleanness was contracted: Every one therefore was concerned to avoid it; and the Leper himself must give notice of the Danger. And this was all that the Law could do, in that it was weak through the Flesh; it taught the Leper to cry, *Unclean, unclean*: But the Gospel has put another Cry into the Leper's Mouth, *Luke 17. 12, 13.* where we find ten Lepers crying with a loud Voice, *Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.* The Law only shews us our Disease; the Gospel shews us our Help in Christ. 2. He must then be shut out of the Camp, and afterwards, when they came to Canaan, out of the City, Town, or Village where he liv'd, and dwell alone, *v. 46.* associating with none but those that were Lepers like himself. When King Uzziah became a Leper, he was banished his Palace, and dwelt in a *several House*, *2 Chron. 26. 21.* and see *2 Kings 7. 3.* This typified the Purity which ought to be preserved in the Gospel Church, by the solemn and authoritative Exclusion of scandalous Sinners, that hate to be reformed, from the Communion of the Faithful: *Put away from among your selves that wicked Person*, *1 Cor. 5. 13.*

47 The garment also, that the plague of leprosy is in, whether it be a woollen garment, or a linnen garment, 48 Whether it be in the warp or woof of linnen or of woollen, whether in a skin, or in any thing made of skin; 49 And if the plague be greenish or reddish in the garment, or in the skin, either in the warp, or in the woof, or in any thing of skin: it is a plague of leprosy, and shall be shewed unto the priest. 50 And the priest shall look upon the plague, and shut up it that hath the plague seven days. 51 And he shall look on the plague on the seventh day: if the plague be spread in the garment, either in the warp, or in the woof or in a skin, or in any work that is made of skin; the plague is a fretting leprosy: it is unclean. 52 He shall therefore burn that garment, whether warp or woof, in woollen or in linnen, or any thing of skin, wherein the plague is: for it is a fretting leprosy: it shall be burnt in the fire. 53 And if the priest shall look, and behold the plague be not spread in the garment, either in the warp, or in the woof, or in any thing of skin; 54 Then the priest shall command that they wash the thing wherein the plague is, and he shall shut it up seven days more. 55 And the priest shall look on the plague after that it is washed: and behold, if the plague have not changed his colour, and the plague be not spread, it is unclean, thou shalt burn it in the fire: it is fret inward, whether it be bare within or without. 56 And if the priest look, and behold the plague be somewhat dark after the washing of it, then he shall rend it out of the garment, or out of the skin, or out of the warp, or out of the woof: 57 And if it appear still in the garment, either in the warp, or in the woof, or in any thing of skin, it is a spreading plague: thou shalt burn that wherein the plague is, with fire. 58 And the garment, either warp or woof, or whatsoever thing of skin it be, which thou shalt wash, if the

plague be departed from them, then it shall be washed the second time, and shall be clean. 59 This is the law of the plague of leprosy in a garment of woollen or linnen, either in the warp or woof, or any thing of skins, to pronounce it clean, or to pronounce it unclean.

This is the Law concerning the Plague of Leprosy in a Garment, whether Linnen or Woollen. A Leprosy in a Garment, with discernible Indications of it, the Colour chang'd by it, the Garment fretted, the Nap worn off, and this in some one particular Part of the Garment, and increasing when it was shut up, and not to be got out by washing, is a Thing which to us now is altogether unaccountable. The Learned confess, That it was a Sign and a Miracle in Israel, an extraordinary Punishment inflicted by the Divine Power, as a Token of great Displeasure against a Person, or Family. (1.) The Process was much the same with that concerning a Leprous Person. The Garment suspected to be tainted was not to be burnt immediately, tho' it may be there would have been no great Loss of it; for in no Case must Sentence be given merely upon a Surmise, but it but be *shew'd to the Priest*. If upon search it was found that there was a *Leprous Spot*, (the Jews say, no bigger than a Bean) it must be burnt, or at least, that part of the Garment in which the Spot was, *v. 52, 57.* If the Cause of the Suspicion were gone, it must be washed, and then might be used, *v. 58.* (2.) The Signification also was much the same, to intimate the great Malignity there is in Sin: It not only defiles the Sinner's Conscience, but it brings a Stain upon all his Employments and Enjoyments, all he has, and all he doth. *To them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure.* *Tit. 1. 14.* And we are hereby taught to hate even the Garments spotted with the Flesh, *Jude 23.* Those who make their Clothes Servants to their Pride and Lust, may see them thereby tainted with a Leprosy, and doom'd to the Fire, *Isa. 3. 18—24.* But the Ornament of the hidden Man of the Heart is incorruptible, *1 Pet. 3. 4.* The Robes of Righteousness never fret, nor are moth-eaten.

CHAP. XIV.

The former Chapter directed the Priests how to convict a Leper of Ceremonial Uncleanness: No Prescriptions are given for his Cure, but when God had cur'd him, the Priests are in this Chapter directed how to cleanse him. The Remedy here is only adapted to the Ceremonial Part of his Disease; but the Authority Christ gave to his Ministers, was to cure the Lepers, and so to cleanse them. We have here, 1. The solemn Declaration of the Leper's being clean, with the significant Ceremony attending it, *v. 1—9.* 2. The Sacrifices which he was to offer to God eight Days after, *v. 10—32.* 3. The Management of a House, in which appear'd Signs of a Leprosy, *v. 33—53.* And the Conclusion and Summary of this whole Matter, *v. 54—57.*

1 AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 This shall be the law of the leper, in the day of his cleansing: he shall be brought to the priest; 3 And the priest shall go forth out of the camp; and the priest shall look, and behold if the plague of leprosy he healed in the leper; 4 Then shall the priest command to take for him that is to be cleansed two birds alive, and clean, and cedar-wood, and scarlet, and hyssop. 5 And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel, over running water. 6 As for the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar-wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water. 7 And he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose into the open field. 8 And he that is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, and shave off all his hair, and wash himself in water, that he may be clean: and after that he shall come into the camp, and shall tarry abroad out of his tent seven days. 9 But it shall be on the seventh day that he shall shave all his hair off his head, and his beard, and his eye brows, even all his hair he shall shave off; and he shall wash his clothes, also he shall wash his flesh in water, and he shall be clean.

Here, 1. It is suppos'd that the Plague of the Leprosy was not an incurable Disease. *Uzziah's* indeed continued to the Day of his Death, and *Obadiah's* was entail'd upon his Seed; but *Miriam's* lasted only *seven Days*. We may suppose that it often wore off in Process of Time. Tho' God contend long, he will not contend for ever. 2. The Judgment of the Cure, as well as that of the Disease, was refer'd to the Priest. He *shut him out of the Camp* to the Leper, to see whether his Leprosy was healed, v. 3. And we may suppose the Priest did not contract any ceremonial Uncleaness by coming near the Leper, as another Person would. 'Twas in Mercy to the poor Lepers that the Priests particularly had Orders to attend them; for the Priests Lips should keep Knowledge: And those in Affliction had need to be instructed both how to bear their Afflictions, and how to reap benefits by them; had need of the Word in concurrence with the Rod, to bring them to Repentance: Therefore 'tis well for those that are sick, if they have these *Messengers of the Lord of Hosts* with them, their *Interpreters to speak unto them God's Spirituality*, Job 33. 23. When the Leper was shut out, and could not go to the Priests, 'twas well the Priests might come to him. *In any sick, let him send for the Elders, the Ministers*, Jam. 5. 14. If we apply it to the Spiritual Leprosy of Sin, it intimates, That when we withdraw from those who walk disorderly, that they may be ashamed, we must not count them as Enemies, but *admonish them as Brethren*, 2 Thes. 3. 15. And also, That when God by his Grace hath brought those to Repentance, who were shut out of Communion for Scandal, they ought with Tenderness, and Joy, and sincere Affection to be received in again. Thus *Paul* orders concerning the excommunicated *Corinthian*, That when he had given Evidences of his Repentance, they should *forgive him, and comfort him, and confirm him by their hands*, 2 Cor. 2. 7, 8. And the Ministers are entrusted by our Master with the declarative Power of *loosing* as well as *binding*; both must be done with great Caution and Deliberation, impartially, and without respect of Persons, with earnest Prayer to God for Direction, and a sincere Regard to the Edification of the Body of Christ; due care being always taken, that Sinners may not be encourag'd by an Excess of Lenity, nor Penitents discourag'd by an Excess of Severity. *Wisdom and Sincerity are profitable to direct* in this Case. 3. If it were found that the Leprosy was healed, the Priest must *declare it with a particular Solemnity*. The Leper, or his Friends, were to get ready *two Birds*, caught for this purpose, (any sort of wild Birds that were clean) and *Cedar-wood*, and *Scarlet*, and *Hyssop*, for all these were to be used in the Ceremony.

1. A Preparation was to be made of *Blood and Water*, with which the Leper must be *sprinkled*. One of the Birds (and the Jews say, if there were any Difference, it must be the larger and better of the two) was to be killed over an earthen Cup of *Spring-Water*, so that the Blood of the Bird might discolour the Water. This (as some other Types) had its Accomplishment in the Death of Christ, when out of his pierced Side there came *Water and Blood*, John 19. 34. Thus Christ comes into the Soul for its Cure and Cleansing, not by *Water only*, but by *Water and Blood*, 1 John 5. 6.

2. The living Bird, with a little *Scarlet Wool*, and a Bunch of *Hyssop*, must be fastned to a *Cedar-Stick*, dipp'd in the Water and Blood, which must be so sprinkled upon him that was to be cleansed, v. 6, 7. The *Cedar-Wood* signified the restoring of the Leper to his Strength and Soundness; for that's a sort of Wood not apt to putrefy. The *Scarlet Wool* signified his recovering a florid Colour again; for the Leprosy made him *white as Snow*. And the *Hyssop* intimated the removing of that unfavoury Smell which commonly attended the Leprosy. The *Cedar*, the stately Plant, and *Hyssop*, the meanest, are here used together in this Service; (see 1 Kings 4. 33.) For those of the lowest Rank in the Church may be of Use in their place, as well as those that are most eminent, 1 Cor. 12. 21. Some make the slain Bird to typify Christ dying for our Sins, and the living Bird Christ rising again for our Justification; and the dipping of the living Bird in the Blood of the slain Bird intimated, That the Merit of Christ's Death was that which made his Resurrection effectual for our Justification. He took his Blood with him into the Holy Place, and there appear'd a Lamb as it had been slain. The *Cedar*, *Scarlet*, and *Hyssop* must all be dipp'd in the Blood, for the Word and Ordinances, and all the Operations of the Spirit, receive their Efficacy for our Cleansing from the Blood of Christ. The Leper must be sprinkled *seven times*, to signify a complete Purification; in Allusion to which *David* prays, *Wash me thoroughly*, Psal. 51. 2. *Naaman* was bid to wash *seven times*, 2 Kings 5. 10.

3. The living Bird was then to be let loose in the open Field, to signify, That the Leper being cleansed was now no longer under Restraint and Confinement, but might take his Liberty to go where he pleas'd. But this being signified by the Flight of a Bird towards Heaven, was an Intimation to him henceforward to seek the Things that are above; and not to spend this new Life God hath restor'd him to, merely in the Pursuit of earth-

ly Things. This typified that glorious Liberty of the Children of God, which they are advanced to, who through Grace are sprinkled from an evil Conscience. They whose Souls before bowed down to the Dust, (Psal. 44. 25.) in Grief and Fear, now fly in the open Firmament of Heaven, and soar upwards upon the Wings of Faith and Hope, and Holy Love and Joy.

4. The Priest must upon this pronounce him clean. 'Twas requisite this should be done with Solemnity, that the Leper might himself be the more affected with the Mercy of God to him in his Recovery, and that others might be satisfied to converse with him. Christ is our Priest, to whom the Father hath committed all Judgment, and particularly the Judgment of the Leprosy. By his definitive Sentence impenitent Sinners will have their everlasting Portion assign'd them *with the Unclean*, Job 36. 14. out of the Holy City; and all that by his Grace are cured and cleansed; shall be received into the Camp of the Saints, into which no unclean thing shall enter. Those are clean indeed whom Christ pronounceeth so, and they need not regard what Men say of them. But though Christ was the End of this Law for Righteousness, yet being in the Days of his Flesh made under the Law, which as yet stood unrepealed, he ordered those Lepers, whom he had cured miraculously, to go and shew themselves to the Priest, and offer for their Cleansing according to the Law, Matth. 8. 4. Luke 17. 14. The Type must be kept up till it was answered by its Antitype.

Lastly, When the Leper was pronounced clean, he must wash his Body and his Clothes, and shave off all his Hair, v. 8. must still tarry *seven Days* out of the Camp, and on the seventh Day must do it again, v. 9. The Priest having pronounced him clean from the Disease, he must make himself as clean as ever he could from all the Remains of it, and from all other Defilements; and he must take Time to do this. Thus they who have the Comfort of the Remission of their Sins, by the sprinkling of the Blood of Christ upon their Consciences, must with the utmost Care and Caution cleanse themselves from all Filthiness, both of Flesh and Spirit, and thoroughly purge themselves from their old Sins: For every one that hath this Hope in him will be concern'd to purify himself.

10 And on the eighth day he shall take two he-lambs without blemish, and one ewe-lamb of the first year without blemish, and three tenth-deals of fine flour for a meat-offering, mingled with oil, and one log of oil. 11 And the priest that maketh him clean, shall present the man that is to be made clean and those things before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 12 And the priest shall take one he-lamb, and offer him for a trespass-offering, and the log of oil, and wave them for a wave-offering before the LORD. 13 And he shall slay the lamb in the place where he shall kill the sin-offering, and the burnt-offering, in the holy place: for as the sin-offering is, the priest's, so is the trespass-offering: it is most holy. 14 And the priest shall take some of the blood of the trespass-offering, and the priest shall put it upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot. 15 And the priest shall take some of the log of oil, and pour it into the palm of his own left hand: 16 And the priest shall dip his right finger in the oil that is in his left hand, and shall sprinkle of the oil with his finger seven times before the LORD. 17 And of the rest of the oil that is in his hand, shall the priest put upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot, upon the blood of the trespass-offering. 18 And the remnant of the oil that is in the priest's hand, he shall pour upon the head of him that is to be cleansed: and the priest shall make an atonement for him before the LORD. 19 And the priest shall offer the sin-offering, and make an atonement for him that is to be cleansed from his uncleanness, and afterward he shall kill the burnt-offering. 20 And the priest shall offer the burnt-offering, and the meat-offering upon the altar: and the priest shall make an atonement for him, and he shall be clean.

To compleat the Purification of the Leper, *on the eighth Day*, after the former Solemnity perform'd without the Camp, and as it should seem, before he returned to his own Habitation, he was to attend at the Door of the Tabernacle, and was there to be presented to the Lord with his Offerings, *v. 11.* Observe here, 1. That the Mercies of God oblige us to present ourselves to him, *Rom. 12. 1.* 2. When God hath restored us to the Liberty of Ordinances again, after Restraint by Sickness, Distance, or otherwise, we should take the first Opportunity of testifying our Respect to God, and our Affection to his Sanctuary, by a diligent Improvement of the Liberty we are restored to. When Christ had healed the impotent Man, he soon after found him in the Temple, *John 9. 14.* Hezekiah asks, *What is the Sign that I shall go up to the House of the Lord?* when he means, *What is the Sign that I shall recover?* intimating, That if God restored him his Health, so that he should be able to go abroad, that should be the first place he would go to. 3. When we present ourselves before the Lord, we must present our Offerings, devoting to God with ourselves all we have and can do. 4. Both we and our Offerings must be presented before the Lord, by the Priest that made us clean, even our Lord Jesus, else neither we nor they can be accepted.

Three Lambs the cleansed Leper was to bring, with a Meat-Offering, and a Log of Oil, which was about half a Pint.

Now, 1. Most of the Ceremony peculiar to this Case was about the Trespas-Offering, the Lamb for which was offer'd first, *v. 12.* And besides the usual Rites with which the Trespas-Offering was offered, some of the Blood was to be put upon the Ear, and Thumb, and Great Toe of the Leper that was to be cleansed, *v. 14.* The very same Ceremony that was used in the Consecration of the Priests, *chap. 8. 23, 24.* 'Twas a mortification to them to see the same Purification necessary for them that was for a Leper. The Jews say, That the Leper stood without the Gate of the Tabernacle, and the Priest within, and thus the Ceremony was performed through the Gate, signifying, That now he was admitted with other Israelites to attend in the Courts of the Lord's House again, and was as welcome as ever, though he had been a Leper; and though perhaps the Name might stick by him as long as he lived, (as we read of one who probably was cleansed by our Lord Jesus, who yet afterwards is called *Simon the Leper*, *Mat. 26. 6.*) yet he was as free as ever to Communion with God and Man. After the Blood of the Offering had been put with the Priest's Finger upon the Extremities of the Body, to include the whole, some of his Oil that he brought, which was first waved, and then sprinkled before the Lord, was in like manner put in the same places upon the Blood. The Blood (saith the Learned Bishop Patrick) seems to have been a Token of Forgiveness, the Oil of Healing; for God first forgiveth our Iniquities, and then healeth our Diseases, *Plal. 103. 3.* see *Isa. 38. 17.* Wherever the Blood of Christ is applied for Justification, the Oil of the Spirit is applied for Sanctification; for these two are inseparable, and both necessary to our Acceptance with God. Nor shall our former Leprosy, if it be healed by Repentance, be any Bar to these glorious Privileges. Cleansed Lepers are as welcome to the Blood and the Oil as consecrated Priests. Such were some of you, but ye are washed. When the Leper was sprinkled, the Water must have Blood in it, *v. 5.* When he was anointed, the Oil must have Blood under it, to signify that all the Graces and Comforts of the Spirit, all his purifying dignifying Influences are owing to the Death of Christ: 'tis by his Blood alone that we are sanctified.

2. Besides this there must be a Sin-Offering and a Burnt-Offering, a Lamb for each, *v. 19, 20.* By each of these Offerings it is said, the Priest shall make an Atonement for him. 1. His Moral Guilt shall be removed; the Sin for which the Leprosy was sent shall be pardon'd, and all the Sins he had been guilty of in his afflicted State. Note, The Removal of any outward Trouble is then doubly comfortable to us, when at the same time God gives us some Assurance of the Forgiveness of our Sins. If we receive the Atonement, we have reason to rejoice, *Rom. 5. 11.* 2. His Ceremonial Pollution shall be removed, which had kept him from the Participation of the Holy Things. And this is called making an Atonement for him, because our Restoration to the Privileges of God's Children typified hereby, is owing purely to the great Propitiation. When the Atonement is made for him he shall be clean, both to his own Satisfaction, and to his Reputation among his Neighbours; he shall retrieve both his Credit and his Comfort; and both these true Penitents become entitled to, both Ease and Honour, by their Interest in the Atonement.

The Burnt-Offering, besides the Atonement that was made by it, was a thankful Acknowledgement of God's Mercy to him: And the more immediate the Hand of God was both in the Sickness and in the Cure, the more reason he had thus to give Glory to him; and thus, as our Saviour speaks, *Mark 11. 44.* to offer for his Cleansing all those things which Moses commanded for a Testimony unto them.

21. And if he be poor, and cannot get so much, then he shall take one lamb for a trespass-offering

to be waved, to make an atonement for him, and one tenth-deal of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat-offering, and a log of oil: 22. And two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons, such as he is able to get; and the one shall be a sin-offering, and the other a burnt-offering. 23. And he shall bring them on the eighth day, for his cleansing, unto the priest, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, before the LORD. 24. And the priest shall take the lamb of the trespass-offering, and the log of oil, and the priest shall wave them for a wave offering before the LORD. 25. And he shall kill the lamb of the trespass-offering, and the priest shall take some of the blood of the trespass offering, and put it upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot. 26. And the priest shall pour of the oil into the palm of his own left hand. 27. And the priest shall sprinkle with his right finger, some of the oil that is in his left hand, seven times before the LORD. 28. And the priest shall put of the oil that is in his hand, upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot, upon the place of the blood of the trespass-offering. 29. And the rest of the oil that is in the priest's hand, he shall put upon the head of him that is to be cleansed, to make an atonement for him before the LORD. 30. And he shall offer the one of the turtle-doves, or of the young pigeons, such as he can get: 31. Even such as he is able to get, the one for a sin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering, with the meat-offering. And the priest shall make an atonement for him that is to be cleansed, before the LORD. 32. This is the law of him in whom is the plague of leprosy, whose hand is not able to get that which pertaineth to his cleansing.

We have here the gracious Provision the Law made for the cleansing of poor Lepers: If they were not able to bring three Lambs, and three tenth-deals of Flour, they must bring one Lamb, and one tenth-deal of Flour; and instead of the other two Lambs, two Turtle-Doves, or two young Pigeons, *v. 21, 22.* Here see, 1. That the Poverty of the Person concerned would not excuse him, if he brought no Offering at all. Let none think, that because they are poor, God requires no Service from them, since he has consider'd them, and demands that which it is in the power of the poorest to give: *My son give me thy Heart*, and with that the Calves of thy Lips shall be accepted instead of the Calves of the Stall. 2. That God expected from those that were poor but according to their Ability: His Commandments are not grievous, nor doth he make us to serve with an Offering. The poor are as welcome to God's Altar as the Rich; and if there be first a willing Mind, and an honest Heart, two Pigeons, when they are the utmost a Man is able to get, are as acceptable to God as two Lambs; for he requires according to what a Man has, and not according to what he has not. But it is observable, that though a meaner Sacrifice was accepted from the Poor, yet the very same Ceremony was used for them as was for the Rich; for their Souls are as precious, and Christ and his Gospel are the same to both. Let not us therefore have the Faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with Respect of Persons, *James 2. 1.*

33. And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, 34. When ye be come into the land of Canaan, which I give to you for a possession, and I put the plague of leprosy in a house of the land of your possession: 35. And he that owneth the house shall come and tell the priest, saying, It seemeth to me there is as it were a plague in the house: 36. Then the priest shall command that they empty the house, before the priest go into it to see the plague: that all that is in the house be not made unclean: and afterward the priest shall go in to see the house. 37. And he shall look on the

the plague, and behold, if the plague be in the walls of the house, with hollow strakes, greenish or reddish, which in sight are lower than the wall; 38 Then the priest shall go out of the house, to the door of the house, and shut up the house seven days. 39 And the priest shall come again the seventh day, and shall look: and behold, if the plague be spread in the walls of the house; 40 Then the priest shall command that they take away the stones in which the plague is, and they shall cast them into an unclean place without the city. 41 And he shall cause the house to be scraped within round about, and they shall pour out the dust that they scrape off, without the city, into an unclean place. 42 And they shall take other stones, and put them in the place of those stones, and he shall take other mortar, and shall plaister the house. 43 And if the plague come again, and break out in the house, after that he hath taken away the stones, and after he hath scraped the house, and after it is plaistered; 44 Then the priest shall come, and look: and behold, if the plague be spread in the house, it is a fretting leprosy in the house: it is unclean. 45 And he shall break down the house, the stones of it, and the timber thereof, and all the mortar of the house: and they shall carry them forth out of the city into an unclean place. 46 Moreover, he that goeth into the house all the while that it is shut up, shall be unclean until the even. 47 And he that lieth in the house, shall wash his clothes: and he that eateth in the house shall wash his clothes. 48 And if the priest shall come in, and look upon it, and behold, the plague hath not spread in the house, after the house was plaistered: then the priest shall pronounce the house clean, because the plague is healed. 49 And he shall take to cleanse the house two birds, and cedar-wood, and scarlet, and hyssop. 50 And he shall kill the one of the birds in an earthen vessel, over the running water. 51 And he shall take the cedar-wood, and the hyssop, and the scarlet, and the living bird, and dip them in the blood of the slain bird, and in the running water, and sprinkle the house seven times. 52 And he shall cleanse the house with the blood of the bird, and with the running water, and with the living bird, and with the cedar-wood, and with the hyssop, and with the scarlet. 53 But he shall let go the living bird out of the city into the open fields, and make an atonement for the house: and it shall be clean.

This is the Law concerning the Leprosy in a House. Now they were in the Wilderness, they dwelt in Tents, and had no Houses, and therefore this Law is made only an Appendix to the former Laws concerning the Leprosy, because it related not to their present State, but to their future Settlement.

The Leprosy in a House is as unaccountable as the Leprosy in a Garment; but if we see not what natural Causes of it can be assign'd, we may resolve it into the Power of the God of Nature, who here saith, *I put the Leprosy in a House*, v. 34. as his Curse is said to enter into a House, and consume it with the Timber and Stones thereof, Zech. 5. 4.

Now, 1. It is suppos'd, that even in Canaan itself, the Land of Promise, their Houses might be infected with a Leprosy. Though it was a Holy Land, that would not secure them from this Plague, while the Inhabitants were many of them so unholy. Thus, a Place and a Name in the visible Church will not secure wicked People from God's Judgments.

2. 'Tis likewise taken for granted, That the Owner of the House will make the Priest acquainted with it, as soon as he sees the least cause to suspect the Leprosy in his House, v. 35. *It seemeth to me there is as it were a Plague in the House*. Sin, where that reigns in a House, is a Plague there, as it is in a Heart: And Masters of Families should be aware, and afraid of the first Appearance of gross Sin in their Families, and put away the Iniquity, whatever it is, far from their Tabernacles,

Job 22. 23. They should be *jealous with a godly Jealousy* concerning those under their Charge, lest they be drawn into Sin, and take early Advice, if it but seem that there is a Plague in the House, lest the Contagion spread, and many be by it defiled and destroy'd.

3. If the Priest upon search find that the Leprosy is got into the House, he must try to cure it, by taking out that part of the Building that was infected, v. 40, 41. This was like cutting off a gangreen'd Limb, for the Preservation of the rest of the Body. Corruption should be purged out in time, before it spread; for a little Leaven leaveneth the whole Lump. *If thy right Hand offend thee, cut it off.*

4. If yet it remain'd in the House, the whole House must be pulled down, and all the Materials carried to the Dung-hill, v. 44, 45. The Owner had better be without a Dwelling, than live in one that was infected. Note, The Leprosy of Sin, if it be obstinate to the Methods of Cure, will at last be the Ruin of Families and Churches. If Babylon will not be healed, she shall be forsaken and abandon'd, and, like the leprous House, they shall not take of her a Stone for a Corner, nor a Stone for Foundations, Jer. 51. 9, 26. The Reminders of Sin and Corruptions in our mortal Bodies, are like this Leprosy in the House; after all our Pains in scraping and plaistering we shall never be quite clear of it, till the earthly House of this Tabernacle be dissolv'd, and taken down: when we are dead, we shall be free from Sin, and not till then, Rom. 6. 7.

5. If the taking out of the infected Stones cured the House, and the Leprosy did not spread any further, then the House must be cleansed; not only air'd, that it might be healthful, but purified from the Ceremonial Pollution, that it might be fit to be the Habitation of an Israelite. The Ceremony of its cleansing was much the same with that of the cleansing of a leprous Person, (v. 49, &c.) This intimated, that the House was suited for the Man's sake, (as Bp. Patrick expresseth it) and he was to look upon himself as preserv'd by the Divine Mercy. The Houses of Israelites are said to be dedicated, Deut. 20. 5. for they were a Holy Nation, and therefore they ought to keep their Houses pure from all Ceremonial Pollutions, that they might be fit for the Service of that God to whom they were devoted. And the same care should we take to reform whatever is amiss in our Families, that we and our Houses may serve the Lord: see Gen. 35. 2.

Some have thought the Leprosy in the House was typical of the Idolatry of the Jewish Church, which did strangely cleave to it; and though some of the Reforming Kings took away the infected Stones, yet still it broke out again, till by the Captivity in Babylon God took down the House, and carried it to an unclean Land: and that proved an effectual Cure of their Inclination to Idols, and Idolatrous Worship.

54 This is the law for all manner of plague of leprosy and scall. 55 And for the leprosy of a garment; and of an house, 56 And for a rising; and for a scall, and for a bright spot. 57 To teach when it is unclean, and when it is clean: this is the law of leprosy.

This is the Conclusion of this Law concerning the Leprosy: There is no Repetition of it in Deuteronomy, only a general Memorandum given, Deut. 24. 8. *Take heed in the Plague of Leprosy*. We may see in this Law, 1. The gracious Care God took of his People Israel, for to them only this Law pertain'd, and not to the Gentiles. When Naaman the Syrian was cured of his Leprosy, he was not forbidden to shew himself to the Priest, tho' he was cured in Jordan, as the Jews that were cured by our Saviour were. Thus they who are entrusted with the Key of Discipline in the Church, judge them only that are within; but them that are without, God judgeth, 1 Cor. 5. 12, 13. 2. The Religious Care we ought to take of ourselves, to keep our Minds from the Dominion of all sinful Affections and Dispositions, which are both their Disease and their Defilement, that we may be fit for the Service of God. We ought also to avoid all bad Company, and as much as may be to avoid coming within the danger of being infected by it. *Tough not the unclean things, saith the Lord, and I will receive you*, 2 Cor. 6. 17.

CHAP. XV.

In this Chapter we have Laws concerning other Ceremonial Uncleanesses contracted either by Bodily Disease like that of the Leprosy, or some natural Incidents; and this either, 1. In Men, v. 1—18. Or, 2. In Women, v. 19—33. We need not be at all curious in explaining these antiquated Laws, 'tis enough if we observe the general Intendment; but we have need to be very cautious lest Sin take occasion by the Commandment to become more exceeding sinful; and exceeding sinful it is when Lust is kindled by Sparks of Fire from God's Altar. The Case is bad with the Soul when 'tis purged by that which should purify it.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses and to Aaron, saying, 2 Speak unto the children

of Israel, and say unto them, When any man hath a running issue out of his flesh, because of his issue he is unclean. 3 And this shall be his uncleanness in his issue: whether his flesh run with his issue, or his flesh be stopped from his issue: it is his uncleanness. 4 Every bed whereon he lieth that hath the issue, is unclean: and every thing whereon he sitteth, shall be unclean. 5 And whosoever toucheth his bed, shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. 6 And he that sitteth on any thing whereon he sate that hath the issue, shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. 7 And he that toucheth the flesh of him that hath the issue, shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. 8 And if he that hath the issue spit upon him that is clean; then he shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. 9 And what saddle soever he rideth upon that hath the issue, shall be unclean. 10 And whosoever toucheth any thing that was under him, shall be unclean until the even: and he that beareth any of those things shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. 11 And whosoever he toucheth that hath the issue (and hath not rinsed his hands in water) he shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. 12 And the vessel of earth, that he toucheth which hath the issue, shall be broken: and every vessel of wood shall be rinsed in water. 13 And when he that hath an issue, is cleansed of his issue; then he shall number to himself seven days for his cleansing, and wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in running water, and shall be clean. 14 And on the eighth day he shall take to him two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons, and come before the LORD unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and give them unto the priest. 15 And the priest shall offer them, the one for a sin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering; and the priest shall make an atonement for him before the LORD, for his issue. 16 And if any man's seed of copulation go out from him, then he shall wash all his flesh in water, and be unclean until the even. 17 And every garment and every skin whereon is the seed of copulation, shall be washed with water, and be unclean until the even. 18 The woman also with whom man shall lie with seed of copulation, they shall both bathe themselves in water, and be unclean until the even.

We have here the Law concerning the Ceremonial Uncleanness that was contracted by running Issues in Men. 'Tis called in the Margin, *v. 2. the Running of the Reins*: A very grievous and loathsome Disease, which was, 1. Usually the Effect and Consequent of Wantonness and Uncleanness, and a dissolute Course of Life, filling Mens Bones with the Sins of their Youth, and leaving them to mourn at the last, when all the Pleasures of their Wickedness are vanish'd and gone, and nothing remains but the Pain and Anguish of a rotten Carcase, and a wounded Conscience. And what Fruit has the Sinner then of those things whereof he has so much reason to be ashamed? *Rom. 6. 21. As Modesty is an Ornament of Grace to the Head, and Chains about the Neck, so Chastity is Health to the Navel, and Marrow to the Bones; but Uncleanness is a Wound and Dishonour, the Consumption of the Flesh and the Body, and a Sin which is often its own Punishment more than any other.* 2. It was sometimes inflicted by the righteous Hand of God for other Sins, as appears by *David's Imprecation of a Curse upon the Family of Joab, for the Murder of Abner, 2 Sam. 3. 29. Let there not fail from the House of Joab one that hath an Issue, or is a Leper.* A vile Disease for vile Deeds.

Now whoever had this Disease upon him, 1. He was himself unclean, *v. 2.* He must not dare to come near the Sanctuary, 'twas at his peril if he did, nor might he eat of the Holy Things. This signified the Filthiness of Sin, and of all the Products of our corrupt Nature, which render us odious to God's Holiness, and utterly unfit for Communion with him. Out of a pure Heart well kept are the Issues of Life, *Prov. 4. 23.* But out of an unclean Heart comes that which is defil-

ling, *Mat. 12. 34, 35.* 2. He made every Person and Thing unclean that he touch'd, or that touch'd him, *v. 4—12.* His Bed, and his Chair, and his Saddle, and every thing that belong'd to him, could not be touch'd without a Ceremonial Uncleanness contracted, which a Man must remain conscious to himself of till Sun-set; and from which he could not be cleansed, without washing his Clothes, and bathing his Flesh in Water. This signified the Contagion of Sin, and the Danger we are in of being polluted by conversing with those that are polluted, and the need we have with the utmost Circumspection to save ourselves from this untoward Generation. 3. When he was cured of the Disease, yet he could not be cleansed from the Pollution without a Sacrifice, for which he was to prepare himself by seven Days Expectation after he was perfectly clear from his Distemper, and by bathing him in Spring-Waters, *v. 13, 14, 15.* This signified the great Gospel-Duties of Faith and Repentance, and the great Gospel-Privileges of the Application of Christ's Blood to our Souls for our Justification, and his Grace for our Sanctification. God has promised to sprinkle clean Water upon us, and to cleanse us from all our Filthiness, and has appointed us by Repentance to wash us, and make us clean: He has also provided a Sacrifice of Atonement, and requires us by Faith to interest ourselves in that Sacrifice, for it is the Blood of Christ his Son that cleanseth us from all Sin, and by which Atonement is made for us, that we may have Admission into God's Presence, and may partake of his Favours.

19 And if a woman have an issue, and her issue in her flesh be blood, she shall be put apart seven days: and whosoever toucheth her, shall be unclean until the even. 20 And every thing that she lieth upon in her separation, shall be unclean: every thing also that she sitteth upon, shall be unclean. 21 And whosoever toucheth her bed, shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. 22 And whosoever toucheth any thing that she sate upon, shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. 23 And if it be on her bed, or on any thing whereon she sitteth, when he toucheth it; he shall be unclean until the even. 24 And if any man lie with her at all, and her flowers be upon him, he shall be unclean seven days, and all the bed whereon he lieth, shall be unclean. 25 And if a woman have an issue of her blood many days out of the time of her separation, or if it run beyond the time of her separation; all the days of the issue of her uncleanness, shall be as the days of her separation: she shall be unclean. 26 Every bed whereon she lieth all the days of her issue, shall be unto her as the bed of her separation: and whatsoever she sitteth upon shall be unclean, as the uncleanness of her separation. 27 And whosoever toucheth those things shall be unclean, and shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. 28 But if she be cleansed of her issue, then she shall number to herself seven days, and after that she shall be clean. 29 And on the eighth day she shall take unto her two turtles, or two young pigeons, and bring them unto the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 30 And the priest shall offer the one for a sin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering; and the priest shall make an atonement for her before the LORD, for the issue of her uncleanness. 31 Thus shall ye separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness, that they die not in their uncleanness, when they defile my tabernacle that is among them. 32 This is the law of him that hath an issue, and of him whose seed goeth from him, and is defiled therewith; 33 And of her that is sick of her flowers, and of him that hath an issue, of the man, and of the woman, and of him that lieth with her which is unclean.

This is concerning the Ceremonial Uncleanness which Women lay under from their Issues, both those that were regular and healthful, and according to the Course of Nature, *v. 19—24.* and those that were unreasonable, excessive, and the Disease of the Body; such was the Bloody Issue of that poor Woman who was suddenly cured by touching the Hem of Christ's Garment, after she had lain twelve Years under her Distemper, and had spent her Estate upon Physicians and Physick in vain. This made the Woman that was afflicted

ed with it unclean, v. 25. and every thing she touch'd unclean, v. 26, 27. And if she was cured, and found by seven Days trial that she was perfectly free from her Issue of Blood, she was to be cleans'd by the Offering of two Turtle-Doves; or two young Pidgeons, to make an Atonement for her, v. 28, 29. All wicked Courses, particularly Idolatries, are compared to the Uncleanliness of a removed Woman, Ezek. 36. 17. and in allusion to this, 'tis said of Jerusalem, Lam. 1. 9. Her Filthiness is in her Skirts, so that (as it follows, v. 17.) she was shunn'd as a menstruous Woman.

The Reasons given for all these Laws (which we are ready to think might very well have been spared) we have, v. 31. Thus shall ye separate the Children of Israel (for to them only and their Servants and Proselytes these Laws pertained) from their Uncleanliness: that is, 1. By these Laws they were taught their Privilege and Honour, that they were purified unto God a peculiar People, and were intended by the Holy God for a Kingdom of Priests, a Holy Nation; for that was a Defilement to them, which was not so to others. 2. They were also taught their Duty, which was to preserve the Honour of their Purity, and to keep themselves from all sinful Pollutions. 'Twas easy for them to argue, That if those Pollutions which were natural, unavoidable, involuntary, their Affliction and not their Sin, render'd them for the time so odious, that they were not fit for Communion either with God or Man; much more abominable and filthy were they, if they sinned against the Light and Law of Nature, by Drunkenness, Adultery, Fraud, and the like Sins, which defile the very Mind and Conscience. And if these Ceremonial Pollutions could not be done away but by Sacrifice and Offering, something greater and much more valuable must be expected and depended upon, for the purifying of the Soul from the Uncleanliness of Sin.

(2.) Thus shall ye prevent their dying in their Uncleanliness, by the Hand of God's Justice, if while they were under any of these Defilements they should come near the Sanctuary. Note, It is a dangerous thing to die in our Uncleanliness; and it's our own fault if we do, since we have not only fair Warning given us by God's Law, against those things that will defile us, but also such gracious Provision made by his Gospel for our cleansing, if at any time we be defiled.

(3.) In all these Laws there seems to be a special Regard had to the Honour of the Tabernacle, which none must approach to in their Uncleanliness; that they defile not my Tabernacle. Infinite Wisdom took this course to preserve in the Minds of that careless People a continual Dread of, and Veneration for the Manifestation of God's Glory and Presence among them in his Sanctuary. Now the Tabernacle of God was with Men, Familiarity would be apt to breed Contempt, and therefore the Law made so many things of frequent Incidence to be Ceremonial Pollutions, and to incur an Incapacity to draw near to the Sanctuary, and to forbid it upon Pain of Death, that they never durst approach without great Caution and Reverence, and serious Preparation, and Fear of being found unfit. Thus they were taught never to draw near to God but with an awful humble Sense of their Distance and Danger, and an exact Observance of every thing that was required in order to their Safety and Acceptance.

And what Duty must we learn from all this? 1. Let us bless God that we are not under the Yoke of these carnal Ordinances, that as nothing can destroy us, so nothing can defile us but Sin. They may now partake of the Lord's Supper, who durst not then eat of the Peace-Offerings. And the Defilement we contract by our Sins of daily Infirmity, we may be cleansed from in secret by the renewed Acts of Repentance and Faith, without bailing in Water, or bringing an Offering to the Door of the Tabernacle. 2. Let us carefully abstain from all Sin, as defiling to the Conscience, and particularly from all fleshly Lusts; possessing our Vessel in Sanctification and Honour, and not in the Lusts of Uncleanliness, which not only pollute the Soul, but war against it, and threaten its Ruin. 3. Let us all see how indispensably necessary real Holiness is to our future Happiness, and get our Hearts purified by Faith that we may see God. Perhaps 'tis in allusion to these Laws, that forbid the Unclean to approach the Sanctuary, that when 'tis ask'd, Who shall stand in God's Holy Place? 'tis answer'd, He that hath clean Hands and a pure Heart, Psal. 24. 3, 4. For without Holiness no man shall see the Lord.

CHAP. XVI.

In this Chapter we have the Institution of the Annual Solemnity of the Day of Atonement, or Expiation, which had as much Gospel in it as perhaps any of the Appointments of the Ceremonial Law, as appears by the Reference the Apostle hath to it, Heb. 9. 7, &c. We had before divers Laws concerning Sin-Offerings for particular Persons, and so be offer'd upon particular Occasions; but this is concerning the Great Sacrifice, in which the whole Nation was interested. The whole Service of the Day is committed to the High Priest. (1.) He must never come into the most Holy Place but upon this Day, v. 1, 2. (2.) He must come dress'd in the Linnen Gar-

ments, v. 4. (3.) He must bring a Sin-Offering and a Burnt-Offering for himself, v. 5. Offer his Sin-Offering, v. 6, 11. then go within the Vail with some of the Blood of his Sin-Offering, burn Incense and sprinkle the Blood before the Mercy-Seat, v. 12, 13, 14. (4.) Two Goats must be provided for the People, Lots cast upon them, and 1. One of them must be a Sin-Offering for the People, v. 5, 7, 8, 9. and the Blood of it must be sprinkled before the Mercy-Seat, v. 15, 16, 17. And then some of the Blood of both the Sin-Offerings must be sprinkled upon the Altar, v. 18, 19. 2. The other must be a Scape-Goat, v. 10, the Sins of Israel must be confess'd over him, and then he must be sent away into the Wilderness, v. 20, 21, 22. and he that brought him away must be ceremonially wash'd clean. (5.) The Burnt-Offerings were then to be offered, the Fat of the Sin-Offerings burnt on the Altar, and their Flesh burnt without the Camp, v. 23, 24, 25, 27, 28. (6.) The People were to observe the Day religiously by a Holy Rest, and Holy Mourning for Sin; and this was to be a Statute for ever, v. 29.—34.

1. **AND** the LORD spake unto Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered before the LORD, and died. 2. And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the vail, before the mercy-seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy-seat. 3. Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt-offering. 4. He shall put on the holy linnen coat, and he shall have the linnen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with the linnen girdle, and with the linnen mitre shall he be attired: these are holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on.

Here's 1. The Date of this Law concerning the Day of Atonement. 'Twas after the Death of the two Sons of Aaron, v. 1. which we read of, chap. 10. 1. (1.) Left Aaron should fear that any remaining Guilt of that Sin should cleave to his Family, or (seeing the Priests were so apt to offend) that some After-Sin of his other Sons should be the Ruin of his Family; he is directed how to make Atonement for his House; that it might keep in with God; for the Atonement for it would be the Establishment of it, and preserve the Entail of the Blessing upon it. (2.) The Priests being warn'd by the Death of Nadab and Abihu to approach to God with Reverence and Godly Fear; otherwise they came at their Peril, Directions are here given how the nearest Approach might be made; not only without Peril, but to unspeakable Advantage and Comfort, if the Directions were observ'd. When they were cut off for an undue Approach, the rest must not say, then we will not draw near at all, but then we will do it by Rule. They died for their Sin, therefore God graciously provides for the rest that they die not. Thus God's Judgments on some should be Instructions to others.

2. The Design of this Law. One Intention of it was to preserve a Veneration for the most Holy Place, within the Vail, where the Shechinah or Divine Glory was pleas'd to dwell between the Cherubims, v. 2. Speak unto Aaron, that he come not at all times into the Holy Place. Before the Vail some of the Priests came every day to burn Incense upon the golden Altar, but within the Vail none must ever come but the High Priest only, and he but one Day in the Year, and with great Ceremony and Caution. That Place where God manifested his special Presence, must not be made common. If none must come into the Presence-Chamber of an earthly King uncall'd, no nor the Queen herself, upon pain of Death, Esth. 4. 11. was it not requisite that the same sacred Respect should be paid to the King of Kings? But see what a blessed Change is made by the Gospel of Christ, all good Christians have now Boldness to enter into the Holiest, through the Vail, every day, Heb. 10. 19, 20. and we come boldly, not as Aaron must, with Fear and Trembling, to the Throne of Grace, or Mercy-Seat, Heb. 4. 16. While the Manifestations of God's Presence and Grace were sensible, it was requisite they should thus be confirm'd, and upon the Reserve, because the Objects of Sense, the more familiar they are made, the less awful or delightful they become: but now they are purely spiritual, 'tis otherwise; for the Objects of Faith, the more they are convers'd with, the more doth there appear of their Greatness and Goodness. Now therefore we are welcome to come at all times into the Holy Place not made with Hands, for we are made to sit together with Christ in Heavenly Places by Faith, Ephes. 2. 6. Then Aaron must not come near at all times lest he die, we now must come near at all times that we may live: 'Tis Distance only that is our Death. Then God appear'd in the Cloud upon the Mercy-Seat, but now with open Face we behold not in a dark Cloud, but in a clear Glass the Glory of the Lord, 2 Cor. 3. 18.

3. The Person to whom the Work of this Day was committed; and that was the *High Priest* only, *v. 3: Thus shall Aaron come into the Holy Place.* He was to do all himself upon the Day of Atonement; only there was a Second provided to be his Substitute or Supporter, in case any thing should befall him, either of Sickness, or ceremonial Uncleanness, that he could not perform the Service of the Day. All Christians are Spiritual Priests, but Christ only is the High Priest, and he alone it is that makes Atonement, nor needed he either Assistant or Substitute.

4. The Attire of the High Priest in this Service. He was not to be dressed up in his rich Garments that were peculiar to himself; he was not to put on the *Ephod* with the precious Stones in it, but only the *Linnen Clothes* which he wore in common with the inferior Priests, *v. 4.* That meaner Dress did best become him on this Day of Humiliation; and being thinner and lighter, he would in them be more expedite for the Work and Service of the Day, which was all to go thro' his hands. Christ our High Priest made Atonement for Sin in our Nature; not in the Robes of his own peculiar Glory, but the *Linnen Garments* of our Mortality, *clean indeed, but mean.*

5 And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel, two kids of the goats for a sin-offering, and one ram for a burnt offering. 6 And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin-offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself and for his house. 7 And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 8 And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scape-goat. 9 And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the LORD's lot fell, and offer him for a sin-offering. 10 But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scape-goat, shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scape-goat into the wilderness. 11 And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin-offering which is for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin-offering which is for himself. 12 And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from the altar before the LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail. 13 And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not. 14 And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat, eastward: and before the mercy-seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times.

The Jewish Writers say, That the seven Days before the Day of Expiation the High Priest was to retire from his own House, and to dwell in a Chamber of the Temple, that he might prepare himself for the Service of this great Day. During those seven Days he himself did the Work of the inferior Priests about the Sacrifices, Incense, &c. that he might have his hand in for this Day: He must have the Institution read to him again and again, that he might be fully apprized of the whole Method. (1.) He was to begin the Service of the Day very early with the usual Morning Sacrifice, after he had first wash'd his whole Body before he dress'd him, and his Hands and Feet again after. He then burnt the daily Incense, dress'd the Lamps, and offer'd the extraordinary Sacrifice appointed for this Day, nor here, but *Numb. 29. 8.* a Bullock, a Ram, and seven Lambs, all for Burnt-Offerings. This he is suppos'd to have done in his High Priest's Garments. (2.) He must now put off his rich Robes, bathe himself, put on the Linnen Garments, and must present unto the Lord his own Bullock, which was to be a Sin-Offering for himself and his House; *v. 6.* The Bullock was set between the Temple and the Altar, and the Offering of him mentioned in this Verse, was the making of a solemn Confession of his Sins, and the Sins of his House, earnestly praying for the Forgiveness of them, and this with his Hands on the Head of the Bullock. (3.) He must then cast Lots upon the two Goats, which were to make (both together) one Sin-Offering for the Congregation. One of these Goats must be slain in token of a Satisfaction to be made to God's Justice for Sin, the other must be sent away, in token of the Remission or Dismissal of Sin by the

Mercy of God. Both must be presented together to God, *v. 7.* before the Lot was cast upon them, and afterwards the Scape-Goat by itself, *v. 10.* Some think Goats were chosen for the Sin-Offering, because by the Unfavourableness of their Smell the Offensiveness of Sin is represented: Others think, because it was said that the Demons, which the Heathens then worshipped, often appeared to their Worshipers in the Form of Goats; God therefore obliged his People to sacrifice Goats; that they might never be tempted to sacrifice to Goats. (4.) The next thing to be done was to kill the Bullock for the Sin-Offering; for himself and his House, *v. 11.* Now (say the Jews) he must again put his Hands on the Head of the Bullock, and repeat the Confession and Supplication he had before made; and kill the Bullock with his own Hands, to make Atonement for himself first, (for how could he make Reconciliation for the Sins of the People, till he was himself first reconciled?) and for his House, not only his own Family, but all the Priests, which are called the House of Aaron, *Psalm. 135. 19.* This Charity must begin at home, tho' it must not end there. The Bullock being killed, he left one of the Priests to stir the Blood, that it might not thicken, and then, (5.) He took a Censer of burning Coals (that would not smoke) in one Hand, and a Dish full of the Sweet Incense in the other, and then went into the Holy of Holies thro' the Veil, went up towards the Ark, set the Coals down upon the Floor, scattered the Incense upon them, so that the Room was presently filled with Smoke. The Jews say, he was to go in side-way, that he might not look directly upon the Ark, where the Divine Glory was, till it was covered with Smoke; and then he must come out backward, out of Reverence to the Divine Majesty: and after a short Prayer, he was to hasten out of the Sanctuary, to shew himself to the People, that they might not suspect that he had misbehaved himself and died before the Lord. (6.) He then fetched the Blood of the Bullock from the Priest, whom he had left stirring it, and took that in with him the second time into the Holy of Holies, which was now filled with the Smoke of the Incense, and sprinkled with his Finger of that Blood upon, or rather towards the Mercy-Seat, once over against the top of it, and then seven times towards the lower part of it, *v. 14.* But the Drops of Blood (as the Jews expound it) all fell upon the Ground, and none touched the Mercy-Seat. Having done this, he came out of the most Holy Place, set the Basin of Blood down in the Sanctuary, and went out.

15 Then shall he kill the goat of the sin-offering that is for the people, and bring his blood within the vail, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy-seat, and before the mercy-seat. 16 And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation that remaineth among them, in the midst of their uncleanness. 17 And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel. 18 And he shall go out unto the altar that is before the LORD, and make an atonement for it, and shall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the goat, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about. 19 And he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel.

When the Priest was come out from sprinkling the Blood of the Bullock before the Mercy-Seat, (1.) He must next kill the Goat, which was the Sin Offering for the People, *v. 15.* and go the third time into the Holy of Holies, to sprinkle the Blood of the Goat, as he had done that of the Bullock; and thus he was to make Atonement for the Holy Place, *v. 16. i. e.* whereas the People by their Sins had provoked God to take away those Tokens of his favourable Presence with them, and render'd even that Holy Place unfit to be the Habitation of the Holy God; Atonement was hereby made for Sin, that God being reconciled to them, might continue with them. (2.) He must then do the same for the outward part of the Tabernacle, that he had done for the inner Room, by sprinkling the Blood of the Bullock first, and then of the Goat, without the Vail, there where the Table and Incense-Altar stood, eight times each, as before. The Reason intimated is, Because the Tabernacle remained amongst them in the midst of their

their Uncleanneſs, v. 16. God would hereby ſhew them how much their Hearts needed to be purified; when even the Tabernacle only, by ſtanding in the miſt of ſuch an impure and ſinful People, needed this Expiation; and alſo, That even their Devotions and Religious Performances had much amifs in them, for which it was neceſſary that Atonement ſhould be made. During this Solemnity none of the inferior Priests muſt come into the Tabernacle, v. 17. but by ſtanding without, muſt own themſelves unworthy and unfit to miniſter there, becauſe their Follies and Defects, and manifold Impurities in their Miniſtry, had made this Expiation of the Tabernacle neceſſary. (3.) He muſt then put ſome of the Blood, both of the Bullock and of the Goat mix'd together, upon the Horns of the Altar that is before the Lord, v. 18, 19. 'Tis certain the Altar of Incenſe had this Blood put upon it, for ſo 'tis expreſſly order'd, Exod. 30. 10. But ſome think this directs the High Priest to the Altar of Burnt-Offerings, for that alſo is here called the Altar before the Lord, v. 12. becauſe he is ſaid to go out to it, and becauſe it may be preſumed that that alſo had need of an Expiation; for to that the Gifts and Offerings of the Children of Iſrael were all brought, from whoſe Uncleanneſs the Altar is here ſaid to be hallow'd.

20 And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he ſhall bring the live goat: 21 And Aaron ſhall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confeſs over him all the iniquities of the children of Iſrael, and all their tranſgreſſions in all their ſins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and ſhall ſend him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderneſs. 22 And the goat ſhall bear upon him all their iniquities, unto a land not inhabited: and he ſhall let go the goat in the wilderneſs. 23 And Aaron ſhall come into the tabernacle of the congregation, and ſhall put off the linnen garments, which he put on when he went into the holy place; and ſhall leave them there 24 And he ſhall waſh his fleſh with water in the holy place, and put on his garments, and come forth, and offer his burnt-offering, and the burnt-offering of the people, and make an atonement for himſelf, and for the people. 25 And the fat of the ſin-offering ſhall he burn upon the altar: 26 And he that let go the goat for a ſcape-goat, ſhall waſh his clothes, and bathe his fleſh in water, and afterward come into the camp. 27 And the bullock for the ſin-offering, and the goat for the ſin-offering, whoſe blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place, ſhall one carry forth without the camp, and they ſhall burn in the fire their ſkins, and their fleſh, and their dung. 28 And he that burneth them, ſhall waſh his clothes, and bathe his fleſh in water, and afterward he ſhall come into the camp.

The High Priest having preſented unto the Lord the expiatory Sacrifices by the ſprinkling of their Blood, the Remainder of which 'tis probable he poured out at the Foot of the Brazen Altar, 1. He is next to confeſs the Sins of Iſrael, with both his Hands upon the Head of the Scape-Goat, v. 21, 22. And whenever Hands were impos'd upon the Head of any Sacrifice; 'twas always done with Confefſion, according as the nature of the Sacrifice was; and this being a Sin-Offering, it muſt be a Confefſion of Sin. In the latter and more degenerate Ages of the Jewiſh Church, they had a ſet Form of Confefſion prepared for the High Priest, but God here preſcribed none; for it might be ſuppos'd that the High Priest was ſo well acquainted with the State of the People, and had ſuch a tender Concern for them, that he needed not any Form. The Confefſion muſt be as particular as he could make it, not only of all the Iniquities of the Children of Iſrael, but all their Tranſgreſſions in all their Sins: In one Sin there may be many Tranſgreſſions from the ſeveral aggravating Circumſtances of it; and in our Confefſions we ſhould take notice of them, and not only ſay *I have ſinned*, but with *Aſhan, Thus and thus have I done*. By this Confefſion he muſt put the Sins of Iſrael upon the Head of the Goat, i. e. aſſign Faith upon the Divine Appointment, which conſtituted ſuch a Tranſlation, he muſt tranſfer the Punishment incurr'd from the Sinners to the Sacrifice; which had been but a Jeſt, nay, an Affront to God, if he himſelf had not ordain'd it. 2. The Goat was then to be ſent away immediately by the hand of a fit Perſon; pitch'd upon for the purpoſe, into a Wilderneſs, a Land not inhabited: And God allow'd them to make this Conſtruction of it, That the ſending away of the Goat was the ſending away of their Sins,

by a tree and full Remiſſion, v. 22. he ſhall bear upon him all their Iniquities. The loſing of the Goat was a Sign to them, that the Sins of Iſrael ſhould be ſought for, and not be found, Jer. 50. 20. The latter Jews had a Cuſtom to tie one Shred of Scarlet Cloth to the Horns of the Goat, and another to the Gate of the Temple, or to the top of the Rock where the Goat was loſt; and they concluded that if it turn'd white, as they ſay it uſually did, the Sins of Iſrael were forgiven, as it is written, *Though your Sins have been as Scarlet, they ſhall be as Wool*. And they add, That for forty Years before the Deſtruction of Jeruſalem by the Romans, the Scarlet Cloth never chang'd Colour at all; which is a fair Confeſſion, that having rejected the Subſtance, the Shadow ſtood them in no ſtead. The High Priest muſt then put off his Linnen Garments in the Tabernacle, and leave them there, (the Jews ſay) never to be worn more by himſelf, or any other, for they made new ones every Year; and he muſt bathe himſelf in Water; put on his rich Clothes, and then offer both his own and the People's Burnt-Offerings, v. 23, 24. When we have the Comfort of our Pardon, God muſt have the Glory of it. If we have the Benefit of the Sacrifice of Atonement, we muſt not grudge the Sacrifices of Acknowledgment. And it ſhould ſeem the burning of the Fat of the Sin-Offering was deferr'd till now, v. 25; that it might be conſum'd with the Burnt-Offerings. 4. The Fleſh of both thoſe Sin-Offerings, whoſe Blood was taken within the Vail, was to be all burnt, not upon the Altar, but at a diſtance without the Camp, to ſignify both our putting away of Sin by true Repentance, and the Spirit of burning, and God's putting it away by a full Remiſſion, ſo that it ſhall never riſe up in Judgment againſt us. 5. He that took the Scape-Goat into the Wilderneſs, and they that burnt the Sin-Offering were to be look'd upon as ceremonially unclean, and muſt not come into the Camp till they had waſh'd their Clothes, and bath'd their Fleſh in Water. Which ſignified the deſiling Nature of Sin, even the Sacrifice, which was but made Sin, was deſiling: Alſo, the Imperfection of the legal Sacrifices; they were ſo far from taking away Sin, that even they left ſome Stain upon thoſe that touch'd them. Laſtly, When all this was done, the High Priest went again into the moſt Holy Place to fetch his Cenſer, and ſo return'd to his own Houſe with Joy, becauſe he had done his Duty, and died not.

29 And this ſhall be a ſtatute for ever unto you: that in the ſeventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye ſhall afflict your ſouls, and do no work at all; whether it be one of your own country, or a ſtranger that ſojourneth among you. 30 For on that day ſhall the prieſt make an atonement for you, to cleanſe you, that ye may be clean from all your ſins before the LORD. 31 It ſhall be a ſabbath of reſt unto you; and ye ſhall afflict your ſouls by a ſtatute for ever: 32 And the prieſt whom he ſhall anoint, and whom he ſhall conſecrate, to miniſter in the prieſt's office in his father's ſtead, ſhall make the atonement, and ſhall put on the linnen clothes, even the holy garments. 33 And he ſhall make an atonement for the holy ſanctuary, and he ſhall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar: and he ſhall make an atonement for the prieſts, and for all the people of the congregation. 34 And this ſhall be an everlaſting ſtatute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Iſrael, for all their ſins, once a year. And he did as the LORD commanded Moſes.

Here's, 1. The Day appointed for this Solemnity: It muſt be obſerved yearly on the tenth Day of the ſeventh Month, v. 29. The ſeventh Month had been reckon'd the firſt Month, till God appointed that the Month in which the Children of Iſrael came out of Egypt, ſhould from thenceforward be accounted and called the firſt Month. Some have fancy'd that this tenth Day of the ſeventh Month was the Day of the Year on which our firſt Parents fell, and that it was kept as a Faſt in remembrance of that. Dr. Lightfoot computes that this was the Day on which Moſes came the laſt time down from the Mount, when he brought with him the renewed Tables, and the Affurances of God's being fully reconciled to Iſrael, and his Face ſhone: That Day muſt be a Day of Atonement throughout their Generations, for the Remembrance of God's forgiving them their Sin about the Golden Calf, might encourage them to hope, that upon their Repentance he would forgive them all Treaſpaſſes. 2. The Duty of the People on this Day, (1.) They muſt reſt from all their Labours; it ſhall be a Sabbath of Reſt, v. 31. The Work of the Day was itſelf enough, and a good Day's Work if it was done well, therefore they muſt do no other Work at all. The Work of Humiliation for Sin requires ſuch a cloſe Application

tion of Mind, and such a fixed Engagement of the whole Man, as will not allow a Diversion to any other Work. The Day of Atonement seems to be that Sabbath spoken of by the Prophet, *Isa. 58. 13.* for 'tis the same with the Fast spoken of in the Verses before. (2.) They must afflict their Souls. They must refrain from all bodily Refreshments and Delights, in token of inward Humiliation and Contrition of Soul for their Sins. They all fasted on this Day from Food, (except the Sick and Children) and laid aside their Ornaments, and did not anoint themselves as *Daniel* chap. 10. 3. 12. *David* chastened his Soul with Fasting, *Psal. 35. 13.* And it signified the mortifying of Sin, and turning from it, *loosing the Bands of Wickedness, Ila. 58. 6, 7.* The Jewish Doctors advis'd that they should not on that Day read those Portions of Scripture, which were proper to affect them with Delight and Joy, because it was a Day to afflict their Souls. 3. The Perpetuity of this Institution; *It shall be a Statute for ever, v. 29, 34.* It must not be intermitted any Year, nor ever let fall till that Constitution should be dissolv'd, and the Type should be superseded by the Antitype. As long as we are continually sinning, we must be continually repenting, and receiving the Atonement. The Law of afflicting our Souls for Sin, is a Statute for ever, which will continue in force till we become there where all Tears, even those of Repentance, will be wiped from our Eyes. The Apostle observes it as an Evidence of the Insufficiency of the legal Sacrifices to take away Sin, and purge the Conscience from it, that in them there was a Remembrance made of Sin every Year, upon the Day of Atonement; (*Heb. 10. 1, 2, 3.*) The Annual Repetition of the Sacrifices shew'd that there was in them only a faint and feeble Effort towards making Atonement; it could be done effectually only by offering up of the Body of Christ once for all, and that once was sufficient; that Sacrifice needed not to be repeated.

Let us therefore see what there was of Gospel in all this. (1.) Here is typified the two great Gospel-Privileges of the Remission of Sin, and Access to God, both which we owe to the Mediation of our Lord Jesus.

Here then let us see, 1. The Expiation of Guilt which Christ made for us. He is himself both the Maker and the Matter of the Atonement; for he is (1.) the Priest, the High Priest, that makes Reconciliation for the Sins of the People, *Heb. 2. 17.* He, and none but he, is *par negotio*, fit for the Work, and worthy of the Honour: He is appointed by the Father to do it, who sanctified him, and sent him into the World for this purpose, that God might in him reconcile the World to himself. He undertook it, and for our sakes sanctified himself, and set himself apart for it, *John 17. 19.* The High Priest's frequent bathing himself on this Day, and performing the Service of it in fine Linnen clean and white, signified the Holiness of the Lord Jesus, his perfect Purity from all Sin, and his being beautified and adorned with all Grace. No Man was to be with the High Priest when he made Atonement, *v. 17.* for our Lord Jesus was to tread the Wine-press alone, and of the People there must be none with him, *Ila. 63. 3.* therefore when he entered upon his Sufferings, all his Disciples forsook him and fled; for if any of them had been taken and put to death with him, 'twould have look'd as if they had assisted in making the Atonement: none but Thieves, concerning whom there could be no such Suspicion, must suffer with him. And observe what the Extent of the Atonement was, which the High Priest made; 'twas for the Holy Sanctuary, for the Tabernacle, for the Altar, for the Priests, and for all the People, *v. 33.* Christ's Satisfaction is that which atones for the Sins both of Ministers and People, the Iniquities of our Holy (and our Unholy) Things; the Title we have to the Privilege or Ordinances, our Comfort in them, and Benefit by them, is all owing to the Atonement Christ made. But whereas the Atonement which the High Priest made pertain'd only to the Congregation of Israel, Christ is the Propitiation, not for our Sins only that are Jews, but for the Sins of the whole Gentile World. And in this also Christ infinitely excell'd Aaron, That Aaron needed to offer Sacrifice for his own Sin first, which he was to make confession of upon the head of his Sin-Offering, but our Lord Jesus had no Sin of his own to answer for; such a High Priest became us, *Heb. 7. 25, 26.* And therefore when he was baptiz'd in Jordan, whereas others stood in the Water confessing their Sins, *Mat. 3. 6.* he went up straightway out of the Water, *v. 16.* having no Sins to confess.

(2.) As he is the High-Priest, so he is the Sacrifice with which Atonement is made; for he is all in all in our Reconciliation to God. Thus he was figured by the two Goats, which both made one Offering: the slain Goat was a Type of Christ dying for our Sins; the Scape-Goat a Type of Christ rising again for our Justification. 'Twas directed by Lot, the Disposal whereof was of the Lord, which Goat should be slain: for Christ was delivered by the determinate Counsel and Foreknowledge of God.

(1.) The Atonement is said to be completed by putting the Sins of Israel upon the head of the Goat: They deserved to have been abandon'd and sent into a Land of Forgetfulness, but that Punishment was here transferred to the Goat that bore

their Sins; with reference to which, God is said to have laid upon our Lord Jesus (the Substance of all these Shadows) the Iniquity of us all, *Ila. 53. 6.* And he is said to have borne our Sins, even the Punishment of them, in his own Body upon the Tree, *1 Pet. 2. 24.* Thus was he made Sin for us, that is, a Sacrifice for Sin, *2 Cor. 5. 21.* He suffer'd and died not only for our good, but in our stead; and was forsaken, and seem'd to be forgotten for a time, that we might not be forsaken and forgotten for ever. Some learned Men have computed that our Lord Jesus was baptiz'd of John in Jordan upon the tenth Day of the seventh Month, which was the very Day of Atonement; then he enter'd upon his Office, as Mediator, and was immediately driven of the Spirit into the Wilderness, a Land not inhabited. (2.) The Consequent of this was, that all the Iniquities of Israel were carried into a Land of Forgetfulness. Thus Christ the Lamb of God takes away the Sin of the World, by taking it upon himself, *John 1. 29.* And when God forgives Sin, he is said to remember it no more, *Heb. 8. 13.* to cast it behind his back, *Ila. 38. 17.* into the Depths of the Sea, *Mich. 7. 19.* and to separate it as far as the East from the West, *Psal. 103. 12.*

2. The Entrance into Heaven, which Christ made for us, is here typified by the High Priest's Entrance into the most Holy Place. This the Apostle hath expounded, *Heb. 9. 7, 8, &c.* and he shews, (1.) That Heaven is the Holiest of all, but not of that Building, and that the way into it by Faith, Hope, and Prayer, through a Mediator, was not then so clearly manifested as it is to us now by the Gospel. (2.) That Christ our High Priest enter'd into Heaven at his Ascension once for all, and as a publick Person, in the Name of all his Spiritual Israel, and through the Vail of his Flesh, which was rent for that purpose, *Heb. 10. 20.* (3.) That he enter'd by his own Blood, *Heb. 9. 12.* taking with him to Heaven the Virtues of the Sacrifice he offer'd on Earth, and so sprinkling his Blood as it were before the Mercy-Seat, where it speaks better things than the Blood of Bullocks and Goats could do. Hence he is said to appear in the midst of the Throne as a Lamb that had been slain, *Rev. 5. 6.* And though he had no Sin of his own to expiate, yet 'twas by his own Merit that he obtain'd for himself a Restoration to his own ancient Glory, *John 17. 4, 5.* as well as an eternal Redemption for us, *Heb. 9. 12.* (4.) The High Priest in the Holy Place burn'd Incense, which typified the Intercession that Christ ever lives to make for us within the Vail, in the Virtue of his Satisfaction. And we could not expect to live, no not before the Mercy-Seat, if it were not covered with the Cloud of this Incense. Mere Mercy itself will not save us, without the Interposal of a Mediator. The Intercession of Christ is there set forth before God as Incense, as this Incense. And as the High Priest interceded for himself first, then for his Household, and then for all Israel, so our Lord Jesus, in the 17th of St. John (which was a Specimen of the Intercession he makes in Heaven) recommended himself first to his Father, then his Disciples, who were his Household, and then all that should believe on him through their Word, as all Israel; and having thus directed the Uses and Intentions of his Offering, he was immediately seiz'd and crucified, pursuant to these Intentions. (5.) Herein the Entry Christ made far exceeded Aaron's; that Aaron could not gain Admission, no not for his own Sons, into the most Holy Place: but our Lord Jesus has consecrated for us also a new and living way into the Holiest, so that we also have Boldness to enter, *Heb. 10. 19, 20.* And (lastly) the High Priest was to come out again, but our Lord Jesus ever lives making Intercession; and always appears in the presence of God for us, whether as the Fore-runner he is for us enter'd, and where as Agent he doth for us reside.

(2.) Here is likewise typified the two great Gospel-Duties of Faith and Repentance, by which we are qualified for the Atonement, and come to be entitled to the Benefit of it. (1.) By Faith we must put our Hands upon the Head of the Offering relying on Christ as the Lord our Righteousness, pleading his Satisfaction, as that which was alone able to atone for our Sins, and procure us a Pardon; *Thou shalt answer, Lord, for me.* This is all I have to say for myself, *Christ has died, you rather is risen again;* to his Grace and Government I entirely submit myself, and in him I receive the Atonement, *Rom. 5. 11.*

(2.) By Repentance we must afflict our Souls; not only fasting for a time from the Delights of the Body, but inwardly sorrowing for our Sins, and living a Life of Self-denial and Mortification. We must also make a penitent Confession of Sin, and this with an Eye to Christ whom we have pierced, and mourning because of him, and a Hand of Faith upon the Atonement, assuring ourselves that if we confess our Sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our Sins, and to cleanse us from all Unrighteousness. Lastly, In the Year of Jubilee the Trumpet which proclaim'd the Liberty was order'd to be sounded in the Close of the Day of Atonement, *Lev. 25. 9.* For the Remission of our Debt, Release from our Bondage, and our Return to our Inheritance, is all owing to the Mediation and Intercession of Jesus Christ. By the Atonement we obtain Rest for our Souls, and all the Glorious Liberties of the Children of God.

CHAP. XVII.

After the Law concerning the Atonement to be made for all Israel, by the High Priest, at the Tabernacle, with the Blood of Bulls and Goats; in this Chapter we have two Prohibitions necessary for the Preservation of the Honour of that Atonement. 1. That no Sacrifice should be offer'd by any other but the Priests, nor any where but at the Door of the Tabernacle, and this upon Pain of Death, v. 1;—9. 2. That no Blood should be eaten, and this under the same Penalty, v. 10,—16.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Speak unto Aaron, and unto his sons, and unto all the children of Israel, and say unto them, This is the thing which the LORD hath commanded, saying, 3 What man soever there be of the house of Israel, that killeth an ox, or lamb, or goat in the camp, or that killeth it out of the camp, 4 And bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, to offer an offering unto the LORD, before the tabernacle of the LORD; blood shall be imputed unto that man, he hath shed blood, and that man shall be cut off from among his people: 5 To the end that the children of Israel may bring their sacrifices, which they offer in the open field, even that they may bring them unto the LORD, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation unto the priest, and offer them for peace-offerings unto the LORD. 6 And the priest shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar of the LORD, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and burn the fat for a sweet savour unto the LORD. 7 And they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils, after whom they have gone a whoring: This shall be a statute for ever unto them throughout their generations. 8 ¶ And thou shalt say unto them, Whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers which sojourn among you, that offereth a burnt-offering or sacrifice, 9 And bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, to offer it unto the LORD, even that man shall be cut off from among his people.

This Statute obliged all the People of Israel to bring all their Sacrifices to God's Altar, to be offered there. And as to this Matter we must consider, 1. How it had stood before. 2. It was allowed to all People to build Altars, and offer Sacrifices to God where they pleas'd. Wherever Abraham had a Tent he built an Altar, and every Master of a Family was a Priest to his own Family, as Job, chap. 1. 5. 2. This Liberty had been an Occasion of Idolatry. When every Man was his own Priest, and had an Altar of his own, by Degrees as they became vain in their Imaginations, they invented Gods of their own, and offered their Sacrifices unto Demons, v. 7. The Word signifies rough or hairy Goats, because it is probable in that Shape the Evil Spirits often appeared to them, to invite their Sacrifices, and to signify their Acceptance of them. For the Devil ever since he became a Revolver from God, and a Rebel against him, hath set up for a Rival with him, and coveted to have Divine Honours paid him; he had the Impudence to move it to our Blessed Saviour, to fall down and worship him. The Israelites themselves had learnt in Egypt to sacrifice to Demons. And some of them it should seem practis'd it even since the God of Israel had so gloriously appeared for them, and with them. They are said to go a whoring after these Demons; for it was such a Breach of their Covenant with God, as Adultery is of the Marriage-Covenant: And they were as strongly addicted to their idolatrous Worships, and as hardly reclaim'd from them, as those that have given themselves over to Fornication, to work all Uncleaness with Greediness; and therefore 'tis with Reference to this that God calls himself a jealous God. (1.) How this Law settled it. 1. Some think that the Children of Israel were by this Law forbidden, while they were in the Wilderness, to kill any Beef, or Mutton, or Veal, or Lamb, or Goat, even for their common eating, but at the Door of the Tabernacle, where the Blood and the Fat were to be offer'd to God upon the Altar, and the Flesh return'd back to the Offering to be eaten as a Peace-

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Offering, according to the Law. And the Statute is so worded, v. 3, 4 as to favour this Opinion, for it speaks generally of killing any Ox, or Lamb, or Goat. The learned Dr. Cudworth puts this Sense upon it, and thinks, That while they had their Tabernacle so near them in the midst of their Camp, they eat no Flesh but what had first been offer'd to God; but that when they were entering Canaan, this Constitution was alter'd, Deut. 12. 21. and they were allow'd to kill their Beasts of the Flock and Herd at Home, as well as the Roe-Buck and the Hart, only thrice a Year they were to see God at his Tabernacle, and to eat and drink before him there. And it is probable in the Wilderness they did not eat much Flesh, but that of their Peace-Offerings, preserving what Cattle they had for breed, against they came to Canaan; therefore they murmur'd for Flesh, being weary of Manna, and Moses on that Occasion speaks as if they were very sparing of the Flocks and the Herds, Numb. 11. 4, 22. Yet it is hard to construe this as a temporary Law, when it is expressly said to be a Statute for ever, v. 7. And therefore, 2. It should seem rather to forbid only the killing of Beasts for Sacrifice, any where but at God's Altar. They must not offer Sacrifice, as they had done in the open Field, v. 5. no not to their true God, but it must be brought to the Priest, to be offer'd on the Altar of the Lord: And the mighty Solemnity they had lately seen of consecrating both the Priests and the Altar, would serve for a good Reason why they should confine themselves to both these, that God had so signally appointed and own'd. Law obliged not only the Israelites themselves, but the Proselytes and Strangers that were circumcis'd and sojourn'd among them, who were in Danger of retaining an Affection to their old Ways of Worship. If any should trespass this Law, and offer Sacrifice any where but at the Tabernacle, 1. The Guilt was great; Blood shall be imputed to that Man, he hath shed Blood, v. 4. Tho' 'twas but a Beast he had killed, yet killing it otherwise than God had appointed, he was look'd upon as a Murderer. 'Tis by the Divine Grant that we have Liberty to kill the Inferiour Creatures, which we are not intitled to the Benefit of unless we submit to the Limitations of it, which are that it be not done either with Cruelty, or with Superstition, Gen. 9. 3, 4. Nor was there ever any greater Abuse done to the inferiour Creatures, than when they were made either false Gods, or Sacrifices to false Gods, which the Apostle perhaps has special Reference to, when he speaks of the Vanity and Bondage of Corruption, which the Creature was made subject to, Rom. 8. 20, 21. compare chap. 1. 23, 25. Idolatrous Sacrifices were look'd upon not only as Adultery, but as Murder, he that offereth them is as if he slew a Man, Isa. 66. 3. 2. The Punishment should be severe, That Man shall be cut off from among his People. Either the Magistrate must do it, if it were manifest and notorious, or if not, God would take the Work into his own Hands, and the Offender should be cut off by some immediate Stroke of Divine Justice. The Reasons why God thus strictly ordered all their Sacrifices to be offered at one Place were, 1. For the preventing of Idolatry and Superstition. That Sacrifices might be offer'd to God, and according to the Rule, and without Innovations, they must always be offered by the Hand of the Priests, who were Servants in God's House, and under the Eye of the High Priest, who was Ruler of the House, and took Care to see every thing done according to God's Ordinance. 2. For the securing of the Honour of God's Temple and Altar, the peculiar Dignity of which would be endanger'd, if they might offer their Sacrifices any where else as well as there. 3. For the preserving of Unity and Brotherly Love among the Israelites, that meeting all at one Altar, as all the Children of the Family meet daily at one Table, they might live and love as Brethren, and be as one Man of one Mind in the Lord. 3. How this Law was observ'd. (1.) While the Israelites kept their Integrity, they had a tender and very jealous Regard to this Law, as appears by their Zeal against the Altar which was erected by the two Tribes and a half, which they would by no Means have left standing, if they had not been satisfied that it was never designed, nor should ever be used for Sacrifice or Offering, Josh. 22. 12, 26. (2.) The Branch of this Law was for many Ages the scandalous and incurable Corruption of the Jewish Church, witness that Complaint which so often occurs in the History even of the Good Kings, Howbeit the High Places were not taken away, and it was an Inlet to the grossest Idolatry. (3.) Yet this Law was in extraordinary Cases dispens'd with. Gideon's Sacrifice, Judg. 6. 26. Manoah's Judg. 13. 19. Samuel's, 1 Sam. 7. 9.—9. 13.—11. 14. David's, 2 Sam. 24. 18. and Elijah's, 1 King. 18. 25. were accepted, tho' not offered at the usual Place: But these were all either order'd by Angels, or offered by Prophets; and some think that after the Desolation of Shiloh, and before the Building of the Temple, while the Ark and Altar were unsettled, 'twas more allowable to offer Sacrifice elsewhere. 4. How this Matter stands now, and what Use we are to make of this Law. 1. It is certain, the Spiritual Sacrifices we are now to offer are not confin'd to any

any one Place. Our Saviour hath made this clear, *Joh. 4. 21.* and the Apostle, *1 Tim. 2. 8.* according to the Prophecy, that in every Place Incense should be offered, *Mal. 1. 11.* We have now no Temple nor Altar that sanctifies the Gift, nor doth the Gospel Unity lie in one Place, but in one Heart, and the Unity of the Spirit. 2. Christ is our Altar, and the true Tabernacle; *Heb. 9. 11.—13. 10.* in him God dwells among us, and 'tis in him that our Sacrifices are acceptable to God, and in him only, *1 Pet. 2. 5.* To set up other Mediators, or other Altars, or other expiatory Sacrifices, is in effect to set up other Gods. He is the Centre of Unity, in whom all God's Israel meet. 3. Yet we are to have Respect to the Publick worship of God, not forsaking the Assemblies of his People, *Heb. 10. 25.* The Lord loves the Gates of Zion more than all the Dwellings of Jacob, and so should we; see *Ezek. 20. 40.* Though God will graciously accept our Family-Offerings, we must not therefore neglect the Door of the Tabernacle.

10 And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people. 11 For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul. 12 Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood. 13 And whatsoever man there be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, which hunteth and catcheth any beast or fowl that may be eaten; he shall even pour out the blood thereof and cover it with dust. 14 For it is the life of all flesh, the blood of it is for the life thereof: therefore I said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh: for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof: whosoever eateth it, shall be cut off. 15 And every soul that eateth that which died of itself, or that which was torn with beasts (whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger) he shall both wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even: then shall he be clean. 16 But if he wash them not, nor bathe his flesh, then he shall bear his iniquity.

Here's a Repetition and Confirmation of the Law against eating Blood. We have met with this Prohibition twice before here in the Levitical Law, chap. 3. 17.—7. 26. besides the Place it had in the Precepts of Noah, *Gen. 9. 4.* But here, 1. The Prohibition is repeated again and again, and Reference had to the former Laws to this Purpose, *v. 12.* I said to the Children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat Blood; and again, *v. 14.* Ye shall eat the Blood of no manner of Flesh. A great Stress is laid upon it, as a Law which hath more in it than at first View one would think. 2. 'Tis made binding, not only to the House of Israel, but to the Strangers that sojourn among them, *v. 10.* which perhaps was one Reason why 'twas thought advisable for a time to forbid Blood to the Gentile Converts, *Acts 15. 29.* 3. The Penalty annex'd to this Law is very severe, *v. 10.* I will even set my Face against that Soul that eateth Blood, if he do it presumptuously, and will cut him off; and again, *v. 14.* He shall be cut off. Note, God's Wrath will be the Sinner's Ruin. Write that Man down, for ever undone, against whom God sets his Face; for what Creature is able to confront the Creator? 4. A Reason is given for this Law, *v. 11.* because it is the Blood that makes Atonement for the Soul; and therefore it was appointed to make Atonement with; because the Life of the Flesh is in the Blood: The Sinner deserved to die, therefore the Sacrifice must die; now the Blood being for the Life, that ordinarily Beasts were kill'd for Man's Use, by the drawing out of all their Blood, God appointed the sprinkling or pouring out of the Blood of the Sacrifice upon the Altar, to signify that the Life of the Sacrifice was given to God instead of the Sinner's Life; and as a Reason or Counter-price for it; therefore without shedding of Blood there was no Remission, *Heb. 9. 22.* For this Reason they must eat no Blood, and (1.) It was then a very good Reason for God would by this means preserve the Honour of that Way of Atonement which he had instituted, and keep up in the Minds of the Peo-

ple a reverent Regard to it. The Blood of the Covenant being then sensible, no Blood must be either eaten, or trodden under Foot as a common thing; as they must have no Ointment or Perfume like that which God ordered them to make for himself. But (2.) This Reason is now superseded, which intimates, That the Law it self was Ceremonial, and is now no longer in Force: The Blood of Christ who is come, and we are to look for no other, is that alone which makes Atonement for the Soul, and of which the Blood of the Sacrifices was an imperfect Type: The coming of the Substance doth away the Shadow. The Blood of Beasts is no longer the Ransom, but Christ's Blood only: And therefore there is not now that Reason for abstaining from Blood that was then; and we cannot suppose it was the Will of God, that the Law should survive the Reason of it. The Blood, provided it be prepared as not to be unwholesome, is now allowed for the Nourishment of our Bodies, because it is no longer appointed to make Atonement for the Soul. (3.) Yet it hath still a useful Significance: The Life is in the Blood; 'tis the Vehicle of the Animal Spirits, and God would have his People to regard even the Life of their Beasts, and not to be cruel and hard-hearted, nor to take Delight in any thing that's barbarous. They must not be a Blood-thirsty People. The Blood then made Atonement; now the Blood of Christ doth so effectually, to that therefore we must have a reverent Regard, and not use it as a common thing; for God will set his Face against those that do so, and they shall be cut off, *Heb. 10. 29.* 5. Some other Precepts are here given as Appendages to this Law, and Hedges about it. 1. They must cover the Blood of that which they took in hunting, *v. 13.* They must not only not eat it, but give it a decent Burial, in Token of some Mystery which they must believe lay hid in this Constitution. The Jews look upon this as a very weighty Precept, and appoint that the Blood should be cover'd with these Words, *Blessed be he that hath sanctified us by his Precepts, and commanded us to cover Blood.* 2. They must not eat that which died of itself, or was torn of Beasts, *v. 15.* for the Blood was either not at all, or not regularly drawn out of them. God would have them to be curious in their Diet, not with the Curiosity that gratifies the sensual Appetite, but with that which checks and restrains it. God would not allow his Children to eat every thing that came in their Way, with Greediness, but to consider diligently what was before them, that they might learn in other things to ask Questions for Conscience Sake. They that flew upon the Spoil sinned, *1 Sam. 14. 32, 33.* If a Man did thro' Ignorance or Inconsideration eat the Flesh of any Beast not duly slain, he must wash himself and his Clothes, else he bore his Iniquity, *v. 15, 16.* The Pollution was Ceremonial, so was the Purification from it; but if a Man slighted the prescribed Method of cleansing, or would not submit to it; he thereby contracted a Moral Guilt. See the Nature of a Remedial Law; he that obeys it has the Benefit of it, he that doth not, not only remains under his former Guilt, but adds to that the Guilt of contemning the Provisions made by Divine Grace for his Relief, and sins against the Remedy.

CHAP. XVIII.

Here's 1. A general Law against all Conformity to the corrupt Usages of the Heathen, *v. 1.—5.* 2. Particular Laws, (1.) Against Incest, *v. 6.—18.* (2.) Against beastly Lusts, and barbarous Idolatries, *v. 19.—23.* 3. The enforcement of these Laws from the Ruin of the Canaanites, *v. 24.—30.*

1 AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, I am the LORD your God. 3 After the doings of the land of Egypt wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do; and after the doings of the land of Canaan whither I bring you, shall ye not do: neither shall ye walk in their ordinances. 4 Ye shall do my judgments, and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein: I am the LORD your God. 5 Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the LORD.

After divers Ceremonial Institutions God here returns to give them Moral Precepts. The former are still of use to us as Types, the latter still binding as Laws. We have here, 1. The Sacred Authority by which these Laws are enacted; I am the Lord your God, *v. 1, 4, 30.* and I am the Lord, *v. 5, 6, 21.* The Lord that have a Right to rule all, your God that have a Right to rule you. Jehovah is the Fountain of Being, and therefore the Fountain of Power, whose we are, whom we are bound to serve, and who is able to avenge all Disobedience

bedience. *Your God* whom you have consented to, you are happy in, you lie under the highest Obligations imaginable to, and to whom you are accountable. 2. A strict Caution to take heed of retaining the Reliques of the Idolatries of Egypt, where they had dwelt, and of receiving the Infection of the Idolatries of Canaan, whither they were now going, v. 3. Now God was by *Moses* teaching them his Ordinances, there was *aliquid dediscendum*, something to be unlearned, which they had suck'd in with their Milk in Egypt, a Country noted for Idolatry; *Ye shall not do after the doings of the Land of Egypt.* 'Twould be the greatest Absurdity in itself, to retain such an Affection for their House of Bondage, as to be governed in their Devotions by the Usages of it, and the greatest Ingratitude to God, who had so wonderfully and graciously delivered them. Nay, as if they had been governed by a Spirit of Contradiction, even after they had received these Ordinances of God, they would be in danger of admitting the wicked Usages of the *Canaanites*, and of inheriting their Vices with their Land. Of this Danger they are here warned, *Ye shall not walk in their Ordinances.* Such a Tyrant is Custom, that their Practices are called *Ordinances*, and they became Rivals even with God's Ordinances, and God's professing People were in danger of receiving Law from them. 3. A solemn Charge to them to keep God's Judgments, Statutes, and Ordinances, v. 4, 5. To this Charge, and many other the like, *David* seems to refer, in the many Prayers and Professions he makes relating to God's Law in the 119th Psalm. *Observe here, (1.)* The great Rule of our Obedience; God's Statutes, and Judgments. Those we must keep, to walk therein. We must keep them in our Books, and keep them in our Hands, that we may practise them in our Hearts and Lives. Remember God's Commandments to do them, Psalm 103. 18. keep in them, as our Way to travel in; keep to them as our Rule to work by. Keep them as our Treasure, as the Apple of our Eye, with the utmost Care and Value. (2.) The great Advantage of our Obedience; *Which if a Man do, he shall live in them, i.e. he shall be happy here and hereafter.* We have reason to thank God, (1.) That this is still in force as a Promise, with a very favourable Construction of the Condition. If we keep God's Commandments in Sincerity, tho' we come short of a sinless Perfection, we shall find the Way of Duty is the Way of Comfort, and will be the Way to Happiness. Godliness has the Promise of Life, 1 Tim. 4. 8. Wisdom hath said, *Keep my Commandments and live: And if through the Spirit we mortify the Deeds of the Body,* (which are to us as the Usages of Egypt were to Israel) *we shall live.* (2.) That it is not so in force in the Nature of a Covenant, as that the least Transgression shall for ever exclude us from this Life. The Apostle quotes this twice, as opposite to the Faith which the Gospel reveals. 'Tis the Description of the Righteousness which is by the Law, *The Man that doth them shall live & abide,* Rom. 10. 5. and is urged to prove that the Law is not of Faith, Gal. 3. 12. The Alteration which the Gospel has made is in the last Word, still *the Man that doth them shall live*, but none live in them, for the Law could not give Life, because we could not perfectly keep it; 'twas *weak thro' the Flesh*, not in itself; but now the Man that doth them shall live by the Faith of the Son of God. He shall owe his Life to the Grace of Christ, and not to the Merit of his own Works; see Gal. 3. 21, 22. *The Just shall live*, but they shall live by Faith, by virtue of their Union with Christ, who is their Life.

6 ¶ None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him, to uncover their nakedness: I am the LORD. 7 The nakedness of thy father, or the nakedness of thy mother, shalt thou not uncover; she is thy mother, thou shalt not uncover her nakedness. 8 The nakedness of thy father's wife shalt thou not uncover: it is thy father's nakedness. 9 The nakedness of thy sister, the daughter of thy father, or daughter of thy mother, whether she be born at home, or born abroad, even their nakedness thou shalt not uncover. 10 The nakedness of thy son's daughter, or of thy daughters daughter, even their nakedness thou shalt not uncover: for theirs is thine own nakedness. 11 The nakedness of thy father's wives daughter, begotten of thy father, (she is thy sister) thou shalt not uncover her nakedness. 12 Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy father's sister: she is thy father's near kinswoman. 13 Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy mother's sister, for she is thy mother's near kinswoman. 14 Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy fa-

thers brother, thou shalt not approach to his wife: she is thine aunt. 15 Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy daughter in law: she is thy son's wife, thou shalt not uncover her nakedness. 16 Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy brother's wife: it is thy brother's nakedness. 17 Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter, neither shalt thou take her son's daughter, or her daughters daughter, to uncover her nakedness; for they are her near kinswomen: it is wickedness. 18 Neither shalt thou take a wife to her sister to vex her, to uncover her nakedness, besides the other in her life-time.

These Laws relate to the seventh Commandment, and no doubt are obliging to us now under the Gospel, for they are consonant to the very Light and Law of Nature: One of the Articles, that of a Man's having his Father's Wife, the Apostle speaks of as a Sin not so much as nam'd among the Gentiles, 1 Cor. 5. 1. Tho' some of the Incests here forbidden were practis'd by some particular Persons among the Heathen, yet they were disallowed and detested, unless among those Nations who were become barbarous, and were quite given up to vile Affections.

Observe, 1. That which is forbidden as to the Relations here instanced in, is approaching to them to uncover their Nakedness, v. 6. (1.) It is chiefly intended to forbid the marrying of any of these Relations. Marriage is a divine Institution, that and the Sabbath the eldest of all other, of equal standing with Man upon the Earth: It is intended for the Comfort of Human Life, and the decent and honourable Propagation of the Human Race, such as became the Dignity of Man's Nature, above that of the Beasts. 'Tis honourable in all, and these Laws are for the Support of the Honour of it. 'Twas requisite a divine Ordinance should be subject to divine Rules and Restraints, especially because it concerns a thing wherein the corrupt Nature of Man is as apt as in any thing to be wilful and impetuous in its Desires, and impatient of Check. Yet these Prohibitions, besides their being enacted by an uncontested Authority, are in themselves highly reasonable and equitable. (1.) By Marriage two were to become one Flesh, therefore those that before were in a Sense one Flesh by Nature, could not without the greatest Absurdity become one Flesh by Institution; for the Institution was designed to unite those who before were not united. (2.) Marriage puts an Equality between Husband and Wife; *Is she not thy Companion, taken out of thy Side?* Therefore if those, who before were Superior and Inferior, should intermarry (which is the Case in most of the Instances here laid down) the Order of Nature would be taken away by a positive Institution, which must by no means be allow'd. The Inequality between Master and Servant, Noble and Ignoble, is founded in Consent and Custom, and there's no Harm done if that be taken away by the Equality of Marriage; but the Inequality between Parents and Children, Uncles and Nieces, Aunts and Nephews, either by Blood or Marriage, is founded by Nature, and is therefore perpetual, and cannot without Confusion be taken away by the Equality of Marriage, the Institution of which, tho' ancient, is subsequent to the Order of Nature. (3.) No Relations that are Equals are forbidden, but only Brothers and Sisters, either by the whole Blood, or half Blood, or by Marriage; and in this there is not the same natural Absurdity as in the former, for Adam's Sons must of necessity marry their own Sisters; but it was requisite it should be made by a positive Law unlawful and detestable, for the preventing of sinful Familiarities between those, that in the Days of their Youth are supposed to live in a House together, and yet cannot intermarry without defeating one of the Intentions of Marriage, which is the Enlargement of Friendship and Interest. If every Man married his own Sister, as they would be apt to do from Generation to Generation, if it were lawful, each Family would be a World to itself, and it would be forgotten that we are Members one of another. 'Tis certain this has always been look'd upon by the most sober Heathen as a most infamous and abominable thing; and they who had not this Law, yet were herein a Law to themselves. The making use of the Ordinance of Marriage for the patronizing of incestuous Mixtures, is so far from justifying them, or extenuating their Guilt, that it adds the Guilt of profaning an Ordinance of God, and prostituting that to the vilest Purposes, which was instituted for the noblest Ends. But (2.) Uncleanness committed with any of these Relations out of Marriage, is likewise without doubt forbidden here, and no less intended than the former; as also all lascivious Carriage, wanton Dalliance, and every thing that has the appearance of this Evil. Relations must love one another, and are to have free and familiar Converse with

each other, but it must be with all Purity; and the less it is suspected of evil by others, the more Care ought the Persons themselves to take, that Satan do not get Advantage against them, for he is a very subtle Enemy, and seeks all Occasions against us.

2. The Relations forbidden are most of them plainly described; and 'tis generally laid down as a Rule, that what Relations of a Man's own he is bound up from marrying with, the same Relations of his Wife he is likewise forbidden to marry with, for they two are one. The Law which forbids marrying a Brother's Wife, (v. 16.) had an Exception peculiar to the Jewish State, That if a Man died without Issue, his Brother, or next of Kin, should marry the Widow, and raise up Seed to the Deceased, Deut. 25. 5. for Reasons which held good only in that Commonwealth; and therefore now those Reasons cease, the Exception ceaseth, and the Law is in force, that a Man must in no case marry his Brother's Widow. That Article. v. 18. which forbids a Man to take a Wife to her Sister, supposeth a Connivance at Polygamy, as some other Laws then did (Exod. 21. 10. Deut. 21. 15.) but forbids a Man's marrying two Sisters, as Jacob did, because between them, who had before been equal, there would be apt to arise greater Jealousies and Animosities, than between Wives that were not so nearly related. If the Sister of the Wife be taken for the Concubine, or secondary Wife, nothing can be more vexing in her Life, or as long as she lives.

19 Also thou shalt not approach unto a woman to uncover her nakedness, as long as she is put apart for her uncleanness. 20 Moreover, thou shalt not lie carnally with thy neighbours wife to defile thyself with her. 21 And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass thro' the fire to Moloch, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the LORD. 22 Thou shalt not lie with mankind as with womankind: it is abomination. 23 Neither shalt thou lie with any beast, to defile thyself therewith: neither shall any woman stand before a beast to lie down thereto: it is confusion. 24 Defile not you yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you. 25 And the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants. 26 Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations; neither any of your own nation, nor any stranger that sojourneth among you. 27 (For all these abominations have the men of the land done which were before you, and the land is defiled.) 28 That the land spue not you out also, when ye defile it, as it spued out the nations, that were before you. 29 For whosoever shall commit any of these abominations, even the souls that commit them shall be cut off from among their people. 30 Therefore shall ye keep mine ordinance, that ye commit not any one of these abominable customs, which were committed before you, and that ye defile not yourselves therein: I am the LORD your God.

Here's 1. A Law to preserve the Honour of the Marriage-Bed, that it shall not be unreasonably us'd, v. 19. nor invaded by an Adulterer, v. 20. 2. A Law against that which was the most unnatural Idolatry, causing their Children to pass thro' the Fire to Moloch, v. 21. Moloch (as some think) was the Idol in and by which they worshipped the Sun, that great Fire of the World; and therefore in the Worship of it they made their own Children either Sacrifices to this Idol, burning them to death before it; or Devotees to it, causing them to pass between two Fires, as some think, or to be thrown thro' one, to the Honour of this pretended Deity; imagining, that the consecrating but of one of their Children in this manner to Moloch, would procure good Fortune for all the rest of their Children. Did Idolaters thus give their own Children to false Gods, and shall we think any thing too dear to be dedicated to, or to be parted with for the true God? See how this Sin of Israel (which they were afterwards guilty of not withstanding this Law) is aggravated from the Relation which they and their Children stood in to God, Ezek. 16. 20. Thou hast taken thy Sons and thy Daughters, whom thou hast born un-

to me, and these thou hast sacrificed. Therefore 'tis here call'd profaning the Name of their God; for it look'd as if they thought they were under greater Obligations to Moloch than to Jehovah; for to him they offered their Cattle only, but to Moloch their Children. 3. A Law against unnatural Lusts, Sodomy, and Bestiality, Sins not to be nam'd or thought of without the utmost Abhorrence imaginable, v. 22, 23. Other Sins level Men with the Beasts, but these sink them much lower: That ever there should have been occasion for the making of these Laws, and that since they are published they should ever have been broken, is the perpetual Reproach and Scandal of the Human Nature; and the giving of Men up to these vile Affections, was many times the Punishment of their Idolatries; so the Apostle shews, Rom. 1. 24. 4. Arguments against these and the like abominable Wickednesses. He that has an indisputable Right to command us, yet because he will deal with us as Men, and draw with the Cords of a Man, condescends to reason with us. 1. Sinners defile themselves with these Abominations, v. 24. Defile not yourselves in any of these things. All Sin is defiling to the Conscience, but these are Sins that have a particular Turpitude in them. Our heavenly Father, in Kindness to us, requires of us that we keep ourselves clean, and do not wallow in the Dirt. 2. The Souls that commit them shall be cut off, v. 29. and justly; for if any Man defile the Temple of God, him shall God destroy, 1 Cor. 3. 17. Flethly Lusts war against the Soul, and will certainly be the Ruin of it, if God's Mercy and Grace prevent not. 3. The Land is defiled, v. 25. If such Wickednesses as these be practised and connived at, the Land is thereby made unfit to have God's Tabernacle in it, and the pure and holy God will withdraw the Tokens of his gracious Preference from it. 'Tis also regarded unwholesome to the Inhabitants, who are hereby infected with Sin, and exposed to Plagues; and it is really nauseous and loathsome to all good Men in it, as the Wickedness of Sodom was to the Soul of righteous Lot. 4. These have been the Abominations of the former inhabitants, v. 24, 27. Therefore 'twas necessary these Laws should be made, as Antidotes and Preservatives from the Plague are then necessary, when we go into an infected Place. And therefore they should not practise any such things; because the Nations that had practised them, now lay under the Curse of God, and were shortly to fall by the Sword of Israel. They could not but be sensible how odious those People had made themselves, who wallowed in this Mire, and how they stank in the Nostrils of all good Men; and shall a People sanctified and dignified, as Israel was, make themselves thus vile? When we observe how ill Sin looks in others, we should use that as an Argument with ourselves, with the utmost Care and Caution to preserve our Purity. 5. For these and the like Sins the Canaanites were to be destroyed; these filled the Measure of the Amorites Iniquity, Gen. 15. 16. and brought down that Destruction of so many populous Kingdoms, which the Israelites were now shortly to be not only the Spectators, but the Instruments of; Therefore I do visit the Iniquity thereof upon it, v. 25. Note, The tremendous Judgments of God executed on those that are daringly profane and atheistical, are intended as Warnings to those who profess Religion, to take heed of every thing that has the least appearance of, or tendency towards Profaneness and Atheism. Even the Ruin of Canaanites is an Admonition to Israelites, not to do like them. Nay, to shew that not only the Creator is provoked, but the Creation burthened by such Abominations as these; 'tis added, v. 25. The Land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants. The very Ground they went upon did as it were groan under them, and was sick of them, and not easy till it had discharged itself of these Enemies of the Lord, Isa. 1. 24. This speaks the extreme Loathsomeness of Sin; sinful Man indeed drinks in Iniquity like Water, but the harmless Part of the Creation even heaves at it, and riseth against it. Many a House and many a Town hath spued out the wicked Inhabitants, as it were with Abhorrence, Rev. 3. 16. therefore take heed, saith God, that the Land spue not you out also, v. 28. 'Twas secured to them, and entailed upon them, and yet they must expect, that if they made the Vices of the Canaanites their own, with their Land, their Fate would be the same. Note, wicked Israelites are as abominable to God as wicked Canaanites, and more so, and will be as soon spued out, or sooner. Such a Warning as this here given to the Israelites, is given by the Apostle to the Gentile Converts, with reference to the rejected Jews, in whose room they were substituted, Rom. 11. 19, etc. they must take heed of falling by the same Example of Unbelief, Heb. 4. 11. Apply it more generally, and let it deter us effectually from all sinful Courses, to consider how many they have been the Ruin of. Lay the Ear of Faith to the Gates of the bottomless Pit, and hear the doleful Shrieks and Outcries of damned Sinners, whom Earth has spued out, and Hell has swallowed, that find themselves undone, for ever undone by Sin, and tremble lest this be your Portion at last. God's Threatnings and Judgments should frighten us from Sin. Lastly, The Chapter concludes with

with a sovereign Antidote against this Infection, v. 30. Therefore ye shall keep mine Ordinances, that ye commit not any one of these abominable Customs. This is the Remedy prescribed. Note, 1. Sinful Customs are abominable Customs, and their being common and fashionable, doth not make them at all the less abominable, nor should we the less abominate them, but the more; because the more customary they are, the more dangerous they are. 2. 'Tis of pernicious consequence to admit and allow of any one sinful Custom, because one will make way for many. *Uno absurdo dato mille sequuntur.* The way of Sin is down-hill. 3. A close and constant Adherence to God's Ordinances, is the most effectual Preservative from the Infection of gross Sin. The more we taste of the Sweetness, and feel of the Power of holy Ordinances, the less mind we shall have to the forbidden Pleasures of Sinners abominable Customs. 'Tis the Grace of God only that will secure us, and that Grace is to be expected only in the use of the Means of Grace. Nor doth God ever leave any to their own Hearts Lusts, till they have first left him and his Institutions.

CHAP. XIX.

Some Ceremonial Precepts there are in this Chapter, but most of them are Moral. One would wonder that when some of the lighter Matters of the Law are greatly enlarged upon, witness two long Chapters concerning the Leprosy, many of the weightier Matters are put into a little Compass: Divers of the single Verses of this Chapter contain whole Laws concerning Judgment and Mercy; for these are things which are manifest in every Man's Conscience; Mens own Thoughts are able to explain these, and to comment upon them. (1) The Laws of this Chapter which were peculiar to the Jews are, 1. Concerning their Peace-Offerings, v. 5.—8. 2. Concerning the Gleanings of their Fields, v. 9, 10. 3. Against Mixtures of their Cattle, Seed, and Cloth, v. 19. 4. Concerning their Trees, v. 23.—25. 5. Against some superstitious Usages, v. 26.—28. But (2) Most of these Precepts are obliging to us, for they are Expositions of most of the ten Commandments. 1. Here's the Preface to the ten Commandments, I am the Lord, repeated here fifteen times. 2. A Sum of the ten Commandments. All the first Table in that, Be ye holy, v. 2. All the second Table in that, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour, v. 18. and an Answer to that Question, Who is my Neighbour, v. 33, 34. 3. Something of each Commandment. 1. The first Commandment is implied in that which is oft repeated here, I am your God. And here's a Prohibition of Inchantment, v. 26. and Witchcraft, v. 31. which make a God of the Devil. 2. Idolatry against the second Commandment is forbidden, v. 4. 3. Profanation of God's Name against the third, v. 12. 4. Sabbath Sanctification is pressed, v. 3, 30. 5. Children are required to honour their Parents, v. 3. and the aged, v. 32. 6. Hatred and Revenge are here forbidden against the sixth Commandment, v. 17, 18. 7. Adultery, v. 20.—22. and Whoredom, v. 29. 8. Justice is here required in Judgment, v. 15. Theft forbidden, v. 31. Fraud, and with-holding Dues, v. 13. and false Weights, v. 35, 36. 9. Lying, v. 11. Slandering, v. 14. Tale-bearing, and false witness bearing, v. 16. 10. The tenth Commandment, laying a Restraint upon the Heart, so doth that, v. 17. Thou shalt not hate thy Brother in thine Heart. And here's a solemn Charge to observe all these Statutes, v. 37. Now these are things, which need not much Help for the Understanding of them, but require constant Care and Watchfulness for the observing of them. A good Understanding have all they that do these Commandments.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy; for I the LORD your God am holy. 3 Ye shall fear every man his mother and his father, and keep my sabbaths: I am the LORD your God. 4 Turn ye not unto idols, nor make to yourselves molten gods: I am the LORD your God. 5 And if ye offer a sacrifice of peace-offerings unto the LORD; ye shall offer it at your own will. 6 It shall be eaten the same day ye offer it, and on the morrow; and if ought remain until the third day, it shall be burnt in the fire. 7 And if it be eaten at all on the third day, it is abominable; it shall not be accepted. 8 Therefore every one that eateth it shall bear his iniquity, because he hath profaned the hallowed thing of the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people. 9 And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly

reap the corners of thy field; neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. 10 And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard; neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger: I am the LORD your God.

Moses is ordered to deliver the Summary of Laws to all the Congregation of the Children of Israel, v. 2. not to Aaron and his Sons only, but to all the People, for they were all concerned to know their Duty. Even in the darker Ages of the Law, that Religion could not be of God, which boasted of Ignorance as its Mother. Moses must make known God's Statutes to all the Congregation, and proclaim them thro' the Camp. These Laws, 'tis probable, he delivered himself to as many of the People as could be within hearing at once, and so by degrees at several times to them all. Many of the Precepts here given they had received before, but 'twas requisite they should be repeated, that they might be remember'd; Precept must be upon Precept, and Line upon Line, and all little enough.

In these Verses, 1. 'Tis required that Israel be a holy People, because the God of Israel is a holy God, v. 2. Their being distinguished from all other People by peculiar Laws and Customs, was intended to teach them a real Separation from the World and the Flesh, and an entire Devotedness to God. And this is now the Law of Christ (the Lord bring every Thought within us into Obedience to it!) Ye shall be holy, for I am holy, 1. Pet. 1. 15, 16. We are the Followers of the holy Jesus, and therefore must be according to our Capacity consecrated to God's Honour, and conformed to his Nature and Will. Israel was sanctified by the Types and Shadows, Lev. 20. 8. but we are sanctified by the Truth, or Substance of all those Shadows, John 17. 17. Tit. 2. 14.

2. That Children be obedient to their Parents, v. 3. Ye shall fear every Man his Mother and his Father. (1.) The Fear here required is the same with the Honour commanded by the fifth Commandment; see Mat. 23. 6. It includes inward Reverence and Esteem, outward Expressions of Respect, Obedience to the lawful Commands of Parents, Care and Endeavour to please them, and make them easy, and to avoid every thing that may offend and grieve them, and incur their Displeasure. The Jewish Doctors ask, What is this Fear that is owing to a Father? And they answer, 'Tis not to stand in his Way, nor to sit in his Place, nor to contradict what he saith, or to carp at it, nor to call him by his Name, either living or dead, but my Father, or Sir; 'tis to provide for him if he be poor, and the like. (2.) Children, when they grow up to be Men, must not think themselves discharged from this Duty: Every Man, tho' he be a wise Man and a great Man, yet must reverence his Parents, because they are his Parents. (3.) The Mother is put first, which is not usual, to shew that the Duty is equally owing to both; if the Mother survive the Father, still she must be revered and obeyed. (4.) 'Tis added, and keep my Sabbaths. If God provides by his Law for the preserving of the Honour of Parents, Parents must use their Authority over their Children for the preserving of the Honour of God, particularly the Honour of his Sabbaths, the Custody of which is very much committed to Parents by the fourth Commandment, Thou and thy Son and thy Daughter. The Ruin of young People hath often been observed to begin in the Contempt of their Parents, and the Profanation of the Sabbath-day: First therefore are these two Precepts here put together in the beginning of this Abridgment of the Statutes, Ye shall fear every Man his Mother and his Father, and keep my Sabbaths. Those are hopeful Children, and likely to do well, that make Conscience of honouring their Parents, and keeping holy the Sabbath-day. (5.) The Reason added to both these Precepts is, I am the Lord your God, the Lord of the Sabbath, and the God of your Parents.

3. That God only be worshipped, and not by Images, v. 4. Turn ye not to Idols, to Elilim, to Vanities, Things of no Power, no Value, Gods that are no Gods. Turn not from the true God to false ones, from the mighty God to impotent ones, from the God that will make you holy and happy, to those that will deceive you, debauch you, ruin you, and make you for ever miserable. Turn not your Eye to them, much less your Heart. Make not to yourselves Gods, the Creatures of your own Fancy, nor think to worship the Creator by molten Gods. You are the Work of God's Hands, be not so absurd as to worship Gods the Work of your own Hands. Molten Gods are instituted in for the sake of the molten Calf.

4. That the Sacrifices of their Peace-offerings should always be offered, and eaten according to the Law, v. 5, 6, 7, 8. There was some particular reason 'tis likely for the Reiteration of this Law, rather than any other relating to the Sacrifices. The eating of the Peace-offerings was the People's Part, and was done from under the Eye of the Priests, and perhaps

perhaps some of them had kept the cold Meat of their Peace-Offerings, as they had done the Manna, *Exod.* 16. 20. longer than was appointed, which occasioned this Caution; see the Law itself before, *chap.* 7. 16, 17, 18. God will have his own Work done in his own Time. Tho' the Sacrifice was offer'd according to the Law, if it were not eaten according to the Law, it was not accepted. Tho' Ministers do their Part, what the better if People do not theirs? There is Work to be done after our spiritual Sacrifices, in a due Improvement of them, which if it be neglected all is in vain.

5. That they should leave the Gleanings of their Harvest and Vintage for the Poor, *v.* 9. 10. *Note*, Works of Piety must be always attended with Works of Charity, according as our Ability is. When they gathered in their Corn, they must leave some standing in the Corner of the Field; the Jewish Doctors say, it should be a sixtieth Part of the Field; and they must also leave the Gleanings and the small Clusters of their Grapes, which at first were overlook'd. This Law, tho' not binding now in the Letter of it, yet teacheth us, 1. That we must not be covetous and griping, and greedy of every thing we can lay any Claim to; nor insist upon our Right in Things small and trivial. 2. That we must be well pleased to see the Poor supply'd and refresh'd with the Fruit of our Labours. We must not think every thing lost that goes beside our selves, nor any thing wasted that goes to the Poor. 3. That Times of Joy, such as Harvest-time is, are proper Times for Charity, that when we rejoice the Poor may rejoice with us; and when our Hearts are blessing God their Loin may bless us.

11 ¶ Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another. 12 ¶ And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the LORD. 13 ¶ Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning. 14 ¶ Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling-block before the blind, but shalt fear thy God: I am the LORD. 15 ¶ Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment; thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty; but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour. 16 ¶ Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour: I am the LORD. 17 ¶ Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him. 18 ¶ Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.

We are taught here, 1. To be honest and true in all our Dealings, *v.* 11. God, who has appointed every Man's Property by his Providence, forbids by his Law the invading of that Appointment, either by downright Theft, *Ye shall not steal*, or by fraudulent Dealing, *You shall not cheat, or deal falsely*. Whatever we have in the World, we must see to it that it be honestly come by, for we cannot be truly rich, nor long rich with that which is not. The God of Truth, who requires Truth in the Heart, *Psal.* 51. 6. requires it also in the Tongue, *Neither lie one to another*, either in bargaining, or common Converse. This is one of the Laws of Christianity, *Col.* 3. 9. *Lie not one to another*. They that do not speak Truth do not deserve to be told Truth: They that sin by lying, justly suffer by it, therefore we are forbid to *lie one to another*; for if we lie to others, we teach them to lie to us. 2. To maintain a very reverent Regard to the sacred Name of God, *v.* 12. and not to call him to be Witness, either (1) To a Lye, *Ye shall not swear falsely*. 'Tis bad to tell a Lye, but it's much worse to swear it. Or, (2) To a Trifle, and every Impertinence, *Neither shalt thou profane the Name of thy God*, by alienating it to any other Purpose, than that for which it is to be religiously us'd. 3. Neither to take nor keep any one's Right from them, *v.* 13. We must not take that which is none of our own, either by Fraud or Robbery, nor detain that which belongs to another, particularly the Wages of the Hiredling, let it not abide with thee all Night. Let the Day-Labourer have his Wages as soon as he has done his Day's Work, if he desire it. 'Tis a great Sin to deny the Payment of it, nay, to defer it to his Damage, a Sin that cries to Heaven for Vengeance, *James* 5. 4. 4. To be particularly tender of the Credit and Safety of those that cannot help themselves, *v.* 14. (1) The Credit of the Deaf;

Thou shalt not curse the Deaf; not those that are naturally Deaf, that cannot hear at all, or those that are *absent*, and are present out of hearing of the Curse, and so cannot shew their Repentment, return the Affront, or right themselves. Or, those that are *patient* that seem as if they heard not, and are not willing to take Notice of it, as *David*, *Psal.* 38. 13. Do not therefore injure any because they are unwilling, or unable to avenge themselves, for God sees and hears though they do not.

(2) The Safety of the Blind we must likewise be tender of, and not put a Stumbling-Block before them, for this is to add Affliction to the Afflicted, and to make God's Providence a Servant to our Malice. This Prohibition implies a Precept to help the blind, and remove Stumbling-Blocks out of their Way. The Jewish Writers thinking it impossible that any should be so barbarous as to put a Stumbling-Block in the Way of the Blind, understood it figuratively, that it forbids giving ill Counsel to those that are simple, and easily imposed upon, by which they may be led to do something to their own Prejudice. We ought to take heed of doing any thing which may occasion our weak Brother to fall, *Rom.* 14. 13. *1 Cor.* 8. 9. 'Tis added as a Preservative from these Sins, *but fear thou God*. Thou dost not fear the deaf and blind, they cannot right themselves, but remember 'tis the Glory of God to help the helpless, and he will plead their Cause. *Note*, The Fear of God will restrain us from doing that which will not expose us to Mens Resentments. 5. Judges and all in Authority are here commanded to give Verdict and Judgment without Partiality, *v.* 15. Whether they are constituted Judges by Commission, or made so in a particular Case by the Consent of both Parties, as Referees or Arbitrators, they must do no Wrong to either Side, but to the utmost of their skill must go according to the Rules of Equity, having Respect purely to the Merits of the Cause, and not to the Characters of the Person. *Injustice* must never be perverted, either (1) in pity to the Poor, *Thou shalt not respect the Person of the Poor*, *Exod.* 23. 3. Whatever may be given to a poor Man as an Alms, yet let nothing be awarded him as his Right, but what he is legally intitled to, nor let his Poverty excuse him from any just Punishment for a Fault. Or (2) in Veneration or Fear of the mighty, in whose Favour Judges would be most frequently biass'd. The Jews say, Judges were by this Law obliged to be so impartial, as not to let one of the contending Parties sit while the other stood; nor permit one to say what he pleas'd, and bid the other be short, see *James* 2. 1, 2, 3. 6. We are all forbidden to do any thing injurious to our Neighbour's Good Name, *v.* 16. either (1) in common Conversation, *Thou shalt not go up and down as a Tale-bearer*. 'Tis as ill an Office as a Man can put himself into to be the Publisher of every Man's Faults, divulging what was secret, aggravating Crimes, and making the worst of every thing that was amiss, with design to blast and ruin Mens Reputation, and to sow Discord among Neighbours. The Word us'd for a Tale-bearer signifies a Pedlar, or petty Chapman, the Interlopers of Trade; for Tale-bearers pick up ill-natured Stories at one House, and utter them at another, and commonly barter Slanders by way of Exchange. See this Sin condemned, *Prov.* 11. 13—20. 19. *Jer.* 9. 4, 5. *Ezek.* 22. 9. Or, (2) in Witness-bearing, *Neither shalt thou stand as a Witness against the blood of thy Neighbour*, if his Blood be innocent, nor join in Confederacy with such bloody Men as these described, *Prov.* 1. 11, 12. The Jewish Doctors put this further Sense upon it, Thou shalt not stand by and see thy Brother in Danger, but thou shalt come in to his Relief and Succour, though it be with the Peril of thy own Life or Limb; They add, He that can by his Testimony clear one that is accused, is obliged by this Law to do it, see *Prov.* 24. 11, 12. 7. We are commanded to rebuke our Neighbour in Love, *v.* 17. *Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy Neighbour*. (1) Rather rebuke him than hate him for any Injury done to thyself. If we apprehend that our Neighbour has any way wronged us, we must not conceive a secret Grudge against him, and estrange our selves from him, speaking to him neither bad nor good, as the manner of some is, who have an Art of concealing their Displeasure, till they have an Opportunity of a full Revenge, *2 Sam.* 13. 22. But we must rather give vent to our Resentments with the Meekness of Wisdom, endeavour to convince our Brother of the Injury, reason the Case fairly with him, and so put an End to the Dispute conceived: This is the Rule our Saviour gives in this Case, *Luke* 17. 3. (2) Therefore rebuke him for his Sin against God, because thou lovest him; endeavour to bring him to Repentance that his Sin may be pardon'd, and he may turn from it, and it may not be suffered to lie upon him. *Note*, Friendly Reproof is a Duty we owe to one another, and we ought both to give it and take it in Love. Let the Righteous smite me, it shall be a Kindness, *Psal.* 141. 5. Faithful and useful are these Wounds of a Friend, *Prov.* 27. 5, 6. It is here strictly commanded, *Thou shalt in any wise do it*, and not omit it under any Pretence. Consider, 1. The Guilt we incur by not reproving. 'Tis construed here, *hating* our Brother. We are ready to argue thus, Such a one is a Friend I love, therefore

fore I will not make him uneasy by telling him of his Faults; but we should rather say, therefore I will do him the Kindness to tell him of them. *Love covers Sin* from others, but not from the Sinner himself. 2. The Mischief we do by not reprov- ing; we *suffer Sin upon him*: And must we help the Afs of an Enemy that's fallen under his Burthen, and shall we not help the Soul of a Friend? *Exod. 23. 5.* And by *suffering Sin upon him*, we are in Danger of *bearing Sin for him*, as the Mar- gin reads it. If we reprove not the *unfruitful Works of Dark- ness*, we have Fellowship with them, and become Accessaries *ex post facto*, *Eph. 5. 11.* 'Tis thy Brother, thy Neighbour that is concerned, and he was a Cain that said, *Am I my Brother's Keeper?* 8. We are here required to put off all Malice, and to put on brotherly Love, *v. 18.* (1.) We must be ill-affected to none; *Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any Grudge*, to the same Purpose with that, *v. 17.* *Thou shalt not hate thy Brother in thy Heart*; for Malice is Murder begun. If our Brother has done us an Injury, we must not return it upon him, that's a- venging; we must not upon every Occasion upbraid him with it, that's bearing a Grudge; but we must both forgive it, and forget it, for thus we are forgiven of God. 'Tis a most ill-na- tur'd thing, and the Bane of Friendship, to retain the Reven- ge of Affronts and Injuries, and to let that *Sword devour for ever*. (2.) We must be well-affected to all; *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself*. We often wrong ourselves, but we soon forgive ourselves those Wrongs, and they do not at all lessen our Love to ourselves; and in like manner we should love our Neighbour. Our Saviour hath made this the second great Com- mandment of the Law, *Mat. 22. 39.* And the Apostle shews how it is the Summary of all the Laws of the second Table, *Rom. 13. 9, 10. Gal. 5. 14.* We must love our Neighbour as truly as we love ourselves, and without Dissimulation; we must evidence our Love to our Neighbour in the same way by which we evidence our Love to ourselves, preventing his Hurt, and procuring his Good to the utmost of our Power. We must do to our Neighbour as we would be done to ourselves, *Mat. 7. 12.* putting our Souls into his Souls stead, *Job 16. 4, 5.* Nay, we must in many Cases deny ourselves for the Good of our Neigh- bour, as St. Paul, *1 Cor. 9. 19, &c.* Herein the Gospel goes beyond even the excellent Precept of the Law; for Christ, by laying down his Life for us, hath taught us even to lay down our Lives for the Brethren in some Cases, *1 John 3. 16.* and to love our Neighbour better than ourselves.

19 ¶ Ye shall keep my statutes: Thou shalt not let thy cattel gender with a divers kind: Thou shalt not sow thy field with mingled seed: neither shall a garment mingled of linnen and woollen come upon thee. 20 ¶ And whosoever lieth carnally with a woman that is a bond-maid betrothed to an husband, and not at all redeemed, nor free- dom given her, she shall be scourged: they shall not be put to death, because she was not free. 21 And he shall bring his trespass-offering unto the LORD, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, even a ram for a trespass-offering. 22 And the priest shall make an atonement for him with the ram of the trespass-offering be- fore the LORD, for his sin which he hath done: and the sin which he hath done, shall be forgiven him. 23 ¶ And when ye shall come into the land, and shall have planted all manner of trees for food, then ye shall count the fruit thereof as uncircum- cised: three years shall it be as uncircumcised un- to you; it shall not be eaten of. 24 But in the fourth year all the fruit thereof shall be holy to praise the LORD withal. 25 And in the fifth year shall ye eat of the fruit thereof, that it may yield unto you the increase thereof: I am the LORD your God, 26 ¶ Ye shall not eat any thing with the blood: neither shall ye use enchant- ment, nor observe times, 27 Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard. 28 Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I am the LORD. 29 ¶ Do not prostitute thy daughter, to cause her to be a whore; lest the land fall to whoredom, and the land become full of wickedness.

Here's 1. A Law against Mixtures, *v. 19.* God in the Be- ginning made the Cattle after their kind, *Geni. 1. 25.* and we

must acquiesce in the Order of Nature God hath established, believing that's best and sufficient, and not covet Monsters. Add thou not unto his Works, lest he reprove thee; for it is the Excel- lency of the Work of God, that nothing can, without making it worse, be either put to it, or taken from it, *Eccl. 3. 14.* As what God has joined we must not separate, so what he hath separated we must not join. The sowing of mingled Corn, and the wearing of Linssey-Woolsey Garments are forbidden, either as superstitious Customs of the Heathen, or to intimate, how careful they should be not to mingle themselves with the Hea- then, nor to wave any of the Usages of the Gentiles into God's Ordinances. *Ainsworth* suggests, That 'twas to lead Israel to the Simplicity and Sincerity of Religion, and to all the Parts and Doctrines of the Law and Gospel in their distinct Kinds. As Faith is necessary, Good Works are necessary, but to mingle these together in the Cause of our Justification before God, is forbidden, *Gal. 2. 16.* 2. A Law for the punishing of Adultery committed with one that was a Bond-maid that was espous'd, *v. 20, 21, 22.* If she had not been espoused, the Law appointed no Punishment at all; being espoused, if she had not been a Bond-maid, the Punishment had been no less than Death: But being as yet a Bond-maid, (though before the completing of her Espousals she must have been made free) the Capital Pu- nishment is remitted, and they shall both be scourged; or, as some think, the Woman only, and the Man was to bring a Sacrifice. 'Twas for the Honour of Marriage, though but be- gun by betrothing, that the Crime should be punish'd; but 'twas for the Honour of Freedom that it should not be punish'd so as the debauching of a Free-Woman was; so great was the Dif- ference then made between bond and free, *Gal. 4. 30.* but the Gospel of Christ knows no such Distinction, *Col. 3. 11.* 3. A Law concerning Fruit-Trees, that for the three first Years af- ter they were planted, if they should happen to be so forward as to bear in that time, yet no Use should be made of the Fruit, *v. 23, 24, 25.* It was therefore the Practice of the Jews to pluck off the Fruit as soon as they perceived it knit, from their young Trees, as Gardners do sometimes, because their early bearing hinders their growing. If any did come to Perfection, it was not to be used in the Service either of God or Man; but what they bore the fourth Year was to be holy to the Lord, either given to the Priest, or eaten before the Lord with Joy, as their second Tithe was, and from thenceforward 'twas all their own. Now, (1.) Some think this taught them not to follow the Custom of the Heathen, who they say con- secrated the very first Product of their Fruit-Trees to the Idols, saying, that otherwise all the Fruits would be blasted. (2.) This Law in the Case of Fruit-Trees seems to be parallel with that in the Case of Animals, that no Creature should be accepted as an Offering till it was past eight Days old, nor till that Day were Children to be circumcised; see *Lev. 22. 27.* God would have the first Fruits of their Trees, but because for the three first Years they were as inconsiderable as a Lamb or a Calf un- der eight Days old, therefore God would not have them, for 'tis fit he should have every thing at its best; and yet he would not allow them to use them, because his first Fruits were not as yet offered, they must therefore be accounted as un- circumcised, i. e. as an Animal under eight Days old, not fit for any Use. (3.) We are hereby taught not to be over-hasty in catching at any Comfort, but to be willing with Patience to wait the time for the Enjoyment of it, and particularly to ac- knowledge ourselves unworthy of the Increase of the Earth, our Right to the Fruits of which was forfeited by our first Pa- rents eating forbidden Fruit, and we are restored to it only by the Word of God and Prayer, *1 Tim. 4. 5.* 4. A Law against the superstitious Usages of the Heathen, *v. 26, 27, 28.* 1. Eating upon the Blood, as the Gentiles did, who gathered the Blood of their Sacrifices into a Vessel, for their Demons (as they fancied to drink) and then fate about it, eating the Flesh them- selves, signifying their Communion with Devils, by their Feast- ing with them. Let not this Custom be us'd, for the Blood of God's Sacrifices was to be sprinkled on the Altar, and then pour'd at the Foot of it, and conveyed away. 2. Enchantment and Divination, and a superstitious Observation of times, some Days and Hours lucky, and others unlucky. Curious Arts of this kind 'tis likely had been of late invented by the Egyptian Priests, to amuse the People, and support their own Credit. The Israelites had seen them, practis'd, but must by no Means imitate them. 'Twould be unpardonable in them, to whom were committed the Oracles of God, to ask Counsel of the Devil, and yet worse in Christians; to whom the Son of God is mani- fested, who has destroyed the Works of the Devil. For Christians to have their Nativities cast, and their Fortunes told them, to use Spells and Charms for the Cure of Diseases, and the dri- ving away of Evil Spirits, to be affected with the falling of the Salt, a Hare crossing the Way, Cross-Days, or the like, is an intolerable Affront to the Lord Jesus, a Support of Paganism and Idolatry, and a Reproach both to themselves, and to that worthy Name by which they are called: And they must be grossly ignorant, both of the Law and the Gospel, that ask,

What

What Harm is there in these things? Is it no Harm for those that have Fellowship with Christ, to have Fellowship with Devils, or to learn the ways of those that have? Surely we have not so learned Christ. 3. There was a Superstition even in trimming themselves, used by the Heathen, which must not be imitated by the People of God; *Ye shall not round the Corners of your Heads.* They that worshipped the Hosts of Heaven, in Honour of them cut their Hair, so as that their Heads might resemble the Celestial Globe; but as the Custom was foolish in itself, so being done in Respect to their false Gods, it was idolatrous. 4. The Rites and Ceremonies by which they expressed their Sorrow at their Funerals must not be imitated, v. 18. They must not make Cuts or Prints in their Flesh for the dead, for the Heathen did so to pacify the infernal Deities they dreamt of, and to make them propitious to their deceased Friends. Christ by his Sufferings has altered the Property of Death, and made it a true Friend to every true Israelite; and now as there needs nothing to make Death propitious to us, (for if God be so, Death is so of Course) so we sorrow not as those that have no Hope. Those whom the God of Israel had set apart for himself, must not receive the Image and Superstition of these Dunghil Deities. Lastly, The prostituting of their Daughters to Uncleaness, which is here forbidden, v. 29. Seems to have been practis'd by the Heathen in their Idolatrous Worship, for with such Abominations those unclean Spirits which they worshipp'd were well-pleasing. And when Lewdness obtain'd as a religious Rite, and was committed in their Temples, no marvel that the Land became full of that Wickedness; which, when it enter'd at the Temple Doors, overspread the Land like a mighty Torrent, and bore down all the Fences of Virtue and Modesty. The Devil himself could not have brought such Abominations into their Lives, if he had not first brought them into their Worship. And justly were they given up to vile Affections, who forsook the Holy God, and gave Divine Honours to impure Spirits. Those that dishonour God are thus suffered to dishonour themselves; and their Families.

30 ¶ Ye shall keep my sabbath and reverence my sanctuary: I am the LORD. 31 ¶ Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God. 32 ¶ Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the LORD. 33 ¶ And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your lands, ye shall not vex him. 34 But the stranger that dwelleth with you, shall be unto you as one born amongst you; and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God. 35 ¶ Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in meteyard, in weight, or in measure. 36 Just ballance, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin shall ye have: I am the LORD your God which brought you out of the land of Egypt. 37 Therefore shall ye observe all my statutes, and all my judgments, and do them: I am the LORD.

Here's 1. A Law for preserving of the Honour of the Time and Place appropriated to the Service of God, v. 30. This would be a Means to secure them both from the Idolatries and Superstitions of the Heathen, and from all Immoralities in Conversation. (1.) *Sabbaths* must be religiously observ'd, and not those times mentioned, v. 26. which the Heathen had a superstitious Regard to. (2.) The *Sanctuary* must be revered; great Care must be taken to approach the Tabernacle with that Purity and Preparation which the Law required, and to attend there with that Humility, Decency, and Closeness of Application, which became them in the immediate Presence of such an awful Majesty. Though now there is no Place Holy by Divine Institution, as the Tabernacle and Temple then were, yet this obligeth us to respect the solemn Assemblies of Christians for Religious Worship, as being under a Promise of Christ's special Presence in them, and to carry ourselves with a due Decorum, while in those Assemblies we attend the Administration of Holy Ordinances, Eccles. 5. 1. 2. A Caution against all Communion with Witches, and those that were in League with familiar Spirits; *Regard them not, Seek not after them,* be not in fear of any Evil from them, or in hopes of any Good from them. Regard not their Threatnings or Promises, or Predictions; seek not to them for Discovery or Advice, for if you do you are defiled by it, and rendred abominable both to God and your own Consciences. This was the Sin that completed *Saul's* Wickedness for which he was rejected of God, 1 Chron. 10. 13. 3. A

Charge to young People to shew Respect to the Aged, v. 32. *Thou shalt rise up before the hoary Head.* Age is honourable, and he that is the *Ancient of Days* requires that Honour be paid to it. *The hoary Head is a Crown of Glory.* Those whom God has honoured with the common Blessing of long Life, we ought to honour with the distinguishing Expressions of Civility; and those that in Age are wise and good, are worthy of double Honour: More Respect is owing to such old Men than merely to rise up before them; their Credit and Comfort must be carefully consulted, their Experiences and Observations improv'd, and their Counsels ask'd and hearkened to, Job 32. 6, 7. Some by the old Man, whose Face or Presence is to be honour'd, understand the Elder in Office, as by the *hoary Head* the Elder in Age; both ought to be respected as Fathers, and in the Fear of God, who has put some of his Honour upon both. Note, Religion teacheth Good Manners, and obligeth us to give Honour to those to whom Honour is due. 'Tis an Instance of great Degeneracy and Disorder in a Land, when the Child behaves himself proudly against the Ancient, and the base against the honourable, Isa. 3. 5. Job 30. 1, 12. It becomes the Aged to receive this Honour, and the Younger to give it; for it is the Ornament as well as Duty of their Youth, to Order themselves lowly and reverently to all their betters. 4. A Charge to Israelites to be very tender of Strangers, v. 33, 34. Both the Law of God and his Providence hath vastly dignified Israel above any other People, yet they must not therefore think themselves authorized to trample upon all Mankind, but those of their own Nation, and to insult them at their Pleasure; no, *Thou shalt not vex a Stranger, but love him as thyself,* and as one of thine own People. 'Tis suppos'd that this Stranger was not an Idolater, but a Worshipper of the God of Israel, though not circumcis'd; a Proselyte of the Gate at least, though not a Proselyte of Righteousness: If such a one sojourn'd among them, they must not vex him, not oppress or over-reach him in a Bargain, taking Advantage of his Ignorance of their Laws and Customs: They must reckon it as great a Sin to cheat Strangers, as to cheat an Israelite; nay (say the Jewish Doctors) they must not so much as upbraid him with his being a Stranger, and his having been formerly an Idolater. Strangers are God's particular Care, as Widows and Fatherless are, because it is his Honour to help the Helpless, Psal. 146. 9. 'tis therefore at our Peril if we do them any Wrong, or put any Hardships upon them. Strangers shall be welcome to God's Grace, and therefore we should do what we can to invite them to it, and to recommend Religion to their good Opinion. It argues a generous Disposition, and a pious Regard to God as a common Father, to be kind to Strangers; for those of different Countries, Customs, and Languages, yet are all made of one Blood. But here is a Reason added peculiar to the Jews, for ye were Strangers in the Land of Egypt. God then favour'd you, therefore do you now favour the Strangers; and so do to them as you then wish'd to be done to. You were Strangers, and yet are now thus highly advanced; therefore you know not what those Strangers may come to, whom you are apt to despise. 5. Justice in Weights and Measures is here commanded. That there should be no cheat in them, v. 35. That they should be very exact, v. 36. In weighing and measuring, we pretend a Design to give all those their own whom we deal with; but if the Weights and Measures be false, 'tis like a Corruption in Judgment, it cheats under Colour of Justice; and thus to deceive a Man to his Damage is worse than picking his Pocket, or robbing him on the High-Way. He that sells is bound to give the full of the Commodity, and he that buys the full of the Price agreed upon, which cannot be done without just Balances, Weights, and Measures. Let no Man go beyond or defraud his Brother, for though it be hid from Man, 'twill be found that God is the Avenger of all such.

Lastly, The Chapter concludes with a general Command, v. 37. *Ye shall observe all my Statutes, and do them.* Note, 1. We are not likely to do God's Statutes, unless we observe them, with great Care and Consideration. 2. Yet 'tis not enough barely to observe God's Precepts, but we must make Conscience of obeying them. What will it avail us to be critical in our Notions, if we be not conscientious in our Conversations. 3. An upright Heart hath Respect to all God's Commandments, Psal. 119. 6. Though in many Instances the Hand fails of doing what should be done, yet the Eye observes all God's Statutes. We are not allowed to pick and choose our Duty, but must aim at standing compleat in all the Will of God.

CHAP. XX.

The Laws which before were made, are in this Chapter repeated, and Penalties annex'd to them; that they who would not be deterred from Sin by the Fear of God, might be deterred from it by the Fear of Punishment. If we will not avoid such and such Practices because the Law has made them Sin, (and 'tis most acceptable, when we go upon that Principle of Religion) sure we will avoid them when the Law has made them Death, from a Principle of Self.

June 1 1803

Self-preservation. In this Chapter we have 1. Many particular Crimes that are made Capital, 1. Giving their Children to Moloch, v. 1—5. 2. Consulting Witches, v. 6, 27. 3. Cursing Parents, v. 9. 4. Adultery, v. 10. 5. Incest, v. 11, 12, 14, 17, 19, 20, 21. 6. Unnatural Lusts, v. 13, 15, 17, 18. 2. General Commands given to be holy, v. 7, 8, 22,—26.

1 AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, **2** Again thou shalt say to the children of Israel, Whosoever he be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn in Israel, that giveth any of his seed unto Moloch, he shall surely be put to death: the people of the land shall stone him with stones. **3** And I will set my face against that man, and will cut him off from among his people: because he hath given of his seed unto Moloch, to defile my sanctuary, and to profane my holy name. **4** And if the people of the land do any ways hide their eyes from the man, when he giveth of his seed unto Moloch, and kill him not: **5** Then I will set my face against that man, and against his family, and will cut him off, and all that go a whoring after him, to commit whoredom with Moloch, from among their people. **6** And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and I will cut him off from among his people. **7** Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the LORD your God. **8** And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them: I am the LORD which sanctify you. **9** For every one that curseth his father or his mother, shall be surely put to death: he hath cursed his father or his mother, his blood shall be upon him.

Moses is here directed to say that again to the Children of Israel, which he had in effect said before, v. 2. We are sure it was no vain Repetition, but very necessary, that they might give the more earnest heed to the things that were spoken, and might believe them to be of great consequence, being so oft inculcated. God speaketh once, yea twice, and what he orders to be said again, we must be willing to hear again, because for us it is safe, Phil. 3. 1.

Three Sins are in these Verses threatened with Death.

1. Parents abusing their Children, by sacrificing them to Moloch, v. 2, 3. There is the grossest Absurdity that can be in all Idolatry, and it is a great Reproach to Men's Reason, but none trampled upon all the Honours of the Human Nature so as this did, the burning of their Children in the Fire to the Honour of a Dunghill God. 'Twas a plain Evidence that their Gods were Devils, which desired and delighted in the Misery and Ruin of Mankind, and that the Worshipers were worse than the Beasts that perish, perfectly stript not only of Reason, but of natural Affection. Abraham's offering Isaac could not give Countenance, much less could it give Rise to this barbarous Practice, since tho' that was commanded, it was immediately countermanded. Yet such was the Power of the God of this World over the Children of Disobedience, that this prodigious Piece of Inhumanity was generally practised; and even the Israelites were in danger of being drawn into it, which made it necessary that this severe Law should be made against it. 'Twas not enough to tell them they might spare their Children, the Fruit of their Body should never be accepted for the Sin of their Soul; but they must be told, **1.** That the Criminal himself, should be put to death, as a Murderer, *the People of the Land shall stone him with Stones, v. 2.* which was looked upon as the worst of Capital Punishments among the Jews. If the Children were sacrificed to the Malice of the Devil, the Parents must be sacrificed to the Justice of God. And if either the Fact could not be proved, or the Magistrates did not do their Duty, God would take the Work into his own Hands, *v. 3. I will cut him off.* Note, Those that escape Punishment from Men, yet shall not escape the righteous Judgments of God; so wretchedly do they deceive themselves, that promise themselves Impunity in Sin. How can they escape against whom God sets his Face? i. e. whom he frowns upon, meets as an Enemy, and fights against? The Heinousness of the Crime is here set forth to justify the Doom, it defiles the Sanctuary, and profanes the holy Name of God, for the Honour of both which he is jealous. Observe, The Magnitude of the Sin is laid upon that in it, which was peculiar to Israel; when the Gentiles sacrificed their Children, they

were guilty of Murder and Idolatry; but if Israelites did it, they incurred the additional Guilt of defiling the Sanctuary, which they attended upon, even when they lay under this Guilt, as if there might be an Agreement between the Temple of God and Idols; and of profaning the holy Name of God, by which they were called, as if he allowed his Worshipers to do such things, *Rom. 2. 23, 24.* **2.** That all his Aiders and Abettors should be cut off likewise by the righteous Hand of God. If his Neighbours concealed him, and would not come in as Witnesses against him; if the Magistrates conniv'd at him, and would not pass Sentence upon him, rather pitying his Folly than hating his Impiety, God himself would reckon with them; *v. 4, 5.* Misprision of Idolatry is a Crime confutable in the Court of Heaven, and which shall not go unpunished; *I will set my Face against that Man.* (that Magistrate, *Jer. 5. 1.*) and against his Family. Note, **1.** The Wickedness of the Master of a Family often brings Ruin upon a Family; and he that should be the House-keeper, proves the House-breaker. **2.** If Magistrates will not do Justice upon Offenders, God will do Justice upon them; because there is danger that many will go a whoring after them, that do but countenance Sin, by winking at it; and if the Sins of Leaders be leading Sins, 'tis fit their Punishments should be exemplary Punishments.

2. Childrens abusing their Parents, by cursing them, *v. 9.* If Children either speak ill of their Parents, or wish ill to them; or carry it scornfully or spitefully towards them, 'twas an Iniquity to be punished by the Judges, who were employed as Conservators both of God's Honour and of the Publick Peace, which were both attempted by this unnatural Insolence; see *Prov. 30. 17. The Eye that mocks at his Father, the Ravens of the Valley shall pick it out;* which intimates, that such wicked Children were in a fair way to be not only hang'd, but hang'd in Chains. This Law of Moses Christ quotes and confirms, *Mat. 15. 4.* for it is as direct a Breach of the fifth Commandment as wilful Murder is of the sixth. The same Law, which requires Parents to be tender of their Children, requires Children to be respectful to their Parents. He that despitefully useth his Parents, the Instruments of his Being, flies in the Face of God himself, the Author of his Being, who will not see the Paternal Dignity and Authority insulted and trampled upon.

3. Persons abusing themselves, by consulting such as have familiar Spirits, *v. 6.* By this, as much as any thing, a Man doth diminish, disparage, and deceive himself, and so abuse himself. What greater Madness can there be than for a Man to go to a Liar for Information, and to an Enemy for Advice? They do so, who turn after those that deal in the Black Art, and know the Depths of Satan. This is spiritual Adultery as much as Idolatry is, giving that Honour to the Devil which is due to God only; and the jealous God will give a Bill of Divorce to those that thus go a whoring from him, and will cut them off, they having first cut themselves off from him.

In the midst of these particular Laws comes in that general Charge, *v. 7, 8.* where we have, **1.** The Duties required; and they are two. **1.** That in our Principles, Affections and Aims we be holy; Sanctify yourselves, and be ye holy. We must cleanse ourselves from all the Pollutions of Sin, consecrate ourselves to the Service and Honour of God, and conform ourselves in every thing to his holy Will and Image; this is to sanctify ourselves. **2.** That in all our Actions, and in the whole Course of our Conversation, we be obedient to the Laws of God; *Ye shall keep my Statutes.* By this only we can make it to appear that we have sanctified ourselves, and are holy, even by our keeping God's Commandments; *the Tree is known by its Fruit.* Nor can we keep God's Statutes as we ought, unless we first sanctify ourselves, and be holy. Make the Tree good, and the Fruit will be good. **2.** The Reasons to enforce these Duties. **1.** I am the Lord your God. Therefore be holy, that you may resemble him whose People you are, and may be pleasing to him. Holiness becomes his House and Household. **2.** I am the Lord which sanctify you. God sanctified them by peculiar Privileges, Laws, and Favours, which distinguish'd them from all other Nations, and dignified them as a People set apart for God. He gave them his Word and Ordinances to be Means of their Sanctification, and his good Spirit to instruct them, therefore they must be holy, else they received the Grace of God herein in vain. Note, **1.** God's People are and must be Persons of Distinction. God has distinguished them by his holy Covenant, and therefore they ought to distinguish themselves by their holy Conversations. **2.** God's sanctifying us is a good reason why we should sanctify ourselves, that we may comply with the Designs of his Grace, and not walk contrary to them. If it be the Lord that sanctifies us, we may hope the Work shall be done, tho' it be difficult; the manner of Expression is like that *2 Cor. 5. 5.* He that hath wrought us to the self same thing is God. And his Grace is so far from superseding our Care and Endeavour, that it doth most strongly engage and encourage it. Work out your Salvation; for it is God that worketh in you.

10 ¶ And the man that committeth adultery with another mans wife: even he that committeth adultery with his neighbours wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.

11 And the man that lieth with his fathers wife, hath uncovered his fathers nakedness: both of them shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them. 12 And if a man lie with his daughter-in-law, both of them shall surely be put to death: they have wrought confusion: their blood shall be upon them. 13 If a man also lie with mankind as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination, they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them. 14 And if a man take a wife and her mother, it is wickedness: they shall be burnt with fire, both he and they, that there be no wickedness among you. 15 And if a man lie with a beast, he shall surely be put to death: and ye shall slay the beast. 16 And if a woman approach unto any beast, and lie down thereto, thou shalt kill the woman and the beast: they shall surely be put to death, their blood shall be upon them. 17 And if a man shall take his sister, his fathers daughter, or his mothers daughter, and see her nakedness, and she see his nakedness, it is a wicked thing, and they shall be cut off in the sight of their people: he hath uncovered his sisters nakedness, he shall bear his iniquity. 18 And if a man shall lie with a woman having her sickness, and shall uncover her nakedness; he hath discovered the fountain of her blood: and she hath uncovered the fountain of her blood: and both of them shall be cut off from among their people. 19 And thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy mothers sister, nor of thy fathers sister: for he uncovereth his near kin: they shall bear their iniquity. 20 And if a man shall lie with his uncles wife, he hath uncovered his uncles nakedness: they shall bear their sin, they shall die childless. 21 And if a man shall take his brothers wife, it is an unclean thing: he hath uncovered his brothers nakedness, they shall be childless.

Sins against the seventh Commandment are here ordered to be severely punished. These are Sins which, of all other, Fools are most apt to make a Mock at; but God would teach those the Heinousness of the Guilt by the Extremity of the Punishment that would not otherwise be taught it.

1. Lying with another Man's Wife was made a capital Crime; the Adulterer and the Adulteress that had join'd in the Sin, must fall alike under the Sentence, they shall both be put to Death, v. 10. Long before this, even in Job's Time, this was reputed a heinous Crime, and an Iniquity to be punished by the Judges, Job 31. 11. It is a presumptuous Contempt of an Ordinance of God, and a Violation of his Covenant, Prov. 2. 17. It is an irreparable Wrong to the injured Husband, and debaucheth the Mind and Conscience of both the Offenders themselves as much as any thing. 'Tis a Sin which headstrong and unbridled Lusts hurry men violently to, and therefore it needs such a powerful Restraint as this: 'Tis a Sin which defiles a Land, and brings down God's Judgments upon it, which disquiets Families, and tends to the Ruin of all Virtue, and Religion, and therefore is fit to be animadverted upon by the Conservators of the Publick Peace. But see John 8. 11.

2. Incestuous Copulations, whether by Marriage or not.

(1.) Some of them were to be punished with Death, as a Man's lying with his Father's Wife, v. 11. Reuben had been put to death for his Crime, Gen. 35. 22. if this Law had been then made. 'Twas the Sin of the incestuous Corinthian, for which he was to be delivered unto Satan, 1 Cor. 5. 1, 5. A Man's debauching his Daughter-in-law, or his Mother-in-law, or his Sister, was likewise to be punished with Death, v. 12, 14, 17.

(2.) Others of them God would punish with the Curse of Barrenness, as a Man's defiling his Aunt, or his Brother's Wife, v. 19, 20, 21. they shall die Childless. Those that keep not within the divine Rules of Marriage, forfeit the Blessings of Marriage; they shall commit Whoredom, and shall not increase, Hos. 4. 10. nay, it is said, they shall bear their Iniquity, i. e. tho' they be not immediately cut off by the Hand either of God

or Man for this Sin, yet the Guilt of it shall lie upon them, to be reckoned for another Day, and not to be purged with Sacrifice or Offering.

3. The unnatural Lusts of Sodomy and Bestiality (Sins not to be mentioned without Horror) were to be punished with Death, as they are at this Day by our Law, v. 13, 15, 16. Even the Beast that was thus abused was to be killed with the Sinner, who was thereby openly put to the greater Shame. And the Villany was thus represented, as in the highest degree execrable and abominable, all Occasions of the remembrance or mention of it being to be taken away. Even the unreasonable Use of the Marriage-Bed, if presumptuous, and in Contempt of the Law, would expose the Offenders to the just Judgment of God, they shall be cut off, v. 18. For this is the Will of God, that every Man should possess his Vessel (and the Wife is called the weaker Vessel) in Sanctification and Honour, as becomes Saints.

22 ¶ Ye shall therefore keep all my statutes, and all my judgments, and do them, that the land whither I bring you to dwell therein, spue you not out. 23 And ye shall not walk in the manners of the nation which I cast out before you: for they committed all these things, and therefore I abhorred them. 24 But I have said unto you, Ye shall inherit their land, and I will give it unto you to possess it, a land that floweth with milk and honey: I am the LORD your God which have separated you from other people. 25 Ye shall therefore put difference between clean beasts and unclean, and between unclean fowls and clean: and ye shall not make your souls abominable by beast or by fowl, or by any manner of living thing that creepeth on the ground, which I have separated from you as unclean. 26 And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine. 27 ¶ A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them.

The last Verse is a particular Law, which comes in after the general Conclusion, as if omitted in its proper place; 'tis for the putting of those to death that dealt with familiar Spirits, v. 27. It would be a great Affront to God, and to his lively Oracles, a Scandal to the Country, and a Temptation to ignorant ill People to consult them, if such were known, and suffered to live among them. They that are in League with the Devil, have in effect made a Covenant with Death, and an Agreement with Hell, and so shall their Doom be.

The rest of these Verses repeat and inculcate what had been said before, for to that unthinking forgetful People 'twas requisite there should be Line upon Line; and that general Rules with their Reasons should be frequently insisted on, for the Enforcement of particular Laws, and making them more effectual. Three things are here minded of.

1. Their Dignity. (1.) They had the Lord for their God, v. 24. They were his, his Care, his Choice, his Treasure, his Jewels, his Kingdom of Priests, v. 26. that ye should be mine. Happy the People, and truly great, that is in such a Case. (2.) Their God was a holy God, v. 26. infinitely advanced above all others: His Holiness is his Glory, and it was their Honour to be related to him, while their Neighbours were the infamous Worshipers of impure and filthy Spirits. (3.) The great God had separated them from other People, v. 24. And again, v. 26. Other Nations were the Common, they were the Inclosure, beautified and enriched with peculiar Privileges, and designed for peculiar Honours; let them therefore value themselves accordingly, preserve their Honour, and not lay it in the Dust, by walking in the way of the Heathen.

2. Their Duty, this is inferred from their Dignity: God had done more for them than for others, and therefore expected more from them than from others. And what is it that the Lord their God requires in consideration of the great things done and designed? (1.) Ye shall keep all my Statutes, v. 22. and all the reason in the World they should, for the Statutes were their Honour, and Obedience to them would be their lasting Comfort. (2.) Ye shall not walk in the Manners of the Nations, v. 23. Being separated from them, they must not associate with them, nor learn their Way. The Manners of the Nations were ill enough in them; but would be much worse in God's People. (3.) Ye shall put difference between Clean and Unclean, v. 25. This is Holiness to discern between Things that

that differ, not to live at large, as if we might say and do any thing, but to speak and act with Caution. (4.) *Ye shall make your Souls abominable*, v. 25. Our constant Care must be to preserve the Honour, by preserving the Purity of our own Souls, and never to do any thing to make them *abominable* to God, and to our own Consciences.

3. Their Danger. (1.) They were going into an infected Place, v. 24. *Ye shall inherit their Land*. A Land flowing indeed with Milk and Honey, which they would have the Comfort of, if they kept their Integrity; but wital, it was a Land full of Idols, Idolatries, and superstitious Usages, which they would be apt to fall in Love with, having brought from Egypt with them a strange Disposition to take that Infection: (2.) If they took the Infection, 'twould be of pernicious Consequence to them. The Canaanites were to be expelled for these very Sins, *they committed all these things and therefore I abhorred them*, v. 23. See what an evil Thing Sin is, it provokes God to *abhor* his own Creatures, whereas otherwise he delights in the Work of his Hands. And if the Israelites trod in the Steps of their Impiety, they must expect that the Land would *spue them out* too, v. 22, as he had told them before, chap. 18. 28. If God spared not the natural Branches, but broke them off, neither would he spare these who were grafted in if they degenerated. Thus the Rejection of the Jews stands for a Warning to all Christian Churches to take heed lest the Kingdom of God be taken from them. Those that sin like others must expect to smart like them, and their Profession of Relation to God will be no Security to them.

CHAP. XXI.

This Chapter might borrow its Title from Mal. 2. 1. And now O ye Priests this Commandment is for you. *'Tis a Law obliging Priests with the utmost Care and Jealousy, to preserve the Dignity of their Priesthood*. 1. The Inferior Priests are here charged both concerning their Mourning, and concerning their Marriages, and their Children, v. 1.—9. 2. The High Priest is restrained more than any of them, v. 10.—15. 3. Neither the one nor the other must have any Blemish, v. 16.—24.

AND the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto the priests the sons of Aaron, and say unto them, There shall none be defiled for the dead among his people. 2 But for his kin, that is near unto him, *that is*, for his mother, and for his father, and for his son, and for his daughter, and for his brother. 3 And for his sister a virgin, that is nigh unto him, which hath had no husband: for her may he be defiled. 4 But he shall not defile himself, *being* a chief man among his people, to profane himself. 5 They shall not make baldness upon their head, neither shall they shave off the corner of their beard, nor make any cuttings in their flesh. 6 They shall be holy unto their God, and not profane the name of their God: for the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and the bread of their God they do offer: therefore they shall be holy. 7 They shall not take a wife that is a whore, or profane; neither shall they take a woman put away from her husband: for he is holy unto his God. 8 Thou shalt sanctify him therefore, for he offereth the bread of thy God: he shall be holy unto thee: for I the LORD which sanctify you, am holy. 9 And the daughter of any priest, if she profane herself by playing the whore, she profaneth her father: she shall be burnt with fire.

It was before appointed that the Priests should teach the People the Statutes God has given concerning the Difference between clean and unclean, chap. 10. 10, 11. Now here it is provided that they should observe themselves what they were to teach the People. Note, They whose Office it is to instruct must do it by Example as well as Precept, 1 Tim. 4. 12. The Priests were to draw nearer to God than any of the People, and to be more intimately conversant with sacred Things, and therefore 'twas required of them that they should keep at a greater Distance than others from every thing that was defiling, and might diminish the Honour of their Priesthood.

1. They must take Care not to disparage themselves in their Mourning for the dead. All that mourn'd for the dead were supposed to come near the Body, if not to touch it: And the Jews say, it made a Man Ceremonially unclean to come within six

Foot of a dead Corps; nay, 'tis declared, *Numb. 19. 14.* That all that come in the Tent where the dead Body lies shall be unclean seven Days. Therefore all the Mourners that attended the Funeral could not but defile themselves; so as not to be fit to come into the Sanctuary of seven Days: For this Reason 'tis ordered.

(1.) That the Priests should never put themselves under this Incapacity of coming into the Sanctuary, unless it were for one of their nearest Relations, v. 1, 2, 3. He was permitted to do it for a Parent or a Child, for a Brother, or an unmarried Sister, and therefore no doubt (though not mentioned) for the Wife of his Bosom; for *Ezekiel* a Priest had mourned for his Wife, if he had not been particularly prohibited, *Ezek. 24. 17.* By this Allowance God put an Honour upon Natural Affection, and favoured it so far, as to dispense with the Attendance of his Servants for seven Days, while they indulg'd themselves in their Sorrow for the Death of their dear Relations, but longer than so weeping must not hinder sowing, nor their Affection to their Relations take them off from the Service of the Sanctuary. Nor was it at all allowed for the Death of any other, no not of a chief Man among the People, as some read it, v. 4. They must not defile themselves, no not for the High Priest himself, unless thus a Kin to them. Though there is a Friend that is nearer than a Brother, yet the Priests must not pay this Respect to the best Friend they had but a Relation, lest if it were allowed for one, others would expect it; and so they should be frequently taken off from their Work. And 'tis hereby intimated, That there is a particular Affection to be reserved for those that are thus akin to us; and when any such are removed by Death, we ought to be affected with it, and lay it to Heart, as the near Approach of Death to ourselves, and an Alarm to us to prepare to follow.

(2.) That they must not be extravagant in the Expressions of their Mourning, no not for their dearest Relations, v. 5. Their Mourning must not be either; (1.) Superstitious, according to the Manner of the Heathen, who cut off their Hair; and let out their Blood, in Honour of the imaginary Deities, which presided (they thought) in the Congregation of the Dead, that they might engage them to be propitious to their departed Friends. Even the superstitious Rites used of old at Funerals, are an Indication of the ancient Belief of the immortality of the Soul, and its Existence in a separate State: And though the Rites themselves were forbidden by the Divine Law, because they were performed to false Gods, yet the decent Respect which Nature teaches, and the Law allows to be paid to the Remains of our deceased Friends, shews, that we are not to look upon them as lost. Nor, (2.) must it be passionate or immoderate. Note, God's Ministers must be Examples to others of Patience under Afflictions, particularly that which toucheth in a very tender Part, the Death of their near Relations. They are suppos'd to know more than others of the Reasons why we must not sorrow as those that have no Hope, 1 Thes. 4. 13. and therefore they ought to be eminently calm and composed, that they may be able to comfort others with the same Comforts wherewith they are themselves comforted of God. The People were forbidden thus to mourn for the Dead, chap. 19. 27, 28. and what was unlawful to them was much more unlawful to the Priest. The Reason given for their peculiar Care not to defile themselves we have, v. 6. *because they offered the Bread of their God, even the Offerings of the Lord made by Fire*, which were the Provisions of God's House and Table. They are highly honoured, and therefore must not stain their Honour, by making themselves Slaves to their Passions; They are continually employed in Sacred Service, and therefore must not be either diverted from or dispirited for the Services they were called to. If they pollute themselves, they profane the Name of their God on whom they attend: If the Servants be rude and of ill Behaviour, 'tis a Reflection upon the Master, as if he kept a loose and disorderly House. Note, All that either offer or eat the Bread of our God, must be Holy in all Manner of Conversation, or else they profane that Name which they pretend to sanctify.

2. They must take Care not to disparage themselves in their Marriage, v. 7. A Priest must not marry a Woman of ill Fame, that either had been guilty or was suspected to have been guilty of Uncleanness. He must not only not marry a Whore, though never so great a Penitent for her former Whoredoms, but he must not marry one that was profane, i. e. of a light Carriage or indecent Behaviour. Nay, he must not marry one that was divorced, because there was Reason to think it was for some Fault she was divorced. The Priests were forbidden to undervalue themselves by such Marriages as these, which were allowed to others, (1.) lest it should bring a present Reproach upon their Ministry, burden the profane in their Profaneness, and grieve the Hearts of serious People: The New Testament gives Laws to Ministers Wives, 1 Tim. 3. 11. that they be grave and sober, that the Ministry be not blamed. (2.) Lest it should entail a Reproach upon their Families, for the Work and Honour of the Priesthood was to descend as an Inheritance to their Children after them. Those do not consult the Good of their Posterity as they ought, who do not take Care to mar-

ry those that are of good Report and Character. He that would seek a godly Seed, (as the Expression is, *Mal. 2. 15.*) must first seek a godly Wife, and take heed of a Corruption of Blood.

'Tis added here, *v. 8.* *Thou shalt sanctify him, and he shall be holy unto thee.* Not only thou O Moses, by taking Care that these Laws be observ'd, but thou O Israel, by all Endeavours possible to keep up the Reputation of the Priesthood, which the Priests themselves must do nothing to expose or forfeit. He is holy to his God, *v. 7.* therefore he shall be holy unto thee. Note, We must honour those whom our God puts Honour upon. Gospel Ministers by this Rule are to be esteemed very highly in Love for their Work's Sake, *1 Thes. 5. 13.* and every Christian must look upon himself as concern'd to be the Guardian of their Honour.

3. Their Children must be afraid of doing any thing to disparage them, *v. 9.* *If the Daughter of any Priest play the Whore, her Crime is great; she not only polluteth but profaneth herself: Other Women have not that Honour to lose that she hath; who, as one of a Priest's Family, hath eaten of the Holy Things, and is supposed to have been better educated than others. Nay, she profaneth her Father, he is reflected upon, and every Body will be ready to ask; Why did not he teach her better? And the Sinners in Sion will insult and say, Here's your Priest's Daughter: Her Punishment therefore must be peculiar, She shall be burnt with Fire, for Terror to all Priest's Daughters, Note, The Children of Ministers ought of all others to take heed of doing any thing that is scandalous, because in them it is doubly scandalous, and will be punish'd accordingly by him whose Name is jealous.*

10 And he that is the high priest among his brethren, upon whose head the anointing oyl was poured, and that is consecrated to put on the garments, shall not uncover his head, nor rent his clothes. 11 Neither shall he go in to any dead body, not defile himself for his father or for his mother. 12 Neither shall he go out of the sanctuary, nor profane the sanctuary of his God; for the crown of the anointing oyl of his God is upon him: I am the LORD. 13 And he shall take a wife in her virginity. 14 A widow, or a divorced woman, or profane, or an harlot, these shall he not take: but he shall take a virgin of his own people to wife. 15 Neither shall he profane his seed among his people: for I the LORD do sanctify him.

More was expected from a Priest than from other People, but more from the High Priest than from other Priests, because upon his Head the anointing Oil was poured, and he was consecrated to put on the Garments, *v. 10.* both which were typical of the anointing and adorning of the Lord Jesus, with all the Gifts and Graces of the Holy Spirit, which he received without measure. 'Tis called the Crown of the anointing Oil of his God, *v. 12.* for the Anointing of the Spirit is to all that have it a Crown of Glory, and a Diadem of Beauty. The High Priest being thus dignified.

1. He must not defile himself at all for the Dead, no not for his nearest Relations, his Father or his Mother, much less his Child or Brother, *v. 11.* (1.) He must not use the common Expressions of Sorrow on those Occasions, such as uncovering his Head, and rending his Clothes, *v. 10.* so perfectly unconcerned must he shew himself in all the Crosses and Comforts of this Life; Even his natural Affection must be swallowed up in Compassion to the Ignorant, and a Feeling of their Infirmities, and a tender Concern for the Household of God, which he was made the Ruler of. Thus being the Holy One that was intrusted with the Thummim and the Urim, he must not know Father or Mother, *Deut. 33. 8, 9.* (2.) He must not go in to any dead Body, *v. 11.* If any of the inferior Priests were under a Ceremonial Pollution, there were other Priests that might supply their Places, but if the High Priest were defiled there would be a greater misfortune. And the forbidding of him to go to any House of Mourning, or attend any Funeral, would be an Indication to the People of the Greatness of that Dignity to which he was advanced. Our Lord Jesus, the great High Priest of our Profession, touch'd the dead Body of Jarius's Daughter, the Bier of the Widow's Son, and the Grave of Lazarus; to shew that he came to alter the Property of Death, and to take off the Terror of it, by breaking the Power of it. Now it cannot destroy, it doth not defile. (3.) He must not go out of the Sanctuary, *v. 12.* i. e. Whenever he was attending or officiating in the Sanctuary, where usually he tarried in his own Apartment all Day, he must not go out upon any Occasion whatsoever; nor cut short his Attendance on the

Living God, no not to pay his last Respects to a dying Relation. 'Twas a Profanation of the Sanctuary to leave it so long as his Presence was requisite there, upon any such Occasion; for thereby he preferred some other Business before the Service of God, and the Business of his Profession, to which he ought to make every thing else truckle. Thus our Lord Jesus would not leave off preaching to go speak with his Mother and Brethren, *Mat. 12. 48.*

3. He might not marry a Widow, (as other Priests might) much less one divorced, or a Harlot, *v. 13, 14.* The Reason of this was to put a Difference between him and other Priests in this Matter; and (as some suggest) that he might be a Type of Christ, to whom the Church was to be presented a chaste Virgin, *2 Cor. 11. 12.* see *Ezek. 44. 22.* Christ must have our first Love, our pure Love, our insire Love; thus the Virgins love thee, *Cant. 1. 3.* and such only are fit to follow the Lamb, *Rev. 14. 4.*

3. He might not profane his Seed among his People, *v. 15.* Some understand it as forbidding him to marry any of an inferior Rank, which would be a Disparagement to his Family. Jehoiada indeed married out of his own Tribe, but then it was in the Royal Family, *2 Chron. 22. 11.* This was not to teach him to be proud, but to teach him to be pure, and to do nothing unbecoming his Office, and that worthy Name by which he was called. Or it may be a Caution to him in disposing of his Children: He must not profane his Seed, by marrying them unsuitably. Ministers Children are profaned, if they be unequally yoked with Unbelievers.

16 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 17 Speak unto Aaron, saying, Whosoever he be of thy seed in their generations, that hath any blemish, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God: 18 For whatsoever man he be that hath a blemish, he shall not approach: a blind man, or a lame, or he that hath a flat nose, or any thing superfluous. 19 Or a man that is broken-footed, or broken-handed. 20 Or crook-backed, or a dwarf, or that hath a blemish in his eye, or be scurvy, or scabbed, or hath his stones broken. 21 No man that hath a blemish of the seed of Aaron the priest shall come nigh to offer the offerings of the LORD made by fire: he hath a blemish: he shall not come nigh to offer the bread of his God. 22 He shall eat the bread of his God, both of the most holy, and of the holy. 23 Only he shall not go in unto the vail, nor come nigh unto the altar, because he hath a blemish, that he profane not my sanctuaries: for I the LORD do sanctify them. 24 And Moses told it unto Aaron, and to his sons, and unto all the children of Israel.

The Priesthood being confin'd to one particular Family, and entail'd upon all the Issue-Male of that Family throughout their Generations, 'twas very likely that some or other in After-Ages that were born to the Priesthood would have natural Blemishes and Deformities: The Honour of the Priesthood would not secure them from any of these Calamities which are common to Men. Divers Blemishes are here instanced in; some that were ordinarily for Life, as Blindness, others that might be for a time, as a Scurf or Scab, and when they were gone, the Disability ceased.

Now the Law concerning Priests that had Blemishes, was, 1. That they might live upon the Altar, *v. 22.* He shall eat of the Sacrifices with the other Priests; even the most holy things, such as the Shew-Bread, and the Sin-Offerings, as well as the Holy Things, such as the Tithes and First-Fruits, and the Priest's Share of the Peace-Offerings. The Blemishes were such as they could not help, and therefore though they might not work, yet they must not starve. Note, None must be abus'd for their Natural Infirmities. Even the deformed Child in the Family must have its Child's Part.

2. Yet they must not serve at the Altar, at either of the Altars, nor be admitted to attend or assist the other Priests in offering Sacrifices, or burning Incense, *v. 17. 21, 22.* Great Men choose to have such Servants about them as are feebly, and therefore 'twas fit the Great God should have such in his House, then when he was pleas'd to manifest his Glory in external Indications of it. But it was especially requisite that comely Men should be chosen to minister about holy Things for the Sake of the People, who were apt to judge according to outward Appearance; and to think meanly of the Service, how honourable soever it was made by the Divine Institution, if those

those that performed it look'd despicably, or went about it awkwardly. This Provision God made for the preserving of the Reputation of his Altar, that it might not at any time fall under Contempt. 'Twas for the Credit of the Sanctuary that none should appear there that were any way disfigured, either by Nature or Accident.

Now under the Gospel, 1. Those that labour under any such Blemishes as these, have reason to thank God that they are not thereby excluded from offering spiritual sacrifices to God; nor, if otherwise qualified for it, from the Office of the Ministry. There's many a healthful beautiful Soul lodg'd in a crazy deformed Body. 2. We ought to infer from hence, how incapable those are to serve God acceptably, whose Minds are blemish'd and deform'd by any reigning Vice. Those are unworthy to be called Christians, and unfit to be employed as Ministers, that are spiritually blind, and lame, and crooked, whose Sins render them scandalous and deformed, so as that the Offerings of the Lord are abhorred for their Sakes. The Deformities of Hophni and Phinehas were worse than any of the Blemishes here mentioned. Let such therefore who are openly vicious be, as polluted, put from the Priesthood; and let all that are made to our God spiritual Priests, be before him holy, and without Blemish; and comfort themselves with this, that tho' in this imperfect State they have Spots, that are the Spots of God's Children, yet they shall shortly appear before the Throne of God without Spot or Wrinkle, or any such thing.

CHAP. XXII.

In this Chapter we have divers Laws concerning the Priests and Sacrifices, all for the preserving of the Honour of the Sanctuary.

1. That the Priests should not eat of the holy Things in their Uncleanness, v. 1.—9. 2. That no Stranger that did not belong to some Family of the Priests should eat of the holy Things, v. 10.—13. and if he did it unwittingly he must make Restitution, v. 14.—16. 3. That the Sacrifices that were offered must be without Blemish, v. 17.—25. 4. That they must be more than eight Days old, v. 26.—28. And that the Sacrifices of Thanksgiving must be eaten the same Day they were offered, v. 29.—33.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Speak unto Aaron, and to his sons, that they separate themselves from the holy things of the children of Israel, and that they profane not my holy name, in those things which they hallow unto me: I am the LORD. 3 Say unto them, Whosoever he be of all your seed, among your generations, that goeth unto the holy things which the children of Israel hallow unto the LORD, having his uncleanness upon him, that soul shall be cut off from my presence: I am the LORD. 4 What man soever of the seed of Aaron is a leper, or hath a running issue, he shall not eat of the holy things until he be clean. And whoso toucheth any thing that is unclean by the dead, or a man whose seed goeth from him: 5 Or whosoever toucheth any creeping thing, whereby he may be made unclean, or a man of whom he may take uncleanness, whatsoever uncleanness he hath: 6 The soul which hath touched any such shall be unclean until even, and shall not eat of the holy things, unless he wash his flesh with water. 7 And when the sun is down he shall be clean, and shall afterward eat of the holy things, because it is his food. 8 That which dieth of itself, or is torn with beasts, he shall not eat to defile himself therewith: I am the LORD. 9 They shall therefore keep mine ordinance, lest they bear sin for it, and die therefore, if they profane it: I the LORD do sanctify them.

Those that had a natural Blemish, tho' they were forbidden to do the Priest's Work, yet they were allowed to eat of the holy things; and the Jewish Writers say, that to keep them from Idleness they were employed in the Wood-room, to pick out that which was worm-eaten, that it might not be used in the Fire upon the Altar: they might also be employed in the Judgment of Leprosy: But those that were under any Ceremonial Uncleanness, which possibly they contracted by their own Fault, might not so much as eat of the holy things while they continued in their Pollution. 1. Some Pollutions were permanent, as a Leprosy, or a running Issue, v. 4. these separated the People from the Sanctuary, and God would shew that they

were so far from being more excusable, that really they were more abominable in a Priest. 2. Others were more transient, as the touching of a dead Body, or any thing else that was unclean, from which after a certain time a Man was cleansed by bathing his Flesh in Water, v. 6. But whoever was thus defiled might not eat of the holy things, under Pain of God's highest Displeasure, who hath said it and ratified it, that Soul shall be cut off from my Presence, v. 3. Our being in the Presence of God, and attending upon him, will be so far from securing us, that it will but the more expose us to God's Wrath, if we dare to draw nigh to him in our Uncleanness. The Destruction shall come from the Presence of the Lord, 2 Thess. 1. 9. as the Fire by which Nadab and Abihu died came from before the Lord. Thus they who profane the holy Word of God, will be cut off by that Word they make so light of; it shall condemn them. They are again warned of their Danger if they eat of the holy Things in their Uncleanness, v. 9. lest they bear Sin, and die therefore. Note, 1. Those contract great Guilt that profane sacred Things, by touching them with unhallowed Hands. Eating the holy Things signified an Interest in the Atonement, but if they eat of them in their Uncleanness, they were so far from lessening their Guilt, that they increased it; they shall bear Sin. 2. Sin is a Burthen, that, if infinite Mercy prevent not, will certainly sink those that bear it; they shall die therefore. Even Priests may be ruined by their Pollutions and Presumptions.

Now, 1. This obliged the Priests carefully to preserve their Purity, and to dread every thing that would defile them. The holy Things were their Livelihood; if they might not eat of them, how must they subsist? The more we have to lose of Comfort and Honour by our Defilement, the more careful we should be to preserve our Purity. 2. This possessed the People with a Reverence for the holy Things, when they saw the Priests themselves separated from them (as the Expression is, v. 2.) so long as they were in their Uncleanness. He is doubtless a God of infinite Purity, who kept his immediate Attendants under so strict a Discipline. 3. This teaches us carefully to watch against all Moral Pollutions, because by them we are distressed to receive the Comfort of God's Sanctuary. Tho' we labour not under habitual Deformities, yet actual Defilements deprive us of the Pleasure of Communion with God; and therefore he that is washed needeth to wash his Feet, John 13. 10. to wash his Hands, and so to compass the Altar, Psal. 26. 6. Herein we have need to be jealous over ourselves, lest (as it is observably expressed here) we profane God's holy Name in those things which we hallow unto him, v. 2. If we affront God in those very Performances wherein we pretend to honour him, and provoke him instead of pleasing him, we shall make up but an ill Account shortly; yet thus we do if we profane God's Name, by doing that in our Uncleanness which pretends to be hallowed to him.

10 There shall no stranger eat of the holy thing: a sojourner of the priests, or an hired servant, shall not eat of the holy thing. 11 But if the priest buy any soul with his money, he shall eat of it, and he that is born in his house: they shall eat of his meat. 12 If the priests daughter also be married unto a stranger, she may not eat of an offering of the holy things. 13 But if the priests daughter be a widow, or divorced, and have no child, and is returned unto her fathers house, as in her youth, she shall eat of her fathers meat, but there shall no stranger eat thereof. 14 And if a man eat of the holy thing unwittingly, then he shall put the fifth part thereof unto it, and shall give it unto the priest, with the holy thing. 15 And they shall not profane the holy things of the children of Israel, which they offer unto the LORD: 16 Or suffer them to bear the iniquity of trespass, when they eat their holy things: for I the LORD do sanctify them.

The holy Things were to be eaten by the Priests and their Families. Now, 1. Here's a Law that no Stranger should eat of them, that is, no Person whatsoever but the Priests only, and those that pertained to them, v. 10. The Priests are charged with this Care, not to profane the holy Things, by permitting Strangers to eat of them, v. 14. or suffer them to bear the iniquity of Trespass, v. 16. i. e. suffer them to bring Guilt upon themselves, by meddling with that which they have no Right to. Thus it is commonly understood. Note, We must not only be careful that we do not bear Iniquity ourselves; but we must do what we can to prevent others bearing it. We must not only not suffer Sin to lie upon our Brother, but if we can help it, we must not suffer it to come upon him. But perhaps there is another Meaning of those Words: The Priests

eating of the Sin-Offerings is said to signify their bearing the Iniquity of the Congregation, to make Atonement for them, chap. 10. 17. Let not a Stranger therefore eat of that holy thing particularly, and so pretend to bear the Iniquity of Trespas; for it's daring Presumption for any to do that, but such as are appointed to do it. Those that set up other Mediators besides Christ our Priest, to bear the Iniquity of Trespas, sacrilegiously rob Christ of his Honour, and invade his Rights. When we warn People not to trust to their own Righteousness, nor dare to appear before God in it, but to rely on Christ's Righteousness only for Peace and Pardon, it is because we dare not suffer them to bear the Iniquity of Trespas, for we know it's too heavy for them. 2. Here's an Explication of the Law, shewing who were to be looked upon as belonging to the Priest's Family, and who not. (1.) Sojourners and hired Servants abode not in the House for ever, were in the Family, but not of it, and therefore they might not eat of the holy things, v. 10. But the Servant that was born in the House, or bought with Money, being an Heir-loom to the Family, tho' a Servant, yet might eat of the holy things, v. 11. Note, Those only are entitled to the Comforts of God's House that make it their Rest for ever, and resolve to dwell in it all the Days of their Life. As for those that for a time only believe, to serve a present Turn, they are looked upon but as Sojourners and Mercenaries, and have no Part nor Lot in the Matter. (2.) As to the Children of the Family, concerning the Sons there could be no Dispute, they were themselves Priests, but concerning the Daughters there was a Distinction. While they continued in their Father's House they might eat of the holy Things; but if they married such as were not Priests, they lost their Right, v. 12, for now they were cut off from the Family of the Priests. Yet if a Priest's Daughter became a Widow, and had no Children, in whom she might preserve a distinct Family, and returned to her Father's House again, being neither Wife nor Mother, she shall again be looked upon as a Daughter, and shall eat of the holy Things. If those whom Providence hath made sorrowful Widows, and who are dislodg'd from the Rest they had in the House of a Husband, yet find it again in a Father's House, they have reason to be thankful to the Widow's God, who doth not leave them comfortless. 3. Here's a Demand of Restitution to be made by him that had no Right to the holy Things, and yet should eat of them unwittingly, v. 14. If he did it presumptuously, and in Contempt of the divine Institution, he was liable to be cut off by the Hand of God, and to be beaten by the Magistrate; but if he did it thro' Weakness and Inconsideration, he was to restore the Value, adding a fifth Part to it, besides which, he was to bring an Offering to atone for the Trespas; see chap. 5. 15, 16.

Now, 1. This Law might be dispens'd with in a Case of Necessity, as it was when David and his Men eat of the Shew-bread, 1 Sam. 21. 6. And our Saviour justifies them, and gives a Reason for it; which furnisheth us with a lasting Rule in all such Cases, that God will have Mercy and not Sacrifice, Mat. 12. 8. 2. Rituals must give way to Morals.

2. It is an Instruction to Gospel Ministers, who are Stewards of the Mysteries of God, not to admit all, without Distinction, to eat of the holy things, but to take out the precious from the vile. Those that are scandalously Ignorant or Profane, are Strangers and Aliens to the Family of the Lord's Priests; and it is not meet to take the Children's Bread and to cast it to such. Holy Things are for Holy Persons, that at least are in Profession so, Matth. 7. 6.

17 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 18 Speak unto Aaron, and to his sons, and unto all the children of Israel, and say unto them, Whatsoever be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers in Israel, that will offer his oblation for all his vows; and for all his free-will-offerings, which they will offer unto the LORD for a burnt-offering: 19 Ye shall offer at your own will a male without blemish of the beeves of the sheep, or of the goats. 20 But whatsoever hath a blemish, that shall ye not offer: for it shall not be acceptable for you. 21 And whosoever offereth a sacrifice of peace-offerings unto the LORD, to accomplish his vow, or a free-will-offering in beeves, or sheep, it shall be perfect, to be accepted: there shall be no blemish therein. 22 Blind, or broken, or maimed, or having a wen, or scurvy, or scabbed, ye shall not offer these unto the LORD, nor make an offering by fire of them upon the altar unto the LORD. 23 Either a bullock, or a lamb that hath any thing superfluous or lacking in his parts, that mayest thou offer for a free-will-offering; but

for a vow it shall not be accepted. 24 Ye shall not offer unto the LORD that which is bruised, or crushed, or broken, or cut; neither shall you make any offering thereof in your land. 25 Neither from a strangers hands shall ye offer the bread of your God of any of these; because their corruption is in them, and blemishes be in them: they shall not be accepted for you. 26 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 27 When a bullock, or a sheep, or a goat is brought forth, then it shall be seven days under the dam: and from the eighth day and thenceforth, it shall be accepted for an offering made by fire unto the LORD. 28 And whether it be cow or ew, ye shall not kill it and her young both in one day. 29 And when ye will offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving unto the LORD, offer it at your own will. 30 On the same day it shall be eaten up, ye shall leave none of it until the morrow: I am the LORD. 31 Therefore shall ye keep my commandments, and do them: I am the LORD. 32 Neither shall ye profane my holy name, but I will be hallowed among the children of Israel: I am the LORD which hallow you. 33 That brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God: I am the LORD.

Here are four Laws concerning Sacrifices.

1. That whatever was offer'd in Sacrifice to God should be without Blemish, otherwise it should not be accepted. This had often been mention'd in the particular Institutions of the several sorts of Offerings. Now here, 1. They are told what was to be accounted a Blemish which render'd a Beast unfit for Sacrifice; If it were blind or lame, had a Wen, or the Mange, v. 22. If it were bruised or crush'd, or broken or cut, v. 24. i. e. as the Jewish Writers understand it, if it were any of these ways castrated: If Bulls and Rams were made into Oxen and Wethers, they might not be offer'd. 2. A Difference is made between what was brought as a Free-will-Offering, and what was brought as a Vow, v. 23. And though none that had any of the forementioned Blemishes might be brought for either, yet if a Beast had any thing superfluous or lacking, that is, as the Jews understand it, if there was a Disproportion or Inequality between those Parts that are pairs, when one Eye or Ear or Leg is bigger than it should be, or less than it should be: If there were no other Blemish but this, it might be accepted for a Free-will-Offering, which a Man had not before laid himself, nor had the Divine Law laid him under any particular Obligation to; but for a Vow it might not be accepted. Thus God would reach us, to make Conscience of performing our Promises to him very exactly, and not afterwards to abate in Quantity or Value, of what we had solemnly engag'd to devote to him. What was before the Vow in our own Power, as in the Case of a Free-will-Offering, afterwards is not, Lev. 2. 4. 3. It is again and again declared, that no Sacrifice should be accepted, if it were thus blemished, v. 20, 21. According to this Law great Care was taken to search all the Beasts that were brought to be sacrificed, that there might be sure to be no Blemish in them. Even from the Hand of a Stranger, though to such all possible Encouragement should be given to do Honour to the God of Israel, yet a blemish'd Sacrifice might not be accepted, v. 25. By this it appears, That Strangers were expected to the House of God from a far Country, 1 Kings 8. 41, 42. and that they should be welcome, and their Offerings accepted, as those of Darius, Ezr. 6. 9, 10. Isa. 56. 6, 7. The Heathen Priests were many of them not so strict in this Matter, but would receive Sacrifices for their Gods that were never so scandalous; but let the Strangers know, that the God of Israel would not be so serv'd.

Now, 1. This Law was then necessary for the preserving of the Honour of the Sanctuary, and of the God that was there worshipped. 'Twas fit that every thing that was employed for his Honour should be the best of the Kind; for as he is the Greatest and Brightest, so he is the Best of Beings: And he that is the Best must have the Best. See how greatly and justly displeasing the Breach of this Law was to the Holy God; Mat. 1. 8, 13, 14. 2. This Law made all the legal Sacrifices the fitter to be Types of Christ, the Great Sacrifice, from which all those derived their Virtue. In Allusion to this Law, he is said to be a Lamb without Blemish, and without Spot, 1 Pet. 1. 19. As such a Priest, so such a Sacrifice became us, who was harmless and undefiled. When Pilate declared I find no Fault in this Man, he did thereby in Effect pronounce the Sacrifice without Blemish. The Jews say, it was the Work of the Sagan

or Suffragan High Priest, to view the Sacrifices, and see whether they were without Blemish or no: When Christ suffered, *Annas* was in that Office; but little did they think who brought Christ to that same *Annas* first, who sent him bound to *Caiphas*, as a Sacrifice fit to be offered, (*John* 18. 13, 24.) that they were answering the Type of this Law. 3. It is an Instruction to us to offer to God the best we have in our Spiritual Sacrifices. If our Devotions be ignorant, and cold, and trifling, and full of Distractions, we offer *the blind, and the lame, and the sick for Sacrifice*; but *curst be the Deceiver* that doth so, for while he thinks to put a Cheat upon God, he puts a damning Cheat upon his own Soul.

2. That no Beast should be offered in Sacrifice before it was eight Days old, v. 26, 27. 'Twas provided before, that the Firstlings of their Cattle, which were to be dedicated to God, should not be brought him till after the eighth Day, *Exod.* 22. 30. Here, that no Creature should be offered in Sacrifice, till it was eight Days old compleat. Sooner than that it was not fit to be used at Mens Tables, and therefore not at God's Altar. The Jews say, 'twas because the Sabbath sanctifies all things, and nothing should be offered to God till at least one Sabbath had passed over it. 'Twas in Conformity to the Law of Circumcision, which Children were to receive on the eighth Day. Christ was sacrificed for us, not in his Infancy, though then *Herod* sought to slay him; but in the Prime of his time.

3. That the Dam and her Young should not both be kill'd in one Day, whether in Sacrifice, or for common Use, v. 28. There's such a Law as this concerning Birds, *Deut.* 22. 6. This was forbidden, not as evil in itself, but because it look'd barbarous and cruel to the brute Creatures; like the Tyranny of the King of *Babylon*, that slew *Zedekiah's* Sons before his Eyes, and then put out his Eyes. It look'd ill-natur'd towards the Species to kill two Generations at once, as if one design'd the Ruin of the Kind.

4. That the Flesh of their Thank-Offerings should be eaten on the same Day that they were sacrific'd, v. 29, 30. This is a Repetition of what we had before, *ch.* 7. 15.—19. 6, 7. The Chapter concludes with such a general Charge as we have often met with, to keep God's Commandments, and not to profane his holy Name, v. 31, 32. Those that profess God's Name, if they do not make Conscience of keeping his Commandments, do but profane his Name. The general Reasons are added God's Authority over them, *I am the Lord*. His Interest in them, *I am your God*. The Title he had to them by Redemption, *I brought you out of the Land of Egypt* on Purpose, that I might be your God. The Designs of his Grace concerning them, *I am the Lord which hallow you*; and the Resolutions of his Justice, if he had not Honour from them, to get him Honour upon them, *I will be hallow'd among the Children of Israel*. God will be a Loser in his Glory by no Man at least; but sooner or later will recover his Right, either in the Repentance of Sinners, or in their Ruin.

C H A P. XXIII.

Hitherto the Levitical Law hath been chiefly conversant about Holy Persons, Holy Things, and Holy Places; in this Chapter we have the Institution of Holy Times; many of which had been mentioned occasionally before, but here they are all put together: Only the New Moons are not mentioned; all the rest of the Feasts of the Lord are. 1. The weekly Feast of the Sabbath, v. 3. 2. The yearly Feasts. (1.) The Passover, and the Feast of unleavened Bread, v. 4.—8. to which was annex'd the Offering of the Sheaf of First-Fruits, v. 9.—14. (2.) Pentecost, v. 15.—22. (3.) The Solemnities of the Seventh Month. The Feast of Trumpets on the first Day, v. 23.—25. The Day of Atonement on the tenth Day, v. 26.—32. And the Feast of Tabernacles on the fifteenth, v. 33.—44.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning the feasts of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts. 3 Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein; it is the sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings.

Here's 1. A general Account of the Holy Times which God appointed, v. 2. and it is only his Appointment that can make time Holy: For he is the Lord of Time; and as soon as ever he had set its Wheels a going, it was he that sanctified and blessed one Day above the rest, *Gen.* 2. 3. Man may by his Appointment make a good Day, *Eth.* 9. 19. but it is God's Prerogative to make a Holy Day; nbr is any thing sanctified but by the Stamp of his Institution. As all inherent Holiness comes from his special Grace, so all adherent Holiness from his special Ap-

pointment. Now concerning the Holy Times her cobrain'd, observ'd, (1.) They are called Feasts. The Day of Atonement, which was one of them, was a Fast, yet because most of them were appointed for Joy and Rejoycing, they are in the general call'd Feasts. Some read it, *These are my Assemblies*, but that's co-incident with Convocations; I would rather read it, *These are my Solemnities*; to the Word here used is translated, *Isa.* 55. 20. where *Zion* is called the City of our Solemnities: And reading it so here, the Day of Atonement was as great a Solemnity as any of them. (2.) They are the Feasts of the Lord; my Feasts; observ'd to the Honour of his Name, and in Obedience to his Command. (3.) They were proclaim'd; for they were not to be observ'd by the Priest only that attended the Sanctuary, but by all the People. And this Proclamation was the joyful Sound, which they were blessed that were within hearing of; *Psal.* 89. 15. (4.) They were to be sanctified and solemniz'd with Holy Convocations. That the Services of these Feasts might appear the more honourable and august, and the People more unanimous in the Performance of them; 'twas for the Honour of God, and his Institutions, which sought not Corners, and the Purity of which would be best preserv'd by the publick Administration of them; 'twas also for the Edification of the People in Love, that the Feasts were to be observ'd as Holy Convocations.

2. A Repetition of the Law of the Sabbath in the first Place. Tho' the Annual Feasts were made more remarkable by their general Attendance at the Sanctuary, yet these must not eclipse the Brightness of the Sabbath, v. 3. They are here told, 1. That on that Day they must withdraw themselves from all the Affairs and Business of the World. It is a Sabbath of Rest, typifying our Spiritual Rest from Sin, and in God, *Ye shall do no work therein*. On other Holy Days they were forbidden to do any servile Work, v. 7. but on the Sabbath and the Day of Atonement, (which is also called a Sabbath) they were to do no Work at all, no nor the dressing of Meat. 2. On that Day they must employ themselves in the Service of God. (1.) It is a Holy Convocation, i. e. If it lie within your Reach, you shall sanctify it in a religious Assembly: Let as many as can come to the Door of the Tabernacle, and let others meet elsewhere for Prayer, and Praise, and the reading of the Law; as in the Schools of the Prophets, while Prophecy continued, and afterwards in the Synagogues. Christ appointed the New Testament Sabbath to be a Holy Convocation, by meeting his Disciples once and again, (and perhaps oftner) on the first Day of the Week. (2.) Whether you have Opportunity of sanctifying it in a Holy Convocation or not, yet let it be the Sabbath of the Lord in all your Dwellings. Put a Difference between that Day and other Days in your Families. It is the Sabbath of the Lord, the Day on which he rested from the Work of Creation, and on which he hath appointed us to rest; let it be observ'd in all your Dwellings, even now they dwell in Tents. Note, God's Sabbaths are to be religiously observ'd in every private House, by every Family apart, as well as by many Families together, in Holy Convocations. The Sabbath of the Lord in our Dwellings, will be their Beauty, Strength and Safety; 'twill sanctify, edify, and glorify them.

4 ¶ These are the feasts of the LORD, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons. 5 In the fourteenth day of the first month at even, is the LORD's passover. 6 And on the fifteenth day of the same month, is the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD; seven days ye must eat unleavened bread. 7 In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein. 8 But ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD seven days: in the seventh day is an holy convocation, ye shall do no servile work therein. 9 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 10 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the first-fruits of your harvest unto the priest: 11 And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it. 12 And ye shall offer that day when ye wave the sheaf, an he lamb without blemish of the first year, for a burnt-offering unto the LORD. 13 And the meat-offering thereof shall be two tenth-deals of fine flour mingled with oyl, an offering made by fire unto the LORD for a sweet savour: and the drink-

drink-offering thereof *shall be* of wine, the fourth part of an hin. 14 And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the self same day that ye have brought an offering unto your God: *It shall be* a statute for ever throughout your generations, in all your dwellings.

Here again the Feasts are called the *Feasts of the Lord*, because he appointed them. *Jeroboam's Feast*, which he devised of his own Heart, 1 Kings 12. 33. was an Affront to God, and a Sham upon the People. These Feasts were to be proclaimed in their Seasons, v. 4. And the Seasons God chose for them were in *March, May, and September*, (according to our present Computation) not in Winter, because travelling would then be uncomfortable, when the Days were short, and the Ways foul; not in the middle of Summer, because then in those Countries they were gathering in their Harvest and Vintage, and could be ill spared from their Country Business. Thus graciously doth God consult our Comfort in his Appointments, obliging us thereby religiously to regard his Glory in our Observance of them, and not to complain of them as a Burthen. The Solemnities appointed them were (1.) many, and return'd frequently, which was intended to preserve in them a deep Sense of God and Religion, and to prevent their inclining to the Superstitions of the Heathen. God kept them *fully employed* in his Service that they might not have time to hearken to the Temptations of the idolatrous Neighbourhood they lived in. (2.) They were most of them Times of Joy and Rejoycing. The weekly Sabbath is so, and all their yearly Solemnities, except the Day of Atonement. God would thus teach them, that Wisdom's Ways are *Pleasantness*, and oblige them to his Service, by obliging them to be cheerful in it, and to sing at their Work. Seven Days were Days of strict Rest and Holy Convocations; the first Day and the seventh of the Feast of unleavened Bread; the Day of *Pentecost*, the Day of the Feast of Trumpets; the first Day and the eighth of the Feast of Tabernacles; and the Day of Atonement: Here were Six for Holy Joy, and One only for Holy Mourning. We are commanded to *rejoice evermore*, but not to be evermore weeping.

Here's 1. A Repetition of the Law of the Passover, which was to be observed on the fourteenth Day of the first Month, in Remembrance of their Deliverance out of Egypt, and the distinguishing Preservation of their First-born; Mercies never to be forgotten. This Feast was to begin with the killing of the Paschal Lamb, v. 5. 'Twas to continue seven Days, during all which time they were to eat *sad Bread*, that was unleavened, v. 6. and the first and last Day of the seven were to be Days of *Holy Rest*, and *Holy Convocations*, v. 7, 8. They were not *idle Days* spent in Sport and Recreation, (as many that are called Christians spend their Holy Days) but Offerings were made by Fire unto the Lord at his Altar; and we have Reason to think the People were taught to employ their time in Prayer, and Praise, and godly Meditation.

2. An Order for the offering of a Sheaf of the First-Fruits, upon the second Day of the Feast of unleavened Bread: The first is called the *Sabbath*, because it was observ'd as a Sabbath, v. 11. and on the Morrow after, they had this Solemnity. A Sheaf or Handful of new Corn was brought to the Priest, who was to *hallow it up*, in Token of his presenting it to the God of Heaven, and to wave it to and fro before the Lord, as the Lord of the whole Earth, and this should be accepted for them as a thankful Acknowledgment of God's Mercy to them in Clothing their Fields with Corn, and of their Dependence upon God and Desire towards him for the preserving of it to their Use. For it was the Expression both of Prayer and Praise, v. 11. A Lamb for a Burnt-Offering was to be offered with it, v. 12. As the Sacrifice of Animals was generally attended with Meat-Offerings, so this Sacrifice of Corn was attended with a Burnt-Offering that Bread and Flesh might be set together on God's Table. They are forbidden to eat of their new Corn till this Handful was offered to God, for it was fit, if God and Israel feast together, that he should be served first. And the offering of this Sheaf of First-Fruits in the Name of the whole Congregation, did as it were sanctify to them their whole Harvest, and give them a comfortable Use of all the rest; for then we may eat our Bread with Joy, when we have in some Measure perform'd our Duty to God, and God has accepted our Works; for thus all our Enjoyments become *clean to us*. Now, 1. This Law was given now, though there was no Occasion for putting it in Execution till they came to Canaan: In the Wilderness they sowed no Corn; but God's feeding them there with Bread from Heaven, oblig'd them hereafter not to grudge him his Share of their Bread out of the Earth. We find when they came into Canaan the Manna ceased upon the very Day that the Sheaf of First Fruits was offer'd; they had eaten of the old Corn the Day before, Josh. 5. 11. and then on this Day they offered the First-Fruits, by which they became entitled to the new Corn too, v. 13. so that there was no more Occasion

for Manna. 2. This Sheaf of First-Fruits was typical of our Lord Jesus, who is risen from the dead as the First-Fruits of them that slept, 1 Cor. 15. 20. That Branch of the Lord (Isa. 4. 2.) was then presented to him, in the Virtue of the Sacrifice of himself the Lamb of God, and it was accepted for us. 'Tis very observable, that our Lord Jesus rose from the dead on the very Day that the First-Fruits were offer'd, to shew that he was the Substance of this Shadow. 3. We are taught by this Law to honour the Lord with our Substance, and with the First-Fruits of all our Increase, Prov. 3. 9. They were not to eat of their new Corn, till God's Part was offer'd to him out of it, v. 14. for we must always begin with God; begin our Lives with him, begin every Day with him, begin every Meal with him, begin every Affair and Business with him; *seek first the Kingdom of God*.

15 ¶ And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave-offering; seven sabbaths shall be compleat: 16 Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath, shall ye number fifty days, and ye shall offer a new meat-offering unto the LORD. 17 Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave-loaves, of two tenth-deals; they shall be of fine flour, they shall be baked with leaven, they are the first-fruits unto the LORD. 18 And ye shall offer with the bread seven lambs without blemish, of the first year, and one young bullock, and two rams: they shall be for a burnt-offering unto the LORD with their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, even an offering made by fire of sweet savour unto the LORD. 19 Then ye shall sacrifice one kid of the goats for a sin-offering, and two lambs of the first year, for a sacrifice of peace-offerings. 20 And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the first-fruits, for a wave-offering before the LORD, with the two lambs: they shall be holy to the LORD for the priests. 21 And ye shall proclaim on the self same day, that it may be an holy convocation unto you: ye shall do no servile work therein: *It shall be* a statute for ever in all your dwellings throughout your generations. 22 ¶ And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest, neither shalt thou gather any gleanings of thy harvest: thou shalt leave them unto the poor, and to the stranger: *I am* the LORD your God.

Here's the Institution of the Feast of *Pentecost*, or *Weeks*, as 'tis called, Deut. 16. 9. because it was observed fifty Days, or seven Weeks, after the Passover. It is also called the *Feast of Harvest*, Exod. 23. 16. For as the presenting of the Sheaf of First-Fruits was an Introduction to the Harvest, and gave them Liberty to put in the Sickle, so they solemniz'd the finishing of their Corn-Harvest at this Feast. (1.) Then they offer'd a handful of Ears of Barley, now they offered two Loaves of unleavened Bread, v. 17. This was leavened. At the Passover they eat unleavened Bread, because it was in Remembrance of the Bread they eat when they came out of Egypt, which was unleavened; but now at Pentecost it was leavened, because it was an Acknowledgement of God's Goodness to them in their ordinary Food, which was leavened. (2.) With that Sheaf of First-Fruits they only offered one Lamb for a Burnt-Offering, but with these Loaves of First-Fruits they offered seven Lambs, two Rams, and one Bullock, all for a Burnt-Offering, so giving Glory to God, as the Lord of their Land, and the Lord of their Harvest, by whose Favour they liv'd, and to whose Praise they ought to live. They offered likewise a Kid for a Sin-Offering, so taking Shame to themselves, as unworthy of the Bread they eat, and imploring Pardon for their Sins, by which they had forfeited their Harvest-Mercies, and which they had been guilty of in the receiving of them. And, Lastly, Two Lambs for a Sacrifice of Peace-Offerings, to beg a Blessing upon the Corn they had gathered in, which would be neither sure nor sweet to them without that Blessing, Hag. 1. 9. These were the only Peace-Offerings that were offer'd on the Behalf of the whole Congregation, and they were reckoned most holy Offerings, whereas other Peace-Offerings were but Holy. All these Offerings are here appointed, v. 18, 19, 20. (3.) That one Day was to be kept with a Holy Convocation, v. 21. 'Twas one of the Days on which all Israel was to meet God, and

and one another, at the Place which the Lord should choose. Some suggest, That whereas seven Days were to make up the Feast of unleavened Bread, there was only one Day appointed for the Feast of *Pentecost*, because this was a busy time of the Year with them, and God allow'd them speedily to return to their Work in the Country. This Annual Feast was instituted, in Remembrance of the giving of the Law upon Mount Sinai, the fiftieth Day after they came out of Egypt. That was the Feast which, they were told in Egypt, must be observed to God in the Wilderness, as a Memorial of which ever after they kept this Feast. But the Period and Perfection of this Feast, was the pouring out of the Spirit upon the Apostles on the Day of this Feast, (*Acts 2. 1.*) in which the Law of Faith was given, fifty Days after Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us. And on that Day (as Bishop Patrick well expresseth it) the Apostles having themselves received the *First-Fruits of the Spirit*, begat Three Thousand Souls, through the Word of Truth, and presented them, as the *First-Fruits of the Christian Church*, to God and the Lamb.

To the Institution of the Feast of *Pentecost* is annex'd a Repetition of that Law, which we had before, chap. 19. 9. by which they were requir'd to leave the Gleanings of their Fields and the Corn that grew on the Ends of the Burs for the Poor, v. 22. Probably it comes in here as a thing which the Priests must take Occasion to mind the People of, when they brought their First-Fruits, intimating to them, That to obey even in this small Matter, was better than Sacrifice; and that unless they were obedient, their Offerings should not be accepted. It also taught them, that the Joy of Harvest should express itself in Charity to the Poor, who must have their due out of what we have, as well as God his. They that are truly sensible of the Mercy they receive from God will without grudging *show Mercy* to the Poor.

23 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 24 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation. 25 Ye shall do no servile work therein; but ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD. 26 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 27 Also on the tenth day of the seventh month, there shall be a day of atonement, it shall be an holy convocation unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD. 28 And ye shall do no work in that same day: for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the LORD your God. 29 For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people. 30 And whatsoever soul it be that doth any work in that same day, the same soul will I destroy from among his people. 31 Ye shall do no manner of work: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. 32 It shall be unto you a sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls in the ninth day of the month at even: from even unto even shall ye celebrate your sabbath.

Here's 1. The Institution of the Feast of Trumpets, on the first Day of the seventh Month, v. 24, 25. That which was now the seventh Month had been reckoned the first Month, and the Year of Jubilee was still to begin with this Month, chap. 25. 8. So that this was their New-Year's Day. 'Twas to be as their other yearly Sabbaths, a Day of Holy Rest, Ye shall do no servile Work therein; and a Day of Holy Work, Ye shall offer an offering to the Lord, concerning which particular Directions were afterwards given, Num. 29. 1. That which is here made peculiar to this Festival is, that it was a Memorial of blowing of Trumpets: They blew the Trumpet every New Moon, Psal. 81. 3. but in the New Moon of the seventh Month 'twas to be done with more than ordinary Solemnity; for they began to blow at Sun-rise, and continued till Sun-set. Now, (1) This is here said to be a Memorial perhaps of the Sound of the Trumpet upon Mount Sinai, when the Law was given, which must never be forgotten. Some think, 'Twas a Memorial of the Creation of the World, which is supposed to have been in Autumn; for which Reason this was till now the first Month. The mighty Word by which God made the World, is call'd the Voice of his Thunder, Psal. 104. 7. fitly therefore was it commemorated by blowing of Trumpets, or a Memorial of Shouting, as the Caldee renders it; for when the Foundations of the Earth were fastned, all the Sons of God shouted for Joy, Job 38. 6, 7.

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(2) The Jewish Writers suppose it to have a Spiritual Signification. Now at the Beginning of the Year they were called by this Sound of Trumpet to shake off their Spiritual Drowsiness, to search and try their Ways, and to amend them: The Day of Atonement was the ninth Day after this; and thus they were awakened to prepare for that Day, by sincere and serious Repentance, that it might be indeed to them a Day of Atonement. And they say, The devout Jews exercise themselves more in Good Works between the Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Expiation, than at any other time of the Year. (3) It was typical of the Preaching of the Gospel, by which joyful Sound Souls were called in to serve God, and keep a Spiritual Feast to him. The Conversion of the Nations to the Faith of Christ, is said to be by the blowing of a Great Trumpet, Isa. 27. 13.

2. A Repetition of the Law of the Day of Atonement, only so much of it as concern'd the People. 1. They must on this Day rest from all manner of Work; and not only from servile Works, as on other Annual Festivals; it must be as strict a Rest as that of the Weekly Sabbath, v. 28. 30, 31. The Reason is, for it is a Day of Atonement. Note, The humbling of our Souls for Sin, and the making of our Peace with God, is Work that requires the whole Man, and the closest Application of Mind imaginable, and all little enough. He that would do the Work of a Day of Atonement in its Day, as it should be done, had need lay aside the Thoughts of every thing else. On that Day God spake Peace unto his People, and unto his Saints; and therefore they must lay aside all their worldly Business, that they might the more clearly and the more reverently hear that Voice of Joy and Gladness. Fasting Days should be Days of Rest. 2. They must afflict their Souls, and this upon pain of being cut off by the Hand of God, v. 27, 29, 32. They must mortify the Body, and deny the Appetites of it, in Token of their Sorrow for the Sins they had committed, and the mortifying of their indwelling Corruptions. Every Soul must be afflicted, because every Soul was polluted, and guilty before God: While none have fulfilled the Law of Innocency, none are exempt from the Law of Repentance. Besides that, every Man must sigh and cry for the Abominations of the Land. 3. This Day must be observed from even to even, v. 32. ye shall afflict your Souls, i. e. ye shall begin your Fast, and the Expressions of your Humiliation in the ninth Day of the Month at even. They were to leave off all their worldly Labour, and compose themselves to the Work of the Day approaching, some time before Sun-set on the ninth Day, and not to take any Food, (except Children and sick People) till after Sun-set on the tenth Day. Note, The Eves of solemn Days ought to be employed in solemn Preparation. When Work for God and our Souls is to be done, we should not straighten ourselves in time for the doing of it, for how can we spend our time better? Of this Sabbath the Rule here is to be understood, from even unto even shall ye celebrate your Sabbath.

33 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 34 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the LORD. 35 On the first day shall be an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein. 36 Seven days ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD: on the eighth day shall be an holy convocation unto you, and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD: it is a solemn assembly, and ye shall do no servile work therein. 37 These are the feasts of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD, a burnt-offering, and a meat-offering, a sacrifice, and drink-offerings, every thing upon this day; 38 Beside the sabbaths of the LORD, and beside your gifts, and beside all your vows, and beside all your free-will-offerings, which ye give unto the LORD. 39 Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the LORD seven days: on the first day shall be a sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a sabbath. 40 And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm-trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook: and ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days. 41 And ye shall keep it a feast unto the LORD seven days

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in the year: *It shall be a statute for ever in your generations, ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month.* 42 Ye shall dwell in booths seven days, all that are Israelites born, shall dwell in booths. 43 That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: *I am the LORD your God.* 44 And Moses declared unto the children of Israel the feasts of the LORD.

We have here the Institution of the *Feast of Tabernacles*, which was one of the three great Feasts, at which all the Males were bound to attend, and celebrated with more Expressions of Joy than any of them.

1. It was to be observed on the *fifteenth Day of the seventh Month*, v. 34. but *five Days* after the Day of Atonement. We may suppose, though they were not all bound to attend on the Day of Atonement, as on the *three* great Festivals, yet that many of the devout *Jews* came up so many Days before the Feasts of Tabernacles, as to enjoy the Opportunity of attending on the Day of Atonement. Now, (1) The *Afflicting of their Souls* on the Day of Atonement prepared them for the Joy of the Feast of Tabernacles. The more we are *grieved and humbled* for Sin, the better qualified we are for the Comforts of the Holy Ghost. (2) The Joy of this Feast recompensed them for the Sorrow of that Fast; for they that *sow in Tears*, shall reap in Joy.

2. It was to continue *eight Days*, the first and last of which were to be observ'd as *Sabbaths*, Days of Holy Rest, and Holy Convocations, v. 35, 36, 39. The Sacrifices to be offered on these eight Days, we have a very large Appointment of, Numb. 29. 12, &c.

3. During the first seven Days of this Feast, all the People were to leave their Houses, and the Women and Children in them, and to dwell in Booths made of the *Boughs of thick Trees*, particularly *Palm-Trees*, v. 40, 42. The *Jews* make the taking of the Branches to be a distinct Ceremony from the making of the Booths. It is said indeed, Neh. 8. 15. that they made their Booths of the Branches of Trees, which they might do, and yet use that farther Expression of Joy, the carrying of *Palm-Branches* in their Hands, which appears to have been a Token of Triumph upon other Occasions, John 12. 13. and is alluded to, Rev. 7. 9. The eighth Day some make a distinct Feast of itself, but it is call'd, John 7. 37. that great Day of this Feast; 'twas the Day on which they returned from their Booths, to settle again in their own Houses.

4. They were to rejoice before the Lord God during all the Time of this Feast, v. 40. The Tradition of the *Jews* is, That they were to express their Joy by dancing and singing Hymns of Praise to God, with Musical Instruments; and not the common People only, but the wise Men of *Israel*, and their Elders were to do it in the Court of the Sanctuary: For, (say they) The Joy with which a Man rejoiceth in doing a Commandment, is really a great Service.

Now, 1. This Feast was to be kept in Remembrance of their dwelling in Tents in the Wilderness. Thus it is expounded here, v. 34. That your Generations may know, not only by the written History, but by this Ocular Tradition, that I made the Children of Israel to dwell in Booths. Thus it kept in perpetual Remembrance. (1) The Meanness of their Beginning, and the low and desolate State out of which God advanced that People. Note, Those that are comfortably fixed, ought often to call to mind their former unsettled State, when they were but little in their own Eyes. (2) The Mercy of God to them, that when they dwelt in Tabernacles God not only set up a Tabernacle for himself among them, but with the utmost Care and Tenderness imaginable hung a Canopy over them, even the Cloud that shelter'd them from the Heat of the Sun. God's former Mercies to us and our Fathers ought to be kept in everlasting Remembrance. The eighth Day was the great Day of this Feast, because then they were returned to their own Houses again; and remember'd how after they had long dwelt in Tents in the Wilderness, at length they came to a happy Settlement in the Land of Promise, where they dwelt in goodly Houses. And they would the more sensibly value and be thankful for the Comforts and Conveniencies of their Houses, when they had been seven Days dwelling in Booths. It is good for those that have Ease and Plenty, sometimes to learn what it is to endure Hardness.

2. It was a Feast of *in-gathering*, so it is called, Exod. 23. 16. When they have gathered in the Fruit of their Land, v. 39. the Vintage as well as the Harvest, then they were to keep this Feast in Thankfulness to God for all the Increase of the Year; and some think that the eighth Day of the Feast had special Reference to this Ground of the Institution. Note, The Joy of Harvest ought to be improved for the Furtherance of our Joy in God. The Earth is the Lord's, and the Fulness thereof,

and therefore whatever we have the Comfort of, he must have the Glory of, especially when any Mercy is perfected.

3. It was a typical Feast. It is suppos'd by many that our Blessed Saviour was born much about the Time of this Feast; then he left his Mansions of Light above to tabernacle among us, John 1. 14. and he dwelt in Booths. And the Worship of God under the New Testament, is prophesied of under the Notion of keeping the Feast of Tabernacles, Zech. 14. 16. For, 1. The Gospel of Christ teacheth us to dwell in Tabernacles, to sit loose to this World, as those that have here no continuing City, but by Faith, and Hope, and a Holy Contempt of present Things, to go out to Christ without the Camp, Heb. 13. 13, 14. 2. It teaches us to rejoice before the Lord our God. Those are the Circumcision, Israelites indeed, that always rejoice in Christ Jesus, Phil. 3. 3. And the more we are taken off from this World, the less liable we are to the Interruption of our Joys.

Lastly, Here's the Summary and Conclusion of these Institutions. 1. God appointed these Feasts, v. 37, 38. Besides the Sabbath, and your Free-will-Offering. This teacheth us, (1) That Calls to extraordinary Services will not excuse us from our constant stated Performances. Within the Days of the Feast of Tabernacles there must fall at least one Sabbath, which must be as strictly observ'd as any other. (2) That God's Institutions leave Room for Free-will-Offerings. Not that we may invent what he never instituted, but we may repeat what he has instituted, ordinarily the oftner the better. God is well-pleased with a willing People.

2. Moses declared them to the Children of Israel, v. 44. He let them know what God appointed, and neither more nor less. Thus St. Paul delivered to the Churches what he had received from the Lord. We have Reason to be thankful, That the Feasts of the Lord declared unto us are not so numerous, nor the Observance of them so burthensome and costly as theirs then was, but more spiritual and significant and surer sweeter Earnests of the everlasting Feast, at the last in-gathering, which we hope to be celebrating to Eternity.

C H A P. XXIV.

In this Chapter we have, 1. A Repetition of the Laws concerning the Lamps and the Shew-Bread, v. 1,—9. A Violation of the Law against Blasphemy, with the Imprisonment, Trial, Condemnation, and Execution of the Blasphemer, v. 10,—14. with v. 23. 3. The Law against Blasphemy re-enforced, v. 15, 16. with sundry other Laws, v. 17,—22.

1 AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Command the children of Israel, that they bring unto thee pure oyl-olive, beaten, for the light, to cause the lamps to burn continually. 3 Without the vail of the testimony, in the tabernacle of the congregation, shall Aaron order it from the evening, unto the morning, before the LORD continually: *It shall be a statute for ever in your generations.* 4 He shall order the lamps upon the pure candlestick before the LORD continually. 5 ¶ And thou shalt take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes thereof: two tenth deals shall be in one cake. 6 And thou shalt set them in two rows, six on a row; upon the pure table, before the LORD. 7 And thou shalt put pure frankincense upon each row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, even an offering made by fire unto the LORD. 8 Every sabbath he shall set it in order before the LORD continually, being taken from the children of Israel, by an everlasting covenant. 9 And it shall be Aarons and his sons, and they shall eat it in the holy place: for it is most holy unto him, of the offerings of the LORD made by fire, by a perpetual statute.

Care is here taken, and Orders given for the decent furnishing of the Candlestick and Table in God's House.

1. The Lamps must always be kept burning. The Law for this we had before. Exod. 27. 20, 21. 'tis here repeated, probably, because now it began to be put in Execution, when other things were settled. (1) The People were to provide Oil, v. 2. and this, as every thing else that was to be used in God's Service, must be of the best, pure Oil-Olive beaten, probably 'twas double-strained. This was to cause the Lamps to burn. All our English Copies read it Lamps, but in the Original 'tis singular, v. 2. to cause the Lamp to burn; but plural, v. 4. He shall order the Lamps. The seven Lamps made all one Lamp; in

in Allusion to which the Blessed Spirit of Grace is represented by seven Lamps of Fire before the Throne, Rev. 4. 5. for there are Diversities of Gifts, but one Spirit; 1 Cor. 12. 4. Ministers are as burning and shining Lights in Christ's Church, but it is the Duty of People to provide comfortably for them, as Israel for the Lamps. Scandalous Maintenance makes a scandalous Ministry. (2.) The Priests were to tend the Lamps; they must snuff them, clean the Candlestick, supply them with Oil. Morning and Evening, v. 3, 4. Thus it is the Work of the Ministers of the Gospel to hold forth the Word of Life; not to set up new Lights, but by expounding and preaching the Word, to make the Light of it more clear and extensive. This was the ordinary way of keeping the Lamps burning; but when the Church was poor, and in Distress, we find its Lamps fed constantly with Oil from the good Olive immediately, without the Ministry of Priests or People, Zech. 4. 2, 3. for though God has ty'd us to Means, he has not ty'd himself to them; but will take effectual Care that his Lamp never go out in the World for want of Oil.

3. The Table must always be kept spread. This was appointed before, Exod. 25. 30. And here also, 2. The Table was furnished with Bread; not Dainties or Varieties to gratify a luxurious Palate, but twelve Loaves or Cakes of Bread, v. 5, 6. Where there's Plenty of Bread there is no Famine, and where Bread is not, there is no Feast. There was a Loaf for every Tribe, for in our Father's House there is Bread enough. They were all provided for by the Divine Bounty, and were all welcome to the Divine Grace. Even after the Revolt of the ten Tribes, this Number of Loaves was continued, 2 Chron. 13. 17. for the Sake of those few of each Tribe that retained their Affection to the Temple, and continued their Attendance on it. 2. A handful of Frankincense was put in a Gold Sawcer upon or by each Row, v. 7. When the Bread was remov'd, and given to the Priests, this Frankincense was burnt upon the Golden Altar, (I suppose) over and above the daily Incense: And this was for a Memorial instead of the Bread, an Offering made by Fire. As the Handful of the Meat-Offering which was burnt upon the Altar is called the Memorial thereof, Lev. 2. 2. Thus a little was accepted as an humble Acknowledgment, and all the Loaves were consigned to the Priests. All God's Spiritual Israel, typified by the twelve Loaves, are made through Christ a *sweet Saviour* to him, and their Prayers are said to come up before God for a Memorial, Acts 10. 4. The Word is borrowed from the Ceremonial Law. 3. Every Sabbath it was renewed. When the Loaves had stood there a Week, the Priests had them, to eat with other Holy things that were to be eaten in the Holy Place, v. 9. and new ones were provided at the publick Charge, and put in the Room of them, v. 8. The Jews say, the Hands of those Priests that put on were mix'd with theirs that took off, that the Table might be never empty, but the Bread might be before the Lord continually. God is never unprovided for the Entertainment of those that visit him, as Men oft are, Luke 11. 5. Every one of these Cakes contain'd two tenth Deals, i. e. two Ounces of Fine Flour; just so much Manna every Israelite gathered on the sixth Day for the Sabbath, Exod. 16. 22. Whence some infer, That this Shew-Bread, which was set on the Table on the Sabbath, was intended as a Memorial of the Manna wherewith they were fed in the Wilderness. Christ's Ministers should provide new Bread for his House every Sabbath Day, the Products of their fresh Studies in the Scripture, that their Proficiency may appear to all, 1 Tim. 4. 5.

10 And the son of an Israelitish woman, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the children of Israel, and this son of the Israelitish woman, and a man of Israel strove together in the camp. 11 And the Israelitish woman's son blasphemed the name of the LORD, and cursed: and they brought him unto Moses (and his mother's name was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan) 12 And they put him in ward, that the mind of the LORD might be shewed them. 13 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 14 Bring forth him that hath cursed, without the camp; and let all that heard him, lay their hands upon his head, and let all the congregation stone him. 15 And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, Whosoever curseth his God, shall bear his sin. 16 And he that blasphemeth the name of the LORD, he shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name of the LORD, shall be put to

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death. 17 And he that killeth any man, shall surely be put to death. 18 And he that killeth a beast, shall make it good: beast for beast. 19 And if a man cause a blemish in his neighbour, as he hath done, so shall it be done unto him. 20 Breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth: as he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be done to him again. 21 And he that killeth a beast, he shall restore it: and he that killeth a man, he shall be put to death. 22 Ye shall have one manner of law, as well for the stranger, as for one of your own country: for I am the LORD your God. 23 And Moses spake unto the children of Israel, that they should bring forth him that had cursed, out of the camp, and stone him with stones: and the children of Israel did as the LORD commanded Moses.

Evil Manners, we say, beget good Laws. We have here an Account of the evil Manners of a certain nameless Mungrel-Israelite; and the good Laws occasioned thereby.

1. The Offender was the Son of an Egyptian Father, and an Israelitish Mother, v. 10. His Mother was of the Tribe of Dan, v. 11. neither he nor his Father are nam'd, but his Mother only who was an Israelite. This Notice is taken of his Parentage; either 1. To intimate what occasion'd the Quarrel he was engag'd in: The Jews say, He offer'd to set up his Tent among the Danites in the Right of his Mother, but was justly oppos'd by some or other of that Tribe; and told, that his Father being an Egyptian, he had no Part nor Lot in the Matter, but must look upon himself as a Stranger. Or, 2. To show the common ill Effect of such mixt Marriages. When a Daughter of Israel would marry an idolatrous malignant Egyptian, what could be the Product of such a Marriage but a Blaphemer? For the Children will be apt to take after the worse Side, which soever it is; and will sooner learn of an Egyptian Father to blaspheme, than of an Israelitish Mother to pray and praise.

2. The Occasion of the Offence was Contention; He strove with a Man of Israel. The mixt Multitude of Egyptians that came up with Israel, Exod. 12. 38. were many ways hurtful to them, and this was one, they were often the Authors of Strife. The way to preserve the Peace of the Church is to preserve the Purity of it. In this Strife he broke out into ill Language. Note, When Quarrels begin, we know not what Mischief they will make before they end, nor how great a Matter a little Fire may kindle. When Mens Passion is up, they are apt to forget both their Reason and their Religion; which is a good Reason why we should not be apt either to give or to resent Provocation, but leave off Strife before it be meddled with, because the Beginning of it is as the letting forth Water.

3. The Offence itself was Blasphemy and Cursing, v. 11. 'Tis suppos'd his Cause came to be heard before the Judges, who determin'd that he had no Right to the Privileges of an Israelite, his Father being an Egyptian, and being enraged at the Sentence, 1. He blasphemed the Name of the Lord. He blasphemed the Name, i. e. God; who is known by his Name only, not by his Nature, or any Similitude. Not as if God were a mere Name, but his is a Name above every Name. The Translators add (of the Lord) which is implied, but not express'd in the Original, for the greater Reverence of the Divine Majesty: 'Tis a Shame it should be found on Record that the very Name of Jehovah should be blasphemed; tell it not in Gath. 'Tis a fond Conceit of the superstitious Jew; that his Blasphemy was pronouncing the Name Jehovah, which they call ineffable: He that made himself known by that Name, never forbid the calling of him by that Name. 'Tis likely finding himself aggrieved by the Divine Appointment, which separated between the Israelites and Strangers, he impudently reproached both that Law and its Law-Maker, and set him at Defiance. 2. He curst, either God himself, and then his cursing was the same with blaspheming; or, the Person with whom he strove; Imprecations of Mischief are the hellish Language of hasty Passion, as well as of cooled Malice; or, the Judges that gave Sentence against him; he flew in the Face of the Court, and ridicul'd the Proceedings of it. Thus he added Sin to Sin.

4. The Caution with which he was proceeded against for this Sin. The Witnesses of Israel brought him, and his Case (which was somewhat extraordinary), unto Moses, v. 11. according to the Order set, Exod. 18. 22. and Moses himself would not give Judgment hastily, but committed the Offender into Custody, till he had consulted the Oracle in this Case. Note, Judges must deliberate; both those that give the Verdict, and those that give the Sentence, must consider diligently what they do, and do nothing rashly, for the Judgment

in God's, Deut. 32. 37. and before him there will be a Res hearing of the Cause. They waited to know what was the Mind of the Lord, Whether he was to be put to Death by the Hand of the Magistrate, or to be left to the Judgment of God; or rather, they wanted to know whether he should be stoned; as those were to be that only cursed their Parents, Lev. 20. 9. or whether the Crime being so much greater, some sorer Punishment should not be inflicted on him. Note, Those that sit in Judgment should sincerely desire, and by Prayer and the Use of all good Means, should endeavour to know the Mind of the Lord, because they judge for him; 2 Chron. 19. 6. and to him they are accountable.

5. Sentence pass upon this Offender by the righteous Judge of Heaven and Earth himself, v. 14. *Let all the Congregation stone him.* God could have cut him off by an immediate Stroke from Heaven, but he would put this Honour upon the Institution of Magistracy to make Use of it for the supporting and vindicating of his own Glory in the World. Observe, (1) The Place of Execution appointed, *Bring him forth without the Camp;* to signify their Detestation of the Crime, they must thus cast out the Criminal as an abominable Branch, and separate him from them as an unclean thing, and unworthy a Place in the Camp of Israel. (2) The Executioners; *Let all the Congregation do it,* to shew their Zeal for the Honour of God's Name. Every Man should have a Stone to throw at him that blasphemes God, reckoning himself nearly concerned in the Reproaches cast on God, Psal. 69. 9. Thus also the greater Terror would be cast upon the Congregation; they that once help'd to stone a Blasphemer would ever after dread every thing that bordered upon Blasphemy, that look'd like it, or look'd towards it. (3) The Solemnity of the Execution, before the Congregation stoned him, the Witnesses were to lay their Hands upon his Head. The Jews say, This was used in the Execution of no Criminals but Blasphemers only; and that it was done with Words to this Purpose, *Thy Blood be upon thy own Head, for thou thyself hast occasioned it.* Let no Blame be laid on the Law, Judges, Juries, or Witnesses, *If thou scornest thou alone shall bear it.*

6. A standing Law made upon this Occasion for the stoning of Blasphemers, v. 15, 16. Magistrates are the Guardians of both Tables, and ought to be as jealous for the Honour of God, against those that speak contemptuously of his Being and Government, as for the Publick Peace and Safety against the Disturbers of that. (1) A great Stress is laid upon this Law, as in no Case to be dispens'd with. He shall surely be put to Death; they shall certainly stone him. They that lightly esteem God's Honour, might think it hard to make a Man an Offender for a Word; Words are but Wind; but God would let them know that such Words as these were not to be made light of, which come from Malice against God in the Heart of him that speaks, and must occasion either great Guilt, or great Grief to those that hear. (2) It is made to extend to the Strangers that sojourn'd among them, as well as those that were born in the Land. God never made any Law to compel Strangers to be circumcised, and embrace the Jewish Religion; Profelytes made by Force would be no Honour to the God of Israel, but he made a Law to restrain Strangers from speaking evil of the God of Israel. (3) He that was put to Death for Blasphemy is said to bear his Sin, in the Punishment of it; no Sacrifices being appointed on the Head of which the Sin might be transferred, he himself was to bear it upon his own Head, as a Sacrifice to Divine Justice. So his own Tongue fell upon him, Psal. 64. 8. and the Tongue of a Blasphemer will fall heavy.

7. A Repetition of some other Laws annex'd to this new Law. (1) That Murder should be punish'd with Death, v. 17. and again, v. 21. according to an ancient Law in Noah's Time, Gen. 9. 6. and the very Law of Nature, Gen. 4. 10. (2) That Maims should in like Manner be punished by the Law of Retaliation, v. 19, 20. Not that Men might in these Cases be their own Avengers, but they may appeal to the Civil Magistrate, who shall award Suffering to the Injurious, and Satisfaction to the injured, as shall be thought fit in Proportion to the Hurt done. This Law we had before, Exod. 22. 4, 5. And it was more agreeable to that Dispensation in which was revealed the Rigor of the Law, and what Sin deserv'd, than to the Dispensation we are under, in which is reveal'd the Grace of the Gospel, and the Remission of Sins, and therefore our Saviour has set aside this Law, Matth. 5. 38. not to restrain Magistrates from executing Publick Justice, but to restrain us all from returning personal Injuries, and to oblige us to forgive as we are and hope to be forgiven. (3) That Hurt done willfully to a Neighbour's Cattle should be punish'd, by making good the Damage, v. 18, 21. Thus the Divine Law took not only their Lives, but their Goods also under its Protection. Those Beasts which belong'd to no particular Person, but were as our Law speaks *ferre natura*, it was lawful for them to kill, but not those which any Man had a Property in, Doth God take Care for Oxen? Yes; for our Sakes he doth. (4) That Strangers as well as native Israelites should be both

entitled to the Benefit of this Law, so as not to suffer Wrong, and should be liable to the Penalty of this Law, in Case they did wrong. And it should seem, this is it that brings in these Laws here, to shew how equitable it was that Strangers as well as Israelites should be punished for Blasphemy, because Strangers as well as Israelites were punishable for other Crimes. And there may be this further Reason for the Recognition of these Laws here; God would hereby shew what Provision he had made for Man's Safety in punishing those that were injurious to him, which should be an Argument with Magistrates to be jealous for his Honour, and to punish those that blasphem'd his Name. If God took Care for their Comfort, they ought to take Care for his Glory.

8. The Execution of the Blasphemer; Moses did as it were sign the Warrant for it, he spake unto the Children of Israel to do it, and they did as the Lord commanded Moses, v. 23. This teacheth that Death is the Wages of Sin; and that Blasphemy in particular is an Iniquity to be punished by the Judges. But if those who thus profane the Name of God escape Punishment from Men, yet the Lord our God will not suffer them to escape his Righteous Judgments. This Blasphemer was the first that died by the Law of Moses, Stephen, the first that died for the Gospel, died by the Abuse of this Law; the Martyr and the Malefactor suffered the same Death; but how vast the Difference between them!

CHAP. XXV.

The Law of this Chapter concerns the Lands and Estates of the Israelites in Canaan, the occupying and transferring of which were to be under the Divine Direction as well as the Management of Religious Worship; for as the Tabernacle was a Holy House, so Canaan was a Holy Land; and upon that Account, as much as any thing, it was the Glory of all Lands. In token of a peculiar Title God had to this Land, and a Right to dispose of it, he appointed, 1. That every seventh Year should be a Year of Rest from occupying the Land, a Sabbatical Year, v. 1—7. In this God expected from them extraordinary Instances of Faith and Obedience, and they might expect from God extraordinary Instances of Power and Goodness in providing for them, v. 18, 22. 2. That every fiftieth Year should be a Year of Jubilee, that is, (1) a Year of Release of Debts, and Mortgages, and return to the Possession of their alienated Lands, v. 8, 17. Particular Directions are given, 1. Concerning the Sale and Redemption of Lands, v. 23, 28. 2. Of Houses in Cities and Villages, with a Proviso for Levites Cities, v. 29, 34. (2) A Year of Release of Servants and Bond-Slaves. (1) Here is inserted a Law for the kind Usage of poor Debtors, v. 35, 38. (2) Then comes the Law for the Discharge of all Israelites that were sold for Servants in the Year of Jubilee, if they were not redeem'd before. (1) If they were sold to Israelites, v. 39, 46. And, (2) if sold to Profelytes, v. 47, 55. All these Appointments have something Moral and of perpetual Obligation in them, though in the Letter of them they were not only peculiar to the Jewish Nation, but to them only while they were in Canaan.

1. AND the LORD spake unto Moses in Mount Sinai, saying, 2. Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath unto the LORD. 3. Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof. 4. But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the LORD: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard. 5. That which groweth of its own accord of thy harvest, thou shalt not reap, neither gather the grapes of thy wine undressed: for it is a year of rest unto the land. 6. And the sabbath of the land shall be meat for you; for thee, and for thy servant, and for thy maid, and for thy hired servant, and for thy stranger that sojourneth with thee. 7. And for thy cattle, and for the beast that are in thy land, shall all the increase thereof be meat.

The Law of Moses laid a great deal of Stress upon the Sabbath, the Sanctification of which was the earliest and most ancient of all Divine Institutions, designed for the keeping up of the Knowledge and Worship of the Creator among Men; and not only revived the Observance of Sabbath Days every Week, but for the further Advancement of the Honour of them added the Institution of a Sabbatical Year, v. 4. In the seventh Year shall be a Sabbath of Rest unto the Land. And hence the Jews collected that vulgar Tradition, That after the World had stood

six Thousand Years, (a Thousand Years being to God as one Day) it shall cease, and the eternal Sabbath shall succeed. A weak Foundation on which to build the fixing of that Day and Hour which it is God's Prerogative to know. The Sabbatical Year began in September at the End of Harvest, the seventh Month of their Ecclesiastical Year: And the Law was, 1. That at the Seed-time, which immediately follow'd the End of their in-gathering, they should sow no Corn in their Land, and that they should not in the Spring dress their Vineyard, and consequently expect neither Harvest nor Vintage the next Year. 2. That what their Ground did produce of itself they should not claim any Property in, nor Use, otherwise than from Hand to Mouth, but leave it for the Poor, Servants, Strangers, and Cattle, *v. 5, 6, 7.* It must be a Sabbath of Rest to the Land; They must neither do any Work about it, nor expect any Fruit from it, all Annual Labours must be intermitted in the seventh Year, as much as daily Labours on the seventh Day. The Jews say, They began not to reckon for the Sabbatical Year till they had completed the Conquest of Canaan, which was in the eighth Year of Joshua; the seventh Year after that was the first Sabbatical Year, and so the fiftieth Year was the Jubilee. This Year there was to be a general Release of Debts, *Deut. 15, 1, 2.* And a publick reading of the Law in the Feast, *Deut. 31, 10, 11.* to make it the more solemn.

Now, 1. God would hereby shew them that he was their Landlord, and they were Tenants at Will under him. Landlords use to condition with their Tenants, when they shall break up their Ground, how long they shall till it, and when they shall let it rest: God would thus give, grant, and convey that good Land to them under such Proviso's and Limitations as should let them know they were not Proprietors, but Dependants on their Lord, 2. It was a Kindness to their Land to let it rest sometimes, and would keep it in Heart (as our Husbandmen express it) for Posterity, whose Satisfaction God would have them to consult, and not to use the Ground, as if it were design'd for one Age only. 3. When they were thus for a whole Year taken off from all Country Business, they would have the more Leisure to attend the Exercises of Religion, and to get the Knowledge of God and his Law. 4. They were hereby taught to be charitable and generous, and not to engross all to themselves, but to be willing that others should share with them in the Gifts of God's Bounty, which the Earth brought forth of itself. 5. They were brought to live in a constant Dependence upon the Divine Providence, finding that as Man lives not by Bread alone, so he has Bread not by his own Industry alone, but, if God pleases, by the Word of Blessing from the Mouth of God, without any Care or Pains of Man, *Matth. 4, 4.* 6. They were minded of the easy Life Man liv'd in Paradise, when he eat of every good thing, not as since in the Sweat of his Face, Labour and Toil came in with Sin. 7. They were taught to consider how the Poor lived that did neither sow nor reap, even by the Blessing of God upon a little. Lastly, This Year of Rest typified the Spiritual Rest which all Believers enter into through Christ, our true Noah, who giveth us Comfort and Rest concerning our Work and the Toil of our Hands, because of the Ground which the Lord hath cursed, *Gen. 3, 29.* Through him we are eas'd of the Burthen of Worldly Care and Labour, both being sanctified and sweetned to us, and we are enabled and encouraged to live by Faith. And as the Fruits of this Sabbath of the Land were enjoy'd in common, so the Salvation wrought out by Christ is a Common Salvation; and this Sabbatical Year seem'd to have been revived in the Christian Church, when the Believers had all things common, *Acts 2, 44.*

8 ¶ And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years, and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. 9 Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound, on the tenth day of the seventh month; in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. 10 And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land; unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you, and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family. 11 A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be unto you: ye shall not sow, neither reap that which groweth of itself in it, nor gather the grapes in it of thy vine undressed. 12 For it is the jubilee, it shall be holy unto you: ye shall eat the increase thereof out of the field. 13 In the year of this jubilee, ye shall return every man unto his possession. 14 And if thou sell ought unto thy

neighbour, or buyest ought of thy neighbours hand, ye shall not oppress one another. 15 According to the number of years after the jubilee thou shalt buy of thy neighbour, and according unto the number of years of the fruits he shall sell unto thee: 16 According to the multitude of years thou shalt increase the price thereof, and according to the fewness of years thou shalt diminish the price of it: for according to the number of the years of the fruits doth he sell unto thee. 17 Ye shall not therefore oppress one another; but thou shalt fear thy God: For I am the LORD your God. 18 ¶ Wherefore ye shall do my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them; and ye shall dwell in the land in safety. 19 And the land shall yield her fruit, and ye shall eat your fill, and dwell therein in safety. 20 And if ye shall say, What shall we eat the seventh year? behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase: 21 Then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years. 22 And ye shall sow the eighth year, and eat yet of old fruit, until the ninth year; until her fruits come in, ye shall eat of the old store.

Here's 1. The general Institution of the Jubilee, *v. 8, 9, 10, 11.*

1. When it was to be observ'd after seven Sabbaths of Years, *v. 8.* Whether the Forty-ninth or the Fiftieth is a great Question among Learned Men: That it should be the seventh Sabbatical Year, that is, the Forty-ninth (which by a very common Form of Speech is called the Fiftieth) seems to me most probable, and is I think made pretty clear by that learned Chronologer Calvisius, and the Objections remov'd; but this is not a Place for the arguing of it. Seven Sabbaths of Weeks were reckon'd from the Passover to the Feast of Pentecost, (or Fiftieth Day, for so Pentecost signifies) and so Seven Sabbaths of Years from one Jubilee to another, and the seventh is called the Fiftieth: And all this Honour is put upon the seventh, for the Sake of God's resting the seventh Day from the Work of Creation, *Gen. 2, 2, 3.*

2. How it was to be proclaim'd, with Sound of Trumpet in all Parts of the Country, *v. 9.* both to give Notice to all Persons of it, and to express their Joy and Triumph in it; and the Word Jubilee is suppos'd to signify some particular Sound of the Trumpet distinguishable from any other, for the Trumpet that gives an uncertain Sound is of little Service, *1 Cor. 14, 8.* The Trumpet was sounded in the Close of the Day of Atonement, thence the Jubilee commenc'd: And very fitly, when they had been humbling and afflicting their Souls for Sin, then they were made to hear this Voice of Joy and Gladness, *Psal. 51, 8.* When their Peace was made with God, then Liberty was proclaim'd; for the Removal of Guilt is necessary to make way for the Entrance of all true Comfort, *Rom. 5, 1, 2.* In Allusion to this solemn Proclamation of the Jubilee it was foretold concerning our Lord Jesus, that he should preach the acceptable Year of the Lord, *Luk. 4, 6, 21.* He sent his Apostles to proclaim it with the Trumpet of the everlasting Gospel, which they were to preach to every Creature. And it stands still foretold that at the last Day the Trumpet shall sound, which shall release the dead out of the Bondage of the Grave, and restore us to our Possessions.

3. What was to be done in that Year, extraordinary: Besides the common Rest of the Land, which was observ'd every Sabbatical Year, *v. 11, 12.* and the Release of Personal Debts, *Deut. 15, 2, 3.* there was to be the legal Restoration of every Israelite to all the Property and all the Liberty which had been alienated from him since the last Jubilee; so that never was any People so secured in their Liberty and Property (those Glories of a People) as Israel was: Effectual Care was taken that while they kept close to God, these should not only not be taken from them by the Violence of others, but not thrown away for their own Folly, *1 Cor. 14, 8.*

1. The Property which every Man had in his Dividend of the Land of Canaan, could not be alienated any longer than till the Year of Jubilee; or then he or his should return to it, and have a Title to it as undisputed, and the Possession of it as undisturbed as ever, *v. 10, 11.* Ye shall return every Man to his Possession; so that if a Man had sold or mortgaged his Estate or any Part of it, it should then return to him or his Heirs free of all Charge and Encumbrance. Now this was no wrong to the Purchaser, because the Year of Jubilee was fix'd, and every Man knew when it would come, and made his Bargain accordingly. But our Law indeed, if Lands be granted to a Man and his Heirs upon Condition that he shall never sell

or alien them, the Grant is good, but the Condition is void, and repugnant; *iniquum est inferius hominibus* (say the Lawyers) *non esse liberum rerum suarum alienationem*. Yet disagreed in the Books that if the King grant Lands to a Man in Fee upon Condition he shall not alien, the Condition is good. Now God would shew his People Israel that their Land was his, and they were his Tenants, and therefore he ties them up that they shall not have Power to sell, but only to make Leases for any Term of Years not going beyond the next Jubilee. By this Means it was provided. (1.) That their Genealogies should be carefully preserved, which would be of Use for clearing out Saviour's Pedigree. (2.) That the Distinction of Tribes should be kept up, for though a Man might purchase Lands in another Tribe, yet he could not remain there longer than till the Year of Jubilee, and then they would revert of Course. (3.) That none should grow exorbitantly rich, by laying House to House, and Field to Field, Isa. 5. 8. But should rather apply themselves to the cultivating of what they had, than the enlarging of their Possessions. The Wisdom of the Roman Common-wealth sometimes provided that no Man should be Master of above 500 Acres. (4.) That no Family should be sunk and ruin'd, and condemn'd to perpetual Poverty. This particular Care God took for the Support of the Honour of that People, and the preserving of that good Land, not only to the Nation in general, but every Man's Share to his Family in particular, for a perpetual Inheritance, that it might the better typify that good part which should never be taken away from those that have it.

2. The Liberty which every Man was born to, if it were sold or forfeited, should likewise return at the Year of Jubilee, v. 10. *Ye shall return every Man to his Family*. Those that were sold into other Families, thereby became Strangers to their own; but in this Year of Redemption they were to return. This was typical of our Redemption by Christ from the Slavery of Sin and Satan, and our Restoration to the glorious Liberty of the Children of God. Some compute that the very Year in which Christ died was a Year of Jubilee, and the last that ever was kept. But however that be, we are sure 'tis the Son that makes us free, and then we are free indeed.

3. A Law upon this Occasion against Oppression in buying and selling of Land; neither the Buyer nor the Seller must over-reach, v. 14, 15, 16, 17. In short, the Buyer must not give less, nor the Seller take more than the just Value of the thing, considered as necessarily returning at the Year of Jubilee. It must be settled what the clear yearly Value of the Land was, and then how many Years Purchase it was worth till the Year of Jubilee. But they must reckon only Years of the Fruits, v. 15, and therefore must discount for the Sabbatical Years. It is easy to observe, that the nearer the Jubilee was, the less must the Value of the Land be, according to the Fewness of the Years thou shalt diminish the Price. But we do not find it so easy practically to infer from thence, that the nearer the World comes to its Period, the less Value we should put upon the things of it: Because the Time is short, and the Fashion of the World passeth away; let those that buy be as though they possessed not. One would put little Value on an old House, that's ready to drop down.

All Bargains ought to be made by this Rule; *Ye shall not oppress one another*, not take Advantage of one another's Ignorance or Necessity, but thou shalt fear thy God. Note, The Fear of God reigning in the Heart would effectually restrain us from doing any Wrong to our Neighbour in Word or Deed; for though Men be not, God is the Avenger of those that go beyond or defraud their Brethren, 1 Ths. 4. 6. Perhaps Nehemiah refers to this very Law, Chap. 5. 15. where he tells us, that he did not oppress those he had under his Power; because of the Fear of God.

4. Assurance given them that they should be no Losers, but great Gainers by observing these Years of Rest. It is promised, 1. That they should be safe, v. 18. *Ye shall dwell in the Land in Safety*. And again, v. 19. The Word signifies both outward Safety, and inward Security and Confidence of Spirit, that they should be quiet both from Evil, and from the Fear of Evil. 2. That they should be rich; *Ye shall eat your fill*. Note, If we be careful to do our Duty, we may cheerfully trust God with our Comfort. 3. That they should not want Food convenient that Year, in which they did neither sow nor reap, v. 21. *I will command my Blessing in the sixth Year, and it shall bring forth Fruit for three Years*. This was (1.) a standing Miracle, that whereas at other times one Year did but serve to bring in another, the Products of the sixth Year should serve to bring in the ninth. Note, The Blessing of God upon our Provision will make a little go a great way, and satisfy even the Poor with Bread, Psal. 132. 15. It was (2.) a lasting Memorial of the Manna, which was given double on the sixth Day for two Days. And (3.) 'twas intended for an Encouragement to all God's People in all Ages, to trust him in the way of Duty, and to cast their Care upon him. There's nothing lost by Faith and Self-denial in our Obedience.

23. The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine, for ye are strangers and sojourners with me. 24 And in all the land of your possession; ye shall grant a redemption for the land. 25 If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away some of his possession, and if any of his kin come to redeem it, then shall he redeem that which his brother sold. 26 And if the man have none to redeem it, and himself be able to redeem it: 27 Then let him count the years of the sale thereof, and restore the overplus unto the man to whom he sold it; that he may return unto his possession. 28 But if he be not able to restore it to him; then that which is sold, shall remain in the hand of him that hath bought it, until the year of jubilee: and in the jubilee it shall go out, and he shall return unto his possession. 29 And if a man sell a dwelling house in a walled city, then he may redeem it within a whole year after it is sold: within a full year may he redeem it. 30 And if it be not redeemed within the space of a full year: then the house that is in the walled city, shall be established for ever to him that bought it, throughout his generations: it shall not go out in the jubilee. 31 But the houses of the villages which have no walls round about them, shall be counted as the fields of the country: they may be redeemed, and they shall go out in the jubilee. 32 Notwithstanding the cities of the Levites, and the houses of the cities of their possession, may the Levites redeem at any time. 33 And if a man purchase of the Levites, then the house that was sold, and the city of his possession shall go out in the year of jubilee: for the houses of the cities of the Levites are their possession among the children of Israel. 34 But the field of their suburbs of their cities may not be sold, for it is their perpetual possession. 35 If thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee, then thou shalt relieve him: yea though he be a stranger, or a sojourner; that he may live with thee. 36 Take thou no usury of him, or increase: but fear thy God, that thy brother may live with thee. 37 Thou shalt not give him thy money upon usury, nor lend him thy victuals for increase. 38 I am the LORD your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan, and to be your God.

Here's 1. A Law concerning the real Estate of the Israelites in the Land of Canaan, and the transferring of them.

1. That no Land should be sold for ever, from the Family to whose Lot it fell in the Division of the Land. And the Reason given is, *The Land is mine, and ye are strangers and sojourners with me*, v. 23. (1.) God having a particular Propriety in this Land, he would by this Restraint keep them sensible of it. The Possessions of God's People, who having given up themselves to God have therewith given up all they have to him, are in a particular manner at his Dispose, and his Disposal of them must be submitted to. (2.) They being Strangers and Sojourners with him in that Land, and having his Tabernacle among them; to alien their part of that Land would be in effect to cut themselves off from their Fellowship and Communion with God, which that was a Token and Symbol of. For which Reason Naboth would rather incur the Wrath of a King, than part with the Inheritance of his Fathers, 1 Kings 21. 3.

2. That if a Man were constrain'd through Poverty to sell his Land, for the Subsistence of his Family, yet if afterwards he were able, he might redeem it, before the Year of Jubilee, v. 24, 25, 27. and the Price must be settled according to the Number of Years since the Sale, and before the Jubilee.

3. That if the Person himself were not able to redeem it, his next Kinsman might, v. 27. The Redeemer therefore, he that is near unto him shall come and shall redeem, so it might be said. The Kinsman is called God, the Redeemer, Numb. 1. 8. Ruth 2. 20. to whom belonged the Right of redeeming the Land: And this typified Christ, who assumed our Nature, that he might be our Kinsman, Bone of our Bone, and Flesh of our Flesh,

Flesh, and being the only Kinsman we have that is able to do it, to him belong'd the Right of Redemption. As for all our other Kinsmen, their Shoe must be pluck'd off, *Ruth* 4. 6, 7. they cannot redeem; but Christ can, and hath redeemed the Inheritance, which we by Sin had forfeited and alienated, and made a new Settlement of it upon all that by Faith become allied to him. We know that this Redeemer liveth, *Job* 19. 25. And some make this Duty of the Kinsman to signify the Brotherly Love that should be among Christians; inclining them to recover those that are fallen, and to restore them with the Spirit of Meekness.

4. That if the Land were not redeem'd before the Year of Jubilee, then it should return of Course to him that had sold or mortgaged it, *v. 28. In the Jubilee it shall go out.* This was a Figure of the free Grace of God towards us in Christ, by which, and not by any Price or Merit of our own, we are restored to the Favour of God, and become entitled to Paradise, from which our first Parents, and we in them, were expell'd for Disobedience.

5. A Difference was made between Houses in walled Cities, and Lands in the Country, or Houses in Country Villages. Houses in walled Cities were more the Fruits of their own Industry, than Land in the Country, which was the immediate Gift of God's Bounty; and therefore if a Man sold a House in a City, he might redeem it any time within a Year after the Sale, but otherwise it was confirmed to the Purchaser for ever, and should not return, no not at the Year of Jubilee, *v. 29. 30.* This Provision was made to encourage Strangers and Profelytes to come and settle among them. Though they could not purchase Lands in Canaan to them and their Heirs, yet they might purchase Houses in walled Cities, which would be most convenient for them who were suppos'd to live by Trade. But Country Houses could be dispos'd of no otherwise than as Lands might.

6. A Clause is added in Favour of the Levites, by way of Exception from these Rules. (1.) Dwelling Houses in the Cities of the Levites might be redeem'd at any time, and if not redeem'd should revert in the Year of Jubilee, *v. 32, 33.* because the Levites had no other Possessions but Cities, and their Suburbs, and God would shew that the Levites were his peculiar Care; and it was for his Interest of the Publick that they should not be impoverish'd or worm'd out of their Inheritances. (2.) The Fields adjoining to their Cities (*Numb. 35. 4, 5.*) might not be sold at any time, for they belong'd not to particular Levites, but to the City of the Levites, as a Corporation, who could not alien without a Wrong to their Tribe; therefore if any of those Fields were sold, the Bargain was void, *v. 34.* Even the Egyptians took Care to preserve the Priests Lands, *Gen. 47. 22.* And there is no less Reason for the taking of the Maintenance of the Gospel Ministry under the special Protection of Christian Governments.

2. A Law for the Relief of the Poor, and the tender Usage of poor Debtors; and these are of more general and perpetual Obligation than the former.

1. The Poor must be relieved, *v. 35.* Here's 1. Our Brother's Poverty and Distress supposed, *if thy Brother be waxen poor*; not only thy Brother by Nation as a Jew, but thy Brother by Nature as a Man, for it follows, *through he be a Stranger or a Sojourner.* All Men are to be look'd upon and treated as Brethren, for we have all one Father, *Mal. 2. 10.* Though he be poor yet still he is thy Brother, and is to be lov'd and own'd as a Brother. Poverty doth not destroy the Relation. Tho' a Son of Abraham, yet he may wax poor, and fall into decay. Note, Poverty and Decay are great Grievances, and very common, *The Poor ye have always with you.* 2. Our Duty enjoyn'd, *Thou shalt relieve him.* By Sympathy, pitying the Poor; by Service, doing for them; and by Supply, giving to them according to their Necessity and thine Ability.

2. Poor Debtors must not be oppress'd. *if thy Brother be waxen poor,* and have Occasion to borrow Money of thee for the necessary Support of his Family, *Take thou no Usury of him,* either for Money or Victuals, *v. 36, 37.* And thus far this Law binds still, but could never be thought binding where Money is borrowed for Purchase of Lands, Trade, or other Improvements, for there 'tis reasonable that the Lender share with the Borrower in the Profit. The Law here is plainly intended for the Relief of the Poor, to whom it is sometimes as great a Charity to lend freely as to give. Observe the Arguments here used against Extortion. 1. God patronizeth the Poor; *Fear thy God,* who will reckon with thee for all Injuries done to the Poor: Thou fearest not them, but fear him. 2. Relieve the Poor that they may live with thee, and some way or other they may be serviceable to thee. The Rich can as ill spare the Hands of the Poor, as the Poor can the Purfes of the Rich. 3. The same Argument is used to enforce this Precept that prefaceth all the Ten Commandments, *v. 38. I am the Lord your God which brought you out of Egypt.* Note, It becomes those that have received Mercy, to shew Mercy. If God has been gracious to us, we ought not to be rigorous with our Brethren.

39. And if thy brother that dwelleth by thee be waxen poor and be sold unto thee; thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bondservant: 40. But as an hired servant, and as a sojourner, he shall be with thee, and shall serve thee unto the year of jubilee. 41. And then shall he depart from thee, both he and his children with him, and shall return unto his own family, and unto the possession of his fathers shall he return. 42. For they are my servants, which I brought forth out of the land of Egypt: they shall not be sold as bondmen. 43. Thou shalt not rule over him with rigour, but shalt fear thy God. 44. Both thy bondmen, and thy bondmaids, which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen that are round about you; of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids. 45. Moreover, of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you; of them shall ye buy; and of their families that are with you, which they begat in your land: and they shall be your possession. 46. And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession, they shall be your bondmen for ever: but over your brethren the children of Israel, ye shall not rule one over another with rigor. 47. And if a sojourner or stranger wax rich by thee, and thy brother that dwelleth by him wax poor, and sell himself unto the stranger or sojourner by thee, or to the stock of the strangers family: 48. After that he is sold, he may be redeemed again; one of his brethren may redeem him. 49. Either his uncle, or his uncles son may redeem him; or any that is nigh of kin unto him of his family, may redeem him; or if he be able, he may redeem himself. 50. And he shall reckon with him that bought him, from the year that he was sold to him, unto the year of jubilee: and the price of his sale shall be according to the number of years, according to the time of an hired servant shall it be with him. 51. If there be yet many years behind, according unto them he shall give again the price of his redemption, out of the money that he was bought for. 52. And if there remain but few years unto the year of jubilee, then he shall count with him, and according to his years shall he give him again the price of his redemption. 53. And as a yearly hired servant shall he be with him: and the other shall not rule with rigour over him in thy sight. 54. And if he be not redeemed in these years, then he shall go out in the year of jubilee, both he, and his children with him. 55. For unto me the children of Israel are servants, they are my servants whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.

We have here the Laws concerning Servitude, design'd to preserve the Honour of the Jewish Nation, as a Free People; and rescued by a Divine Power out of the House of Bondage, into the glorious Liberty of God's Sons his First-born. Now the Law is, 1. That a native Israelite should never be made a Bondman for Perpetuity. If he were sold for Debt or for a Crime by the House of Judgment, he was to serve but six Years, and to go out the seventh, that was appointed, *Exod. 21. 2.* But if he sold himself, through extream Poverty, having nothing at all left him to preserve his Life, and 'twas to one of his own Nation that he sold himself; in such a Case it is here provided (1.) That he should not serve as a Bond-servant, *v. 39.* not be sold with the Sale of a Bondman, *v. 42. i. e.* it must not be look'd upon that his Master that brought him had as absolute a Property in him, as in a Captive taken in War, that might be used, sold, and bequeathed at Pleasure, as much as a Man's Cattle; no, he shall serve thee as a hired Servant, whom the Master has the Use of only, but not a Despotick Power over. And the Reason is, *They are my Servants*, *v. 41.* God doth not make his Servants Slaves, and therefore their Brethren must not. God had redeemed them out of Egypt, and therefore they must never be expos'd to Sale as Bondmen. The Apostle applies this

this Spiritually, 1 Cor. 7. 23. *Ye are bought with a Price; be not ye the Servants of Men, i. e. of the Lusts of Men, no nor of your own Lusts; for being become the Servants of God, we must not let Sin reign in our mortal Bodies.* Rom. 6. 12, 22. (2.) That while he did serve he should not be *ru'd with Rigor*, as the Israelites were in Egypt, v. 43. Both his Work and his Usage must be such as was fitting for a Son of Abraham. Masters are still required to give to their Servants that which is just and equal, Col. 4. 1. They may be us'd, but must not be abus'd. Those Masters that are always hectoring and domineering over their Servants, taunting them, and trampling upon them, that are unreasonable in exacting Work, and giving Rebukes, and rule them with an high Hand, forget that their Master is in Heaven; and what will they do when he riseth up? as Holy Job reasons with himself, Job 31. 13, 14. (3.) That at the Year of Jubilee he should go out free, he and his Children, and should return to his own Family, v. 41. This typified our Redemption from the Service of Sin and Satan; by the Grace of God in Christ, whose Truth makes us free, John 8. 32. The Jewish Writers say, That for ten Days before the Jubilee Trumpet sounded, the Servants that were to be discharged by it did express their great Joy by Feasting, and wearing Garlands on their Heads: It is therefore called the *joyful Sound*, Psal. 89. 15. And we are thus to rejoice in the Liberty we have by Christ.

2. That they might purchase Bondmen of the Heathen Nations that were round about them, or of those Strangers that sojourn'd among them, (except of those seven Nations that were to be destroyed) and might claim a Dominion over them, and entail them upon their Families, as an Inheritance, for the Year of Jubilee should give no Discharge to them, v. 44, 45, 46. Thus in our English Plantations the Negroes only are us'd as Slaves, how much to the Credit of Christianity I shall not say. Now, 1. This Authority they had over the Bondmen they purchased from the Neighbour Nations, was in Pursuance of the Blessings of Jacob, Gen. 27. 29. *Let People serve thee.* 2. It figur'd the bringing in of the Gentiles to the Service of Christ and his Church, *Ask of me, and I will give thee the Heathen for thine Inheritance*, Psal. 2. 9. And it is promised Isa. 61. 5, *Strangers shall stand and feed your Flocks, and the Sons of the Alien shall be your Vine-dressers*, see Rev. 2. 26, 27. The Upright shall have the Dominion of the Morning, Psal. 49. 14. 3. It intimates that none shall have the Benefit of the Gospel Jubilee, but those only that are Israelites indeed, and the Children of Abraham by Faith: As for those that continue Heathenish, they continue Bondmen. See this turn'd upon the unbelieving Jews themselves, Gal. 4. 25. where Jerusalem, when she had rejected Christ, is said to be *in Bondage with her Children*, Gal. 4. 25. Let me only add here, That though they are not forbidden to rule their Bondmen with Rigor, yet the Jewish Doctors say, It is the Property of Mercy, and Way of Wisdom, that a Man should be compassionate, and not make his Yoke heavy upon any Servant that he hath.

3. That if an Israelite sold himself for a Servant to a wealthy Profelyte that sojourn'd among them, Care should be taken that he should have the same Advantages, as if he had sold himself to an Israelite, and in some Respects greater. 1. That he should have the same Advantages, viz. Not to serve as a Bondman, but as a hired Servant, and not to be *ru'd with Rigor*, (v. 53.) in *thy Sight*, which intimated that the Jewish Magistrates should particularly have an Eye to him, and if he were abus'd should take Cognizance of it, and redress his Grievances, though the injur'd Servant did not himself complain. Also he was to go free at the Year of Jubilee, v. 54. Tho' the Sons of Strangers might serve them for ever, yet the Sons of Israel might not serve Strangers for ever; yet the Servant here having made himself a Slave by his own Act and Deed, should not go out in the seventh Year of Release, but in the Jubilee only. 2. That he should have this further Advantage, that he might be *redeem'd* again, before the Year of Jubilee, v. 48, 49. He that had sold himself to an Israelite might, if ever he were able, redeem himself, but his Relations had no Right to redeem him; but if a Man sold himself to a Stranger, the Jews say, his Relations were *urg'd* to redeem him; if they did not, 'twas fit he should be *redeem'd* at the publick Charge, which we find done, Neh. 5. 8. The Price of his Ransom was to be computed according to the Prospect of the Year of Jubilee, v. 50, 51, 52. as in the Redemption of Land, v. 15, 16. The Learned Bishop Patrick quotes one of the Jewish Rabbins for an Evangelical Exposition of that Appointment, v. 48. *One of his Brethren shall redeem him*; This Redeemer (saith the Rabbi) is the Messiah the Son of David. They expected this Messiah to be their Redeemer out of their Captivity, and to restore them to their own Land again; but we welcome him as the Redeemer who shall come to Zion, and shall turn away Ungodliness from Jacob, for he shall save his People from their Sins; and under this Notion there were those that look'd for Redemption in Jerusalem.

C H A P. XXVI.

This Chapter is a solemn Conclusion of the main Body of the Levitical Law: The Precepts that follow in this and the following Book either relate to some particular Matters, or are Repetitions and Explications of the foregoing Institutions. Now this Chapter contains a general Enforcement of all those Laws by Promises of Reward, in Case of Obedience on the one Hand, and Threatnings of Punishment for Disobedience on the other Hand; the former to work upon Hope, the latter on Fear, these two Handles of the Soul, by which it is taken hold of and manag'd. Here's 1. A Repetition of two or three of the principal of the Commandments, v. 1, 2, 3. 2. An inviting Promise of all good things, if they would but keep God's Commandments, v. 3, 13. 3. A terrible Threatning of ruining Judgments which would be brought upon them, if they were refractory and disobedient; v. 14, 39. 4. A gracious Promise of the Return of Mercy to those of them that would repent and reform, v. 40, &c. Deut. 28. is parallel to this.

YE shall make you no idols, nor graven image, neither rear you up a standing image, neither shall ye set up any image of stone in your land, to bow down unto it: for I am the LORD your God. 2. Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the LORD. 3. If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them; 4. Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. 5. And your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time: and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely. 6. And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid: and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land. 7. And ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword. 8. And five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight: and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword. 9. For I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish my covenant with you. 10. And ye shall eat old store, and bring forth the old because of the new. 11. And I will set my tabernacle amongst you; and my soul shall not abhor you. 12. And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people. 13. I am the LORD your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, that ye should not be their bondmen; and I have broken the bands of your yoke, and made you go upright.

Here's 1. The inculcating of those Precepts of the Law which were of the greatest Consequence, and by which especially their Obedience will be tried, v. 1, 2. They are the Abstract of the second and fourth Commandments; which, as they are by much the largest in the Dialogue, so they are most frequently insisted on in other parts of the Law. As when a Master has given many things in Charge to his Servant, he concludes with the Repetition of those things which were of the greatest Importance, and which the Servant was most in Danger of neglecting, bidding him, whatever he did, be sure to remember those; so here, God by Moses, after many Precepts, closes all with a special Charge to observe these two great Commandments. (1.) Be sure you never worship Images, nor ever make any sort of Image or Pictures for a Religious Use, v. 1. No Sin more provoking to God than this, and yet none that they were more addicted to, and which afterwards proved of more pernicious Consequence to them. Next to God's Being, Unity, and universal Influence, 'tis necessary we know and believe, That he is an Infinite Spirit, and therefore to represent him by an Image in the making of it, to confine him to an Image in the consecrating of it, and to worship him by an Image in bowing down to it, changes his Truth into a Lye, and his Glory into Shame, as much as any thing. (2.) Be sure you keep up a great Veneration for Sabbaths, and Religious Assemblies, v. 2. As nothing tends more to corrupt Religion than the Use of Images in Devotion, so nothing contributes more to the Support of it than keeping the Sabbaths, and reveren-

ing the Sanctuary. These make up very much of the *Instrumental Part of Religion*, by which the *Essentials* of it are kept up. Therefore we find in the Prophets, that next to the Sin of Idolatry, there is no Sin for which the *Jews* are more frequently reprov'd and threaten'd, than the Profanation of the Sabbath-Day.

2. Great Encouragements given them to live in a constant Obedience to all God's Commandments, largely and strongly assuring them that if they did so, they should be a happy People, and should be blessed with all the good Things they could desire. Humane Governments enforce their Laws with Penalties to be inflicted for the Breach of them; but God will be known as *The Rewarder of those that seek and serve him*.

Let us take a View of these great and precious Promises, which though they relate chiefly to the Life that now is, and to the publick National Concerns of that People, yet they were typical of the Spiritual Blessings entail'd by the Covenant of Grace upon all Believers through Christ.

1. Plenty and Abundance of the Fruits of the Earth. They should have *seasonable Rain*, neither too little nor too much, but what was requisite for *their Land*, which was water'd with the Dew of Heaven, *Deut. 11. 10, 11.* that it might *yield its Increase*, v. 4. The Dependence which the Fruitfulness of the Earth beneath, hath upon the Influences of Heaven above, is a sensible Intimation to us, that every good and perfect Gift must be expected from above from the *Father of Lights*. 'Tis promis'd that the Earth should produce its Fruits in such great Abundance, that they would be kept in full Employment, during both the Harvest and the Vintage, to gather it in, v. 5. Before they had reap'd their Corn, and thrash'd it, the Vintage would be ready; and before they had finish'd their Vintage, it would be high Time to begin their Sowing. Long Harvests are often with us the Consequences of bad Weather, but with them they should be the Effects of a great Increase. This signified the Plenty of Grace, which should be pour'd out in Gospel-times, when the *Plowman shall overtake the Reaper*, Amos 9. 13. and a great Harvest of Souls should be gather'd in to Christ. The Plenty should be so great, that they should *bring forth the old to be given away to the Poor, because of the new*, to make Room for it in their Barns, which yet they would not pull down to build greater, as that rich Fool, *Luke 12. 19.* for God gave them this Abundance to be laid out, not to be hoarded up from one Year to another. *He that withholdeth Corn, the People shall curse him*, Prov. 11. 26. That Promise, *Mal. 3. 10.* *I will pour you out a Blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it*, explains this here, v. 10. And that which crowns this Blessing of Plenty, is that, v. 5. you shall eat your Bread to the full, which intimates, not only that they should have Abundance, but that they should have Content, and Satisfaction in it. They should have enough, and should know when they had enough. Thus the *Mulek shall eat and be satisfied*, Psal. 22. 26.

2. Peace under the Divine Protection, v. 5. *Ye shall dwell in your Land safely*; both really safe, and safe in your own Apprehension; ye shall lie down to rest in the Power and Promise of God, and not only none shall hurt you, but none shall so much as make you afraid, v. 6. see *Psal. 4. 8.* They should not be infested with wild Beasts, those should be *rid out of the Land*, or as it is promis'd, *Job 5. 23.* should be at Peace with them; nor should they be terrified with the Alarms of War, *neither shall the Sword go thro' your Land*. This holy Security is promis'd to all the Faithful, *Psal. 91. 1, &c.* Those must needs dwell in Safety that dwell in God, *Job 11. 18, 19.*

3. Victory and Success in their Wars abroad, while they had Peace and Tranquility at Home, v. 7, 8. And that the Hand of God should so signally appear with them in their Conquests, that no Disproportion of Numbers should make against them, *Free of you shall have Courage to attack, and Strength to chase and defeat a Hundred*, as Jonathan did, *1 Sam. 14. 13.* experiencing the Truth of his own Maxim, v. 6. That it is all one with the Lord to *save by many or by few*.

4. The Increase of their People. *I will make you fruitful, and multiply you*, v. 9. Thus the Promise made to Abraham must be fulfill'd, that his Seed should be *as the Dust of the Earth*; and much more numerous they had been, if they had not by their Sin cut themselves short. 'Tis promis'd to the Gospel Church, that it shall be fruitful, *John 15. 16.*

5. The Favour of God, which is the Fountain of all Good. *I will have Respect unto you*, v. 9. If the Eye of our Faith be unto God, the Eye of his Favour will be unto us. More is implied than is express'd in that Promise, *my Soul shall not abhor you*, v. 11. as there is in that Threatning, *My Soul shall have no Pleasure in him*, *Heb. 10. 38.* Though there was that among them which might just have alienated him from them, yet if they would closely adhere to his Institutions, he would not abhor them.

6. The Tokens of his Presence in and by his Ordinances, *I will set my Tabernacle among you*, v. 11. 'Twas their Honour and Advantage that God's Tabernacle was lately erected among them, but he here lets them know that the Continuance

and Establishment of it depended upon their good Behaviour. The Tabernacle that was now set, should be settled if they would be obedient, else not. Note, The Way to have God's Ordinances fix among us, as a Nail in a sure Place, is to cleave closely to the Institution of them. 'Tis added, v. 12. *I will walk among you, with Delight and Satisfaction, as a Man in his Garden; I will keep up Communion with you, as a Man walking with his Friend.* This seems to be alluded to, *Rev. 2. 1.* where Christ is said to walk in the midst of the golden Candlesticks.

7. The Grace of the Covenant, is the Fountain and Foundation, the Sweetness and Security of all these Blessings, *I establish my Covenant with you*, v. 9. Let them perform their Part of the Covenant, and God would not fail to perform his. All Covenant Blessings are sum'd up in the Covenant Relation, v. 12. *I will be your God, and ye shall be my People*; and grounded upon their Redemption, v. 13. *I am your God, because I brought you forth out of the Land of Egypt.* Having purchas'd them he would own them, and never cast them off till they cast him off. He broke their Yoke, and made them go upright, i. e. their Deliverance out of Egypt, put them into a State both of Ease and Honour, that being deliver'd out of the Hands of their Enemies, they might serve God without Fear, each one walking in his Uprightness. When Israel rejected Christ, and was therefore rejected by him, their Back is said to be bowed down always, under the Burthen of their Guilt, which was heavier than that of their Bondage in Egypt, *Rom. 11. 10.*

14 ¶ But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments; 15 And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant: 16 I also will do this unto you, I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow your seed in vain; for your enemies shall eat it. 17 And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies: they that hate you shall reign over you, and ye shall flee when none pursueth you. 18 And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. 19 And I will break the pride of your power: and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass: 20 And your strength shall be spent in vain: for your land shall not yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits. 21 ¶ And if ye walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me, I will bring seven times more plagues upon you, according to your sins. 22 I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, and destroy your cattel, and make you few in number, and your high-ways shall be desolate. 23 And if ye will not be reformed by me by these things, but will walk contrary unto me: 24 Then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins. 25 And I will bring a sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of my covenant: and when ye are gathered together within your cities, I will send the pestilence among you, and ye shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy. 26 And when I have broken the staff of your bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall deliver you your bread again by weight: and ye shall eat and not be satisfied. 27 And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me: 28 Then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury: and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins. 29 And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat. 30 And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images, and cast your carcases upon the carcases of your idols, and my Soul shall abhor you. 31 And I will make your cities

cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation: and I will not smell the savour of your sweet odours. 32 And I will bring the land into desolation: and your enemies which dwell therein, shall be astonished at it. 33 And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste. 34 Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies land; even then shall the land rest, and enjoy her sabbaths. 35 As long as it lieth desolate, it shall rest: because it did not rest in your sabbaths, when ye dwelt upon it. 36 And upon them that are left alive of you, I will send a faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; and the sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them; and they shall flee, as fleeing from a sword: and they shall fall when none pursueth. 37 And they shall fall one upon another, as it were before a sword, when none pursueth: and ye shall have no power to stand before your enemies. 38 And ye shall perish among the heathen, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up. 39 And they that are left of you, shall pine away in their iniquities in your enemies lands; and also in the iniquities of their fathers shall they pine away with them.

After God had set the Blessing before them, the Life and Good which would make them a happy People, if they would be obedient, he here sets the Curse before them, the Death and Evil which would make them as miserable, if they were disobedient. Let them not think themselves so deeply rooted, as that God's Power could not ruin them, or so highly favour'd, as that his Justice would not ruin them, if they revolted from him, and rebell'd against him; no, *You only have I known, therefore I will punish you soonest and forest,* Amos 3. 2.

Observe 1. How their Sin is describ'd, which would bring all this Misery upon them. Not Sins of Ignorance and Infirmity, God had provided Sacrifices for those; not the Sins they repented of and forsook, but the Sins that were presumptuously committed, and obstinately persisted in.

Two Things would certainly bring this Ruin upon them.

1. *A Contempt of God's Commandments*, v. 14. *If ye will not hearken to me speaking to you by the Law, nor do all these Commandments*, that is, desire and endeavour to do them; and wherein you miss it, make use of the prescribed Remedies. Thus their Sin is suppos'd to begin in mere Carelessness, and Neglect, and Omission. That's bad enough, but it makes Way for worse; for they are brought in, v. 15. (1.) *Despising God's Statutes*, both the Duties enjoin'd, and the Authority enjoining them, thinking meanly of the Law, and the Law-Maker. Note, Those are hastening apace to their own Ruin, who begin to think it below them to be religious. (2.) *Abhorring his Judgments*, their very Souls abhorring them. Note, They that begin to despise Religion, will come by Degrees to loath it; and mean Thoughts of it will ripen into ill Thoughts of it; they that turn from it, will turn against it, and their Hearts rise at it. (3.) *Breaking his Covenant*. Though every Breach of the Commandment, do not amount to a Breach of the Covenant, we were undone if it did; yet when Men are come to such a Pitch of Impiety, as to despise and abhor the Commandment, the next Step will be to disown God, and all Relation to him. They that reject the Precept, will come at last to renounce the Covenant. Observe, It is God's Covenant they break: He made it, but they break it. Note, If a Covenant be made and kept between God and Man, God must have all the Honour. But if ever it be broken, Man must bear all the Blame; on him shall this Breach be.

2. *A Contempt of his Corrections*. Even their Disobedience would not have been their Destruction, if they had not been obstinate and impenitent in it, notwithstanding the Methods God took to reclaim them. Their Contempt of God's Word would not have brought them to Ruin, if they had not added to that a Contempt of his Rod, which should have brought them to Repentance. Three Ways this is expressed. (1.) *If ye will not for all this hearken to me*, v. 18, 21, 27. If ye will not learn Obedience by the Things which you suffer, but be as deaf to the loud Alarms of God's Judgments, as you have been to the close Reasonings of his Word, and the secret Whispers of your own Consciences, you are obstinate indeed. (2.) *If ye will walk contrary to me*, v. 21, 23, 27. All Sinners walk contrary to God, to his Truths, Laws, and Counsels, but those especially that are incorrigible under his Judgments. The Design of the Rod

is to humble them, and often them, and bring them to Repentance; but instead of this, their Hearts are more harden'd and exasperated against God, and in their Distress they trespass yet more against him, 2 Chron. 28. 22. This is walking contrary to God. Some read it, *If ye walk at all Adventures with me*, carelessly and presumptuously, as if you heeded not either what you do, whether it be right or wrong, or what God doth with you, whether it be for you or against you, blundering on in wilful Ignorance. (3.) *If ye will not be reform'd by these Things*. God's Design in punishing, is to reform, by giving Men sensible Convictions of the Evil of Sin, and obliging them to seek unto him for Relief: This is the primary Intention; but those that will not be reform'd by the Judgments of God, must expect to be ruin'd by them. Those have a great deal to answer for, that have been long and oft under God's correcting Hand, and yet go on forwardly in a sinful Way; sick and in Pain, and yet not reform'd; cross'd and impoverish'd; and yet not reform'd; broken with Breach upon Breach, yet not returning to the Lord, Amos 4. 6, &c.

2. How the Misery is describ'd, which their Sin would bring upon them, under two Heads.

1. God himself would be against them; and this is the Root and Cause of all their Misery. (1.) *I will set my Face against you*, v. 17. i. e. I will set myself against you, set myself to ruin you. These proud Sinners God will resist, and face those down that confront his Authority. Or, the Face is put for the Anger; I will shew myself highly displeas'd at you. (2.) *I will walk contrary to you*, v. 24, 28. *with the forward he will wrestle*, Psal. 18. 26. When God in his Providence thwarts the Designs of a People, which they thought well laid, crosseth their Purposes, breaks their Measures, blasts their Endeavours, and disappoints their Expectations, then he walks contrary to them. Note, There's nothing got by striving with God Almighty, for he will either break the Heart, or break the Neck of those that contend with him; will bring them either to Repentance or Ruin. *I will walk at all Adventures with you*, so some read it; all Covenant loving Kindness shall be forgotten, and I will leave you to common Providence. Note, Those that cast God off, it is just with him to cast them off. (3.) As they continued obstinate, the Judgments should encrease yet more upon them. If the first sensible Tokens of God's Displeasure do not attain their End to humble and reform them, then, v. 18. *I will punish you seven times more*. And again, v. 21. *I will bring seven times more Plagues*; and v. 24. *I will punish you yet seven times*; and v. 28. *I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your Sins*. Note, If lesser Judgments do not do their Work, God will send greater; for when he judgeth he will overcome. If true Repentance do not stay Process, it will go on till Execution be taken out. Those that are obstinate and incorrigible, when they have weather'd one Storm, must expect another more violent; and how severely soever they are punish'd till they are in Hell, still they must say there's worse behind unless they repent. If the Founder have hitherto melted in vain, Jer. 6. 29. the Furnace will be heated seven times hotter, (a proverbial Expression us'd Dan. 3. 19.) and again and again seven times hotter; and who among us can dwell with such devouring Fire? God doth not begin with the forest Judgments, to shew that he is patient, and delights not in the Death of Sinners; but if they repent not, he will proceed to the forest, to shew that he is righteous, and that he will not be mock'd, or set at Defiance. (4.) Their Misery is compleated in that Threatning, v. 30. *My Soul shall abhor you*. That Man is as miserable as he can be, whom God abhors; for his Resentments are just and effective. Thus if any Man draw back, as these here are suppos'd to do, *God's Soul shall have no Pleasure in them*; Heb. 10. 38. and he will spue them out of his Mouth, Rev. 3. 16. 'Tis spoken of as strange, and yet too true, *How thy Soul lothed Zion?* Jer. 14. 19.

2. The whole Creation would be at War with them. All God's sore Judgments would be sent against them, for he hath many Arrows in his Quiver. The Threatnings here are very particular, because really they were Prophecies; and he that foresaw all their Rebellion, knew they would prove so; see Deut. 31. 16, 29. This long Roll of Threatnings, shews that Evil pursues Sinners.

Here's 1. Temporal Judgments threatened. (1.) *Diseases of Body*, which should be Epidemical, v. 16. *I will appoint over you as Task-masters to rule you with Rigour, Terror, Consumption, and the burning Ague*. What we translate Terror, some think signifies a particular Disease, probably (saith the learned Bishop Patrick) the Falling Sickness, which is Terror indeed: All chronic Diseases are included in the Consumption; and all acute Diseases in the burning Ague, or Fever. These consume the Eyes, and cause Sorrow both to those that are visited with them, and to their Friends and Relations. Note, All Diseases are God's Servants, and do what he appoints them, and are often us'd as Scourges wherewith he chastiseth a provoking People. The Pestilence is threatn'd, v. 25. to meet them when they are gather'd together in their Cities, for Fear of the Sword. And the greater the Concourse of People is, the

in it, and which in our Repentance we should especially bewail. There must also be a *Confession of Writ*; they must overlook the Instruments of their Trouble; and the second Cause, and confess that God has walked contrary to them, and so dealt with them according to their Sins. Such a Confession as this we find made by Daniel just before the Dawning of the Day of their Deliverance, chap. 9. and the like, *Ezr. 9.* and *Neh. 9.* (2.) Remorse and godly Sorrow for Sin; *If their uncircumcised Heart be humbled.* An impenitent, unbelieving, unhumiliated Heart, is called an *uncircumcised Heart*, the Heart of a *Gentile*, that's a Stranger to God, rather than the Heart of an *Israelite* in Covenant with him. True Circumcision is of the Heart, *Rom. 2. 29.* without which the Circumcision of the Flesh avail'd nothing, *Jer. 9. 26.* Now in Repentance this *uncircumcised Heart* was humbled, i. e. it was truly broken and contrite for Sin. Note, An humble Heart under humbling Providence, prepares for Deliverance and true Comfort. 3. Submission to the Justice of God in all his Dealings, if they then accept of the Punishment of their Iniquity, v. 41. and again, v. 43. i. e. if they justify God, and condemn themselves, patiently bear the Punishment, as that which they have well deserved, and carefully answer the Ends of it, as that which God has well designed, accept it as a Kindness, take it as Phylack, and improve it, then they are Penitents indeed.

2. How the Mercy is describ'd, which they should obtain upon their Repentance. (1.) They should not be abandon'd; *Though they have despised my Judgments, yet for all that I will not cast them away, v. 43. 44.* He speaks as a tender Father that cannot find in his Heart to dishonour a Son that has been very provoking. *How shall I do it? Hos. 11. 8. 9.* Till he had laid the Foundations of a Church for himself in the *Gentile World*, the Jewish Church was not quite forsaken, nor cast away. (2.) They should be remember'd; *I will remember the Land with Favour, which is grounded upon the Promise before, I will remember my Covenant, v. 42.* which is repeated, v. 45. God is said to remember the Covenant, when he performs the Promises of it, purely for his Faithfulness Sake; not because there is any thing in us to recommend us to his Favour, but because he will be as good as his Word. This is the Church's Plea, *Psal. 74. 20.* *How will thou forsake the Covenant?* He will remember the Constitution of the Covenant, which is such as leaves Room for Repentance, and prometh Pardon upon Repentance; and the Mediator of the Covenant, who was promis'd to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and was sent when the Fulness of Time came, in Remembrance of this holy Covenant. The Word Covenant is thrice repeated, to intimate, That God is ever mindful of it, and would have us to be so. The Persons also with whom the Covenant was made, are mention'd in an unusual manner, *per modum ascensus*, beginning with Jacob, to lead them gradually to the most ancient Promise, which was made to the Father of the Faithful: Thus *Abrah. 7. 20.* he is said to perform the Truth to Jacob, and the Mercy to Abraham. He will for their Sakes, v. 45. not their Merit's Sake, but their Benefit's Sake, remember the Covenants of their Ancestors, and upon that Score shew Kindness to them, tho' most unworthy; they are therefore said to be, as touching the Election, beloved for the Father's sake, *Rom. 11. 28.* Now, When those that have walked contrary to God in a Way of Sin, return to him by sincere Repentance, tho' he has walked contrary to them in a Way of Judgment, he will return to them in a Way of special Mercy, pursuant to the Covenants of Redemption and Grace. None are so ready to repent, as God is to forgive upon Repentance, through Christ, who is given for a Covenant.

Lastly, There are said to be the *Laws* which the Lord made between him and the Children of Israel, v. 46. His Communion with his Church is kept up by his Law. He manifests not only his Dominion over them, but his Favour to them, by giving them his Law, and they manifest not only their holy Fear, but their holy Love by the Observance of it; and thus it is made between them, rather as a Covenant than a Law, for he draws with the Cords of a Man.

C H A P. XXVII.

The last Verse of the foregoing Chapter seem'd to close up this Statute-Book, yet this Chapter is added as an Appendix: Having given Laws concerning appointed instituted Services, here he directs concerning Vows and voluntary Services, the Free-will Offerings of their Affection. Perhaps some devout serious People among them might be so affected with what Moses had deliver'd to them in the foregoing Chapter, as in a Pang of Zeal to consecrate themselves or their Children, or Estates to him: This because honestly meant, God would accept of; but because Men are apt to repent such Vows, he leave Room for the Redemption of what had been so consecrated, at a certain Rate. Here's 1. The Law concerning what was sanctified to God; *Perchus, v. 2. 3. 4. Cattle clean or unclean, v. 9. 13. Houses and Lands, v. 14. 25. With an Exception of Firstlings, v. 26. 27. 2. Concerning what was devoted, v. 28. 29. 3. Concerning Tithes, v. 30. 34.*

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying; 1. Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When a man shall make a singular vow, the persons shall be for the LORD, by the estimation. 3. And thy estimation shall be, of the male from twenty years old, even unto sixty years old; even thy estimation shall be fifty shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary. 4. And if it be a female, then thy estimation shall be thirty shekels. 5. And if it be from a month old, even unto twenty years old; then thy estimation shall be of the male twenty shekels, and for the female ten shekels. 6. And if it be from a month old, even unto five years old; then thy estimation shall be of the male, five shekels of silver, and for the female, thy estimation shall be three shekels of silver. 7. And if it be from sixty years old, and above; if it be a male, then thy estimation shall be fifteen shekels, and for the female ten shekels. 8. But if he be poorer than thy estimation, then he shall present himself before the priest, and the priest shall value him: according to his ability that vowed, shall the priest value him. 9. And if it be a beast whereof men bring an offering unto the LORD; all that any man giveth of such unto the LORD, shall be holy. 10. He shall not alter it, nor change it, a good for a bad, or a bad for a good: and if he shall at all change beast for beast, then it and the exchange thereof shall be holy. 11. And if it be any unclean beast, of which they do not offer a sacrifice unto the LORD; then he shall present the beast before the priest: 12. And the priest shall value it, whether it be good or bad: as thou valuest it, who art the priest, so shall it be. 13. But if he will at all redeem it, then he shall add a fifth part thereof unto thy estimation.

This is part of the Law concerning *singular Vows*, extraordinary ones, which though God did not expressly insist on, yet if they were consistent with, and conformable to the general Precepts, he would be well pleas'd with. Note, We should not only ask what *must* we do, but what *may* we do for the Glory and Honour of God? As the Liberal divideth liberal Things, *Isa. 32. 8.* so the Pious deviseth pious Things, and the enlarged Heart would willingly do something extraordinary in the Service of so good a Master as God is. When we receive or expect some singular Mercy, 'tis good to honour God with some singular Vow.

1. The Case is here put of Persons vowed to God by a singular Vow, v. 2. If a Man consecrated himself, or a Child to the Service of the Tabernacle, to be employed there in some inferior Office, as sweeping the Floor, carrying out Ashes, running of Errands, or the like, the Person so consecrated, shall be for the Lord, i. e. God will graciously accept the good Will; *Thou didst well that is was in thine Heart, 2 Chron. 6. 8.* but forasmuch as he had no Occasion to use their Service about the Tabernacle, a whole Tribe being appropriated to the Use of it, those that were thus vowed were to be redeem'd, and the Money paid for their Redemption, was employ'd for the Repair of the Sanctuary, or other Uses of it; as appears by *1 Kings 12. 4.* where it is called in the Margin, the Money of the Souls of his Estimation.

A Book of Rates is accordingly provided here, by which the Priests were to go in their Estimation. Here's 1. The Rate of the middle aged between twenty and threescore, these were valued highest, because most serviceable; a Male fifty Shekels, and the Female thirty, v. 3. 4. The Females were then less esteemed, but not so in Christ; for in Christ Jesus there is neither Male nor Female, *Gal. 3. 28.* Note, Those that are in the Prime of their Time, must look upon themselves as oblig'd to do more in the Service of God and their Generation, than can be expected either from Minors, that are not yet arriv'd to their Usefulness, or from the Aged that have surviv'd it. 2. The Rate of the Youth between five Years old and twenty was less, because they were then less capable of doing Service, v. 5. 3. Infants under five Years old were capable of being vowed to God by their Parents, even before they were born, as Samuel was, but not to be presented and redeem'd till a Month old; that as one Sabbath pass'd over them before they were circumcised, so one New Moon might pass over them before they were estimated; and their Valuation was but small.

v. 6. *Samuel*, who was thus vowed to God, was not redeemed; because he was a *Levite*, and a particular Favourite; and therefore was employed in his Childhood in the Service of the Tabernacle. 4. The Aged are valued less than Youth; but more than Children; v. 7. And the *Hebrews* observe, that the Rate of an aged Woman is two parts of three to that of an aged Man; so that in that Age the Female came nearest to the Value of the Male, which occasion'd (as Bishop Patrick quotes in here) this Saying among them, *That an old Woman in an House, is a Treasure in a House*. St. Paul sets a great Value upon the aged Women, when he makes them Teachers of good Things, Tit. 2. 3. 5. The Poor shall be valued according to their Ability; v. 8. Something they must pay, that they might learn not to be rash in vowing to God; for he hath no Pleasure in Fools; Eccl. 2. 6. Yet not more than his Ability, but *secundum tenentum*, that he might not ruin himself and his Family by his Zeal. Note, God expects and requires from Men, according to what they have, and not according to what they have not, Luke 12. 4.

12. The Case is put of Beasts vowed to God; v. 1. If it were a clean Beast, such as was offer'd in Sacrifice, it must not be redeemed, nor any equivalent given for it; it shall be holy, v. 9, 10, after it was vowed, it was not to be put to any common Use, nor chang'd upon second Thoughts; but it must be either offer'd upon the Altar, or if through any Blemish, it was not meet to be offer'd, he that vowed it should not take Advantage of that, but the Priests should have it for their own Use; (for they were God's Receivers) or it should be sold for the Service of the Sanctuary. This teacheth Caution in making Vows, and Continency in keeping them when they are made; for it is a Snare to a Man to devour that which is holy, and after Vows to make Enquiry, Prov. 20. 25. And to this that Rule of Charity seems to allude, 1 Cor. 9. 7. *Every Man according as he purposeth in his Heart, so let him give*. 1. If it were an unclean Beast, it should go to the Use of the Priest at such a Value; but he that vow'd it upon paying that Value in Money, and adding a fifth part more to it, might redeem it if he pleas'd, v. 11, 12, 13. 'Twas fit Men should smart for their Incontinency. God has let us know his Mind concerning his Service, and he is not pleas'd if we do not know our own. God expects that those that deal with him should be at a Point, and say what they will stand to.

14. And when a man shall sanctify his house to be holy unto the LORD: then the priest shall estimate it, whether it be good or bad: as the priest shall estimate it, so shall it stand. 15. And if he that sanctified it, will redeem his house, then he shall add the fifth part of the money of thy estimation unto it, and it shall be his. 16. And if a man shall sanctify unto the LORD some part of a field of his possession: then thy estimation shall be according to the seed thereof: an homer of barley-seed shall be valued at fifty shekels of silver. 17. If he sanctify his field from the year of jubilee; according to thy estimation it shall stand. 18. But if he sanctify his field after the jubilee; then the priest shall reckon unto him the money according to the years that remain, even unto the year of the jubilee, and it shall be abated from thy estimation. 19. And if he that sanctified the field will in any wise redeem it; then he shall add the fifth part of the money of thy estimation unto it, and it shall be assured to him. 20. And if he will not redeem the field, or if he have sold the field to another man; it shall not be redeemed any more. 21. But the field, when it goeth out in the jubilee, shall be holy unto the LORD, as a field devoted: the possession thereof shall be the priests. 22. And if a man sanctify unto the LORD a field which he hath bought, which is not of the fields of his possession; 23. Then the priest shall reckon unto him the worth of thy estimation, even unto the year of the jubilee: and he shall give thine estimation in that day, as a holy thing unto the LORD. 24. In the year of the jubilee, the field shall return unto him of whom it was bought, even to him to whom the possession of the land did belong. 25. And all thy estimation shall be according to the shekel of the sanctuary: twenty gerahs shall be the shekel.

Here's the Law concerning real Estates dedicated to the Service of God by a singular Vow. 1. Suppose a Man in his Zeal

for the Honour of God, sanctify his House to God, v. 14. the House must be valued by the Priest, and the Money got by the Sale of it, was to be converted to the Use of the Sanctuary, which by Degrees came to be greatly enrich'd with dedicated Things; 1 King. 14. 14. But if the Owner be minded to redeem it himself, he must not have it so cheap as another, but must add a fifth Part to the Price, for he should have consider'd before he had vow'd it, v. 15. To him that was necessitous, God would abate of the Estimation of himself, v. 8. But to him that was fickle and humorous, and whose second Thoughts inclin'd more to the World and his secular Interest, than his first, God would raise in the Price. Blessed be God there is a Way of sanctifying our Houses to be holy unto the Lord, without either selling them or buying them. If we and our Houses serve the Lord, if Religion rule in them, and we put away Iniquity far from them, and have a Church in our House, Holiness to the Lord is written upon it; 'tis his, and he will dwell with us in it. 2. Suppose a Man sanctify some Part of his Land to the Lord, giving it to pious Uses, then a Difference must be made between Land that came to the Donor by Descent, and that which came by Purchase, and accordingly the Case alter'd. 101. If it were the Substance of his Fathers, here call'd the Field of his Possession, which pertain'd to his Family from the first Division of Canaan, he might not give it all, no not to the Sanctuary, God would not admit such a Degree of Zeal as ruin'd a Man's Family. But he might sanctify or dedicate only some Part of it, v. 16. And in that Case, 1. The Land was to be valued (as our Countrymen commonly compute Land) by so many Measures sowing of Barley. So much Land as would take a Homer, or Chomer of Barley, which contain'd ten Ephabs, Ezek. 45. 11. (not as some have here mistaken it, an Omer, which was but a tenth Part of an Ephab, Exod. 16. 36.) was valued at fifty Shekels, a moderate Price, v. 16, and that, if it were sanctified immediately from the Year of Jubilee, v. 17. But if some Years after, there was to be a Discount accordingly, even of that Price, v. 18. And 2. When the Value was fixed, the Donor might, if he pleas'd, redeem it for fifty Shekels the Homer sowing, which was with the Addition of a fifth part, the Money then went to the Sanctuary, and the Land reverted to him that had sanctified it, v. 19. But if he would not redeem it, and the Priest sold it to another, then at the Year of Jubilee, beyond which the Sale could not go, the Land came to the Priests, and was there's for ever, v. 20, 21. Now, What is given to the Lord, ought not to be given with a Power of Revocation: What is devoted to the Lord, must be his for ever by a perpetual Covenant. (2.) If the Land were his own Purchase, and came not to him from his Ancestors, then not the Land itself, but the Value of it, was to be given to the Priests for pious Uses, v. 22, 23, 24. It was supposed, that those who by the Blessing of God were grown so rich as to become Purchasers, would think themselves oblig'd in Gratitude to sanctify some Part of their Purchase, at least (and here they are not limited, but that they might, if they pleas'd, sanctify the whole) to the Service of God. For we ought to give as God prospers us, 1 Cor. 16. 2. Purchasers are in a special Manner bound to be charitable. Now so much as purchas'd Lands were by a former Law to return at the Year of Jubilee, to the Family from which they were purchas'd, God would not have that Law, and the Intentions of it, defeated by making the Lands *Corban*, a Gift, Mark 7. 11. But it was to be computed how much the Land was worth for so many Years as were from the Vow to the Jubilee, for only so long it was his own, and God hates Robbery for Burnt Offerings; and we can never acceptably serve God with that which we have wronged our Neighbour. And so much Money he was to give in present, and keep the Land in his own Hands till the Year of Jubilee, when it was to return free of all Encumbrances, even that of its being dedicated, to him of whom it was bought. The Value of the Shekel by which all these Estimations were to be made, is here ascertain'd, v. 25. it shall be twenty Gerahs, and every Gerah was fifteen Barley-Corns. This was fixed before, Exod. 30. 13, and whereas there had been some Alterations, 'tis again fixed in the Laws of Ezekiel's visionary Temple, Ezek. 45. 12. to note that the Gospel should reduce Things to their ancient Standard.

26. Only the firstling of the beasts, which should be the LORD's firstling, no man shall sanctify it, whether it be ox, or sheep: it is the LORD's. 27. And if it be of an unclean beast, then he shall redeem it according to thine estimation, and shall add a fifth part of it thereto: or if it be not redeemed, then it shall be sold according to thy estimation. 28. Notwithstanding, no devoted thing that a man shall devote unto the LORD, of all that he hath, both of man and beast, and of the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed:

redemed: every devoted thing is most holy unto the LORD. 29 None devoted, which shall be devoted of men, shall be redeemed: but shall surely be put to death. 30 And all the tithes of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD's: it is holy unto the LORD. 31 And if a man will at all redeem ought of his tithes, he shall add thereto the fifth part thereof. 32 And concerning the vials of the herd or of the flock, two of whatsoever pasture under the rod: the tenth shall be holy unto the LORD. 33 He shall not search whether it be good or bad, neither shall he change it: and if he change it at all, then both it and the change thereof shall be holy: it shall not be redeemed. 34 These are the commandments which the LORD commanded Moses, for the children of Israel, in mount Sinai.

Here is a Caution given, that no Man should make such a Jest of sanctifying Things to the Lord, as to sanctify any Thing to him, for that was his already by the Law, v. 26. Though the Matter of a general Vow be that which we were before obliged to, as of our sacramental Covenant, yet a single Vow should be of that which we were not in such Circumstances and Proportions antecedently bound to. The Law concerning the Furlings of unclean Beasts, v. 27, is the same with that before, v. 11, 12. Things or Persons devoted are here distinguished from Things or Persons that were only sanctified. (1.) Devoted Things were most holy to the Lord, and could neither be sold, nor be alienated, v. 28. They were of the same Nature with those Sacrifices which were called most holy, which none might touch but only the Priests themselves. The Difference between these and other sanctified Things, arose from the different Extent of the Vow. If a Man dedicated any Thing to God, binding himself with a solemn Curse never to alienate it to any other Purpose, then it was a Thing devoted. (2.) Devoted Persons were to be put to Death, v. 29. Not that it was in the Power of any Parent or Master thus to devote a Child or Servant to Death, but it must be meant of the publick Enemies of Israel, who either by the Appointment of God, or the Sentence of the Congregation were devoted, as the seven Nations with which they must make no League. The City of Jericho is particularly thus devoted, v. 6, 17. The inhabitants of the City were put to Death for violating the Curse pronounced upon those that came up to possess it, v. 19, 20. Some think it was for want of being rightly informed of the true Intent and Meaning of this Law, that Jephthah sacrificed his Daughter, as one devoted, which might not be returned. 3. A Law concerning Tithes, which were paid for the Service of God before the Law, as appears by Abraham's Payment of them, Gen. 14, 22, and Jacob's Promise of them, Gen. 28, 22. It is here appointed, 1. That they should pay Tithes of all their In-

crease, which is the fruit of the land, and of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD's: it is holy unto the LORD. 2. That they should pay Tithes of all their Increase, which is the fruit of the land, and of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD's: it is holy unto the LORD. 3. That they should pay Tithes of all their Increase, which is the fruit of the land, and of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD's: it is holy unto the LORD.

crease, their Cattle, Trees, and Castles, v. 30, 31. Whatsoever Benefits they had the Benefit of, God must be honoured with the Tithes of, if it were tithable. Thus they acknowledged God to be the Owner of their Land, the Giver of its Fruits, and themselves to be his Tenants and Dependents upon him: That they gave him Thanks for the Plenty they enjoyed, and testified his Favour in the Continuation of it: And we are taught in general to honour the Lord with our Substance, Psal. 134, 9, and in particular to support and maintain his Ministers, and to be ready to communicate to them, Gal. 6, 6, 1 Cor. 9, 12. And how this may be done in a fair and more equal Proportion than that of the Tithes, which God himself appointed of old, I cannot tell. That which was once made for Tithes should not be altered, so not for a better, v. 31. For Providence directed the Rod that marked them: God would accept of that it were the best, and they must not judge it though it were, for it was what passed under the Rod. 3. That it should not be altered, unless the Owner would give a fifth part more for its Ransom, v. 32. If Men had the Liberty to prefer what was marked for Tithes, before any other Part of their Increase, was fit they should pay for their Liberty.

The last Verse seems to have Reference to this whole Book, which it is the Conclusion of. These are the Commandments which the Lord commanded Moses, for the Children of Israel. Many of these Commandments are moral, and of perpetual Obligation: Others of them ceremonial, and peculiar to the Jewish Oeconomy, which yet have a Spiritual Significance, and are instructive to us, who are furnished with a Key to let us into the Myseries contained in them; for as by these Instructions is the Gospel preached as well as unto them, Heb. 4, 2. And upon the whole Matter, we may see Cause to bless God that we are not come to Adam's Sin, Heb. 12, 18. 1. That we are not under the dark Shadow of the Law, but enjoy the clear Light of the Gospel, which shows us Christ the End of the Law for Righteousness, Rom. 10, 4. The Doctrine of our Reconciliation to God by a Mediator, is not clouded with the Smoke of burning Sacrifices, but cleared by the Knowledge of Christ, and him crucified. 2. That we are not under the heavy Yoke of the Law, and the Ceremonial Ordinances of it, (as the Apostle calls them, Heb. 9, 10.) imposed till the Time of Reformation, a Yoke which neither they nor their Fathers were able to bear, Acts 15, 10. but under the sweet and easy Instructions of the Gospel, which pronounces those the true Worshipers, that worship the Father in Spirit and Truth, by Christ only, and in his Name, who is our Priest, Temple, Altar, Sacrifice, Purification, and All. Let us therefore think that because we are not tied to the ceremonial Cleanings, Feasts, and Oblations, a little Care, Time, and Expence, will serve to honour God with: No, but rather have our Hearts more enlarged in Freewill Offerings to his Praise, more enflamed with holy Love and Joy, and more engaged in Seriousness of Thoughts and Sincerity of Intention, Having Boldness to enter into the Holiest, by the Blood of Jesus, let us draw near with a true Heart, and in full Assurance of Faith, worshipping God with so much the more Cheerfulness and Double Confidence, still saying, Praise to God for Jesus Christ.

And if a man sanctify unto the LORD a field which he hath bought, which is not of the fields of his possession, he shall give the price of the field unto the LORD, and shall add a fifth part of it thereto: or if he have sold the field to another man, he shall not be redeemed: but if he have sold the field to another man, he shall give the price of the field unto the LORD, and shall add a fifth part of it thereto: or if he have sold the field to another man, he shall give the price of the field unto the LORD, and shall add a fifth part of it thereto.

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An EXPOSITION WITH PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS Upon the Fourth Book of MOSES called NUMBERS.

The Titles of the Five Books of Moses, which we use in our Bibles, are all borrowed from the Greek Translation of the Seventy, the most ancient Version of the Old Testament that we know of: But the Title of this Book only we turn into English; in all the rest we retain the Greek Word itself; for which Difference I know no Reason, but that the Latin Translators have generally done the same. Otherwise this Book might as well have been call'd Arithmoi, the Greek Title, as the First Genesis, and the Second Exodus; or those might as well have been translated, and call'd, the First the Generation, or Original, the Second the Outlet or Escape, as this Numbers.—This Book was thus entitled, because of the Numbers of the Children of Israel so often mentioned in this Book, and so well worthy to give a Title to it, because it was the remarkable Accomplishment of God's Promise to Abraham, that his Seed should be as the Stars of Heaven for Multitude. It also relates two Numberings of them, one at Mount Sinai, Chap. 1. The other in the Plains of Moab, 39 Years after, ch. 26. And not Three Men the same in the last Account that were in the first. The Book is almost equally divided between Histories and Laws, intermix'd. 1. We have here the Histories of the Numbering and Marshalling of the Tribes, Chap. 1.—4. The Dedication of the Altar and Levites; ch. 7; 8. Their March, ch. 9, 10. Their Murmuring and Unbelief, for which they were sentenced to wander Forty Years in the Wilderness, ch. 11,—14. The Rebellion of Corah, ch. 16, 17. And the History of the last Year of the Forty, ch. 20,—26. The Conquest of Midian, and the Settlement of the two Tribes, ch. 31, 32. With an Account of their Journeys, ch. 33. 2. We have divers Laws, about the Nazarites, &c. ch. 5; 6. And again, about the Priests Charge, &c. ch. 18, 19. Feasts, ch. 28, 29. And Vows, ch. 30. And relating to their Settlement in Canaan, ch. 27, 34, 35, 36. An Abstract of much of this Book, we have in a few Words, Psalm 95. 10. Forty Years long was I grieved with this Generation, and an Application of it to ourselves, Heb. 4. 1. Let us fear, lest we seem to come short. Many considerable Nations there were now in Being, that dwelt in Cities and fortified Towns, of which no Notice is taken, no Account kept, by the sacred History: But very exact Records are kept of the Affairs of a Handful of People, that dwelt in Tents, and wander'd strangely in a Wilderness, because they were the Children of the Covenant: For the Lord's Portion is his People, Jacob is the Lot of his Inheritance.

CHAP. I.

Israel was now to be form'd into a Common-wealth, or a Kingdom rather; for the Lord was their King, (1 Sam. 12. 12.) their Government a Theocracy, and Moses under him was King in Jeruſalem, Deut. 33. 5. Now for the right Settlement of this Holy State, next to the Institution of good Laws, was necessary the Institution of good Orders; an Account therefore must be taken of the Subjects of this Kingdom, which is done in this Chapter. Where we have, 1. Orders given to Moses to number the People, v. 1—4. 2. Persons nominated to assist him herein, v. 5,—16. 3. The particular Number of each Tribe, as it was given in to Moses, v. 17,—43. 4. The Sum total of all together, v. 44,—46. 5. An Exception of the Levites, v. 47,—54.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses in the Wilderness of Sinai, in the tabernacle of the congregation, on the first day of the second month, in the second Year, after they were come out of the land of Egypt, saying, 2 Take ye the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel after their families, by the house of their fathers, with the number of their Names, every male by their

poll. 3 From twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel: thou and Aaron shall number them by their armies. 4 And with you there shall be a man of every tribe: every one head of the house of his fathers. 5 ¶ And these are the names of the men that shall stand with you: Of the tribe of Reuben; Elizur the son of Shedeur. 6 Of Simeon; Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai. 7 Of Judah; Nahſhon the son of Amminadab. 8 Of Issachar; Nethaneel the son of Zuar. 9 Of Zebulun; Eliab the son of Helon. 10 Of the children of Joseph: of Ephraim, Elishama the son of Ammihud; of Manasseh, Gamael the son of Pedahzur. 11 Of Benjamin; Abidan the son of Gideoni. 12 Of Dan; Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai. 13 Of Asher; Pagiel the son of Ocran. 14 Of Gad; Eliasaph the son of Deuel. 15 Of Naphtali; Ahira the son of Enan. 16 These were the renowned of the congregation, Princes of the tribes of their fathers, heads of thousands in Israel. Here's

Here's a Commission issued out for the numbering of the People of *Israel*; and *David* long after paid dear for doing it without a Commission. Here's 1. The Date of this Commission, v. 1. The Place; 'tis given at God's Court in the Wilderness of *Sinai*; from his Royal Palace, the *Tabernacle of the Congregation*. The Time; in the second Year after they came up out of *Egypt*; we may call it the second Year of that Reign. The Laws in *Leviticus* were given in the first Month of that Year; these Orders were given in the beginning of the second Month. 2. The Directions given for the Execution of it, v. 2, 3. (1.) None were to be numbred but the Males, and those only such as were fit for War. None under Twenty Years Old, for the some such might have Bulk and Strength enough for military Service, yet in Compassion to their tender Years, God would not have them put upon it to bear Arms. (2.) Nor were any to be numbred, that through Age or bodily Infirmary, Blindness, Lameness, or chonical Diseases, were unfit for War. The Church being militant, those only are reputed the true Members of it, that have lifted themselves Soldiers of *Jesus Christ*, for our Life, our Christian Life is a Warfare. (3.) The Account was to be taken according to their Families, that it might not only be known how many they were, and what were their Names, but of what Tribe, and Family, or Clan; nay, of what particular House every Person was; or reckoning it the Muster of an Army, to what Regiment every Man belong'd, that he might know his Place himself, and the Government might know where to find him. They were numbred a little before this, when their Poll-Money was paid for the Service of the *Tabernacle*, *Exod.* 38. 25, 26. But it should seem they were not register'd by the House of their Fathers, as now they were. That Number and this is the same, Six Hundred Thousand and Three Thousand and Five Hundred and Fifty Men, for as many as had dy'd since then, and were lost in the Account, so many were arriv'd to be Twenty Years old, and were added to the Account. Note, As one Generation passeth away, another Generation cometh. As Vacancies are daily made, so Recruits are daily rais'd to fill up the Vacancies, and Providence takes Care that one Time or other, in one Place or other, the Births shall balance the Burials, that the Race of Mankind, and the holy Seed may not be cut off and extinct. 3. Commissioners are named for the doing of this Work. *Moses* and *Aaron* were to preside, v. 3. And one Man of every Tribe, that was renowned in his Tribe, and was presum'd to know it well, was to assist in it. The Princes of the Tribes, v. 16. Note, Those that are honourable, should study to be serviceable; he that is great, let him be your Minister, and shew by his knowing the Publick, that he deserves to be publickly known. The Charge of this Muster was committed to him, who was the *Lord Lieutenant* of that Tribe.

Now why was this Account order'd to be taken and kept? For several Reasons. 1. To prove the Accomplishment of the Promise made to *Abraham*, that God would multiply his Seed exceedingly, and renew'd in *Jacob*, *Gen.* 28. 14. That his Seed should be as the Dust of the Earth; now it appears, that there did not fail one Tittle of that good Promise, which was an Encouragement to them to hope, that the other Promise of the Land of *Canaan* for an Inheritance, should always be fulfill'd in its Season. When the Number of a Body of Men is only guess'd at upon the View, 'tis easy for one that is dispos'd to Cavil, to object that the Conjecture is mistaken, and that if they were to be counted, they would not be found half so many; therefore God would have *Israel* numbred, that it might be upon Record, how vastly they were increased in a little Time; that the Power of God's Providence, and the Truth of his Promise may be seen and acknowledg'd by all. It could not have been expected in any ordinary Course of Nature, that Seventy-Five Souls (which was the Number of *Jacob's* Family, when he went down into *Egypt*) should in Two Hundred and Fifteen Years (and it was no longer) multiply to so many Hundred Thousands. It is therefore to be contributed to an extraordinary Virtue in the Divine Promise and Blessing. 2. 'Twas to intimate the particular Care God himself would take of his *Israel*, and expected that *Moses* and the inferior Rulers should take of them. God is call'd the Shepherd of *Israel*, *Psal.* 80. 1. Now the Shepherds always kept Count of their Flocks, and deliver'd them by Number to their Under-shepherds, that they might know if any were missing; in like manner, God numbers his Flock, that of all he took into his Fold, he might lose none, but upon a valuable Consideration, even those that were sacrific'd to his Justice. 3. 'Twas to put a Difference between the True-born *Israelites*, and the mixt Multitude that were among them; none were numbred but *Israelites*; all the World is but as Lumber in Comparison with those Jewels. Little Account is made of others, but the Saints God has a particular Property in, and Concern for: The Lord knows them that are his, 1 *Tim.* 2. 19. Knows them by Name, *Phil.* 4. 3. The Hairs of their Head are numbred, but he will say to others, I never knew you, never made any Account of you. 4. 'Twas in order to their being marshall'd into several Districts, for the more easy Administration of Justice, and their more regular March through the Wil-

derness. 'Tis a Rout and a Rabble, not an Army that is not muster'd and put in Order.

17 ¶ And *Moses* and *Aaron* took these men which are expressed by their names. 18 And they assembled all the congregation together on the first day of the second month, and they declared their pedigrees after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of their names, from twenty years old and upwards, by their poll. 19 As the LORD commanded *Moses*, so he numbred them in the wilderness of *Sinai*. 20 And the children of *Reuben*, *Israel's* eldest son, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, by their poll, every male from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war: 21 Those that were numbred of them, even of the Tribe of *Reuben*, were forty and six thousand, and five hundred. 22 ¶ Of the children of *Simeon*, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, those that were numbred of them, according to the number of the names, by their polls, every male from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war: 23 Those that were numbred of them, even of the tribe of *Simeon*, were fifty and nine thousand and three hundred. 24 ¶ Of the children of *Gad*, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war: 25 Those that were numbred of them, even of the tribe of *Gad*, were forty and five thousand six hundred and fifty. 26 ¶ Of the children of *Judah*, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war: 27 Those that were numbred of them, even of the tribe of *Judah*, were threescore and fourteen thousand and six hundred. 28 ¶ Of the children of *Issachar*, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years and upward, all that were able to go forth to war: 29 Those that were numbred of them, even of the tribe of *Issachar*, were fifty and four thousand and four hundred. 30 ¶ Of the children of *Zebulun*, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war: 31 Those that were numbred of them, even of the tribe of *Zebulun*, were fifty and seven thousand and four hundred. 32 ¶ Of the children of *Joseph*, namely, of the children of *Ephraim*, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war: 33 Those that were numbred of them, even of the tribe of *Ephraim*, were forty thousand and five hundred. 34 ¶ Of the children of *Manasseh*, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war: 35 Those that were numbred of them, even of the tribe of *Manasseh*, were thirty and two thousand and two hundred. 36 ¶ Of the children of *Benjamin*, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war: 37 Those

37 Those that were numbred of them, *even* of the tribe of Benjamin, were thirty and five thousand and four hundred. 38 ¶ Of the children of Dan, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war: 39 Those that were numbred of them, *even* of the tribe of Dan, were three-score and two thousand and seven hundred. 40 ¶ Of the children of Asher, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war: 41 Those that were numbred of them, *even* of the tribe of Asher, were forty and one thousand and five hundred. 42 ¶ Of the children of Naphtali, throughout their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war: 43 Those that were numbred of them, *even* of the tribe of Naphtali, were fifty and three thousand and four hundred.

We have here the speedy Execution of the Orders given for the numbering of the People. It was begun the same Day that the Orders were given. *The first Day of the second Month*, compare v. 18. with v. 1. *Note*, When any Work is to be done for God, its good to set about it quickly, while the Sense of Duty is strong and pressing. And for ought appears, it was but one Day's Work, for many other Things were done between, and the twentieth Day of this Month, when they remov'd their Camp, ch. 10. 11. *Joab* was almost *Ten Months* numbering the People in *David's* Time, 2 Sam. 24. 8. But then they were dispers'd, now they live close together, then Satan mov'd the doing of it, now God did. 'Twas the sooner and the easier done now, because it had been done but a while ago, and they needed but review the old Books with the Alterations since made, which probably they had kept an Account of as they occur'd.

In the Particulars here left upon Record, we may observe, 1. That the Numbers are registred in *Words at length* (as I may say) *and not in Figures*; to every one of the twelve Tribes it is repeated, for the greater Ceremony and Solemnity of the Account, that they were numbr'd by their Generations, after their Families, by the House of their Fathers, according to the Number of their Names, to shew, that every Tribe took, and gave in the Account by the same Rule, and in the same Method, tho' so many Hands were employ'd in it; setting down their Genealogy first, to shew that their Family descended from *Israel*, then the Families themselves in their Order, then dividing each Family into the Houses, or subordinate Families that branch'd from it, under these the Names of the particular Persons, according to the Rules of Heraldry. Thus every Man might know who were his Relations, or next of Kin, on which some Laws we have already met with did depend; besides that the nearer any are to us in Relation, the more ready we should be to do them good. 2. That they all end with *Hundreds*, only *Gad* with *Fifty*, v. 25. But none of the Numbers descended to *Unites* or *Tens*. Some think 'twas a special Providence, that order'd all the Tribes just at this Time to be *Even* Numbers, and no odd or broken Numbers among them, to shew them that their was something more than ordinary design'd in their Increase, there being this uncommon in the Circumstance of it. 'Tis rather probable, that *Moses* having some Time before appointed *Rulers of Hundreds*, and *Rulers of Fifties*, Exod. 18. 25. they number'd the People by their respective Rulers, which would bring the Number to even *Hundreds* or *Fifties*. 3. That *Judab* is the most numerous of them all; more than double to *Benjamin* and *Manasseh*, and almost *Twelve thousand* more than any other Tribe, v. 27. 'Twas *Judab* whom his Brethren must praise, because from him *Messiah* the Prince was to descend, but because that was a Thing at a Distance, God did many Ways honour that Tribe in the mean Time, particularly by the great Increase of it, for his Sake who was to spring out of *Judab*, (Heb. 7. 14.) in the Fullness of Time. *Judab* was to lead the Van through the Wilderness, and therefore was furnish'd accordingly with greater Strength than any other Tribe. 4. *Ephraim* and *Manasseh*, the Sons of *Joseph*, are number'd as distinct Tribes, and both together made up almost as many as *Judab*; this was in Pursuance of *Jacob's* Adoption of them, by which they were equal'd with their Uncles *Reuben* and *Simon*, Gen. 48. 5. and the Effect of the Blessing of *Joseph*, who was to be a fruitful Bough, Gen. 49. 22. And *Ephraim* the younger is put first, and is more numerous than *Manasseh*, for *Jacob* had cross'd Hands, and foreseen

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Ten Thousands of Ephraim; and *Thousands of Manasseh*. The fulfilling of this confirms our Faith in the Spirit of Prophecy, with which the Patriarchs were endued. 5. When they came down into *Egypt*, *Dan* had but one Son, Gen. 46. 23. and so his Tribe was but one Family, Numb. 26. 42. *Benjamin* had then ten Sons; Gen. 46. 21. Yet now the Tribe of *Dan* is almost double in Number to that of *Benjamin*. *Note*, The Increasing and Diminishing of Families doth not always go by Probabilities. Some are multiplied greatly, and again are diminished, while others that were poor, have Families made them like a Flock, Psalm. 107. 38; 39. 41. And see Job 12. 23. 6. It is said of each of the Tribes, that those were number'd who were able to go forth to War, to mind them that they had Wars before them, tho' now they were in Peace, and met with no Opposition. Let not him that girdeth on the Harness boast, as tho' he had put it off.

44 These are those that were numbred, which *Moses* and *Aaron* numbred, and the princes of *Israel*, being twelve men: each one was for the house of his fathers. 45 So were all those that were numbred of the children of *Israel*, by the house of their fathers, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to the war in *Israel*: 46 Even all they that were numbred, were six hundred thousand, and three thousand and five hundred and fifty.

We have here the Sum Total at the Foot of the Account; they were in all Six hundred thousand fighting Men, and Three thousand five hundred and fifty over. Some think, that when this was their Number some Months before, Exod. 38. 26. the *Levites* were reckon'd with them, but now that Tribe was separated for the Service of God, yet so many more were by this Time attain'd to the Age of Twenty Years, as that still they were the same Number, to shew that whatever we part with for the Honour and Service of God, it shall certainly be made up to us one Way or other.

Now we see what a vast Body of Men they were, Let us consider, 1. How much went to maintain all these (besides twice as many more, no question, of Women and Children, Sick and Aged, and the mixt Multitude) for Forty Years together in the Wilderness, and they were all at God's finding every Day, having their Food from the Dew of Heaven, and not from the Fatness of the Earth. O what a great and good Housekeeper is our God, that hath such Numbers depending on him, and receiving from him every Day. 2. What Work Sin makes with a People, within forty Years most of them would indeed have dy'd of Course for the common Sin of Mankind, for when Sin enter'd into the World, Death came with it, and how great are the Desolations which it makes in the Earth! But for the particular Sin of Unbelief and Murmuring, all those that were now number'd, except two, laid their Bones under their Iniquity, and perish'd in the Wilderness. 3. What a great Multitude God's spiritual *Israel* will amount to at last; tho' at one Time, and in one Place, they seem to be but a little Flock, yet when they come all together, they shall be a great Multitude, innumerable, Rev. 7. 9: And tho' the Church's Beginning be small, its latter End shall greatly increase; a little one shall become a Thousand.

47 ¶ But the *Levites*, after the tribe of their fathers, were not numbred among them. 48 For the LORD had spoken unto *Moses*, saying, 49 Only thou shalt not number the tribe of *Levi*, neither take the sum of them among the children of *Israel*. 50 But thou shalt appoint the *Levites* over the tabernacle of testimony, and over all the vessels thereof, and over all things that belong to it: They shall bear the Tabernacle, and all the vessels thereof, and they shall minister unto it, and shall encamp round about the tabernacle. 51 And when the tabernacle setteth forward, the *Levites* shall take it down: and when the tabernacle is to be pitched, the *Levites* shall set it up: and the stranger that cometh nigh, shall be put to death. 52 And the children of *Israel* shall pitch their tents every man by his own camp, and every man by his own standard, throughout their hosts. 53 But the *Levites* shall pitch round about the tabernacle of testimony, that there be no wrath upon the congregation of the children of *Israel*: and the *Levites* shall keep the charge of the tabernacle of testimony. 54 And the children of *Israel* did according to all that the LORD commanded *Moses*, so did they.

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Care

Care is here taken to distinguish the Tribe of Levi from the rest of the Tribes, which in the Matter of the Golden Calf had distinguish'd itself, *Exod. 32. 26.* Note, Singular Services shall be recompensed with singular Honours. Now, 1. It was the Honour of the Levites that they were made Guardians of the Spiritualities; to them was committed the Care of the Tabernacle, and the Treasures thereof, both in their Camps, and in their Marches. (1.) When they mov'd, the Levites were to take down the Tabernacle, to carry it, and all that belong'd to it, and then to set it up again in the Place appointed, *v. 50, 51.* 'Twas for the Honour of the holy Things, that none should be permitted to see them, or touch them, but those only who were called of God to the Service. Thus we all are unfit and unworthy to have Fellowship with God, till first we are call'd by his Grace into the Fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and so being the spiritual Seed of that great High Priest, are made Priests to our God; and 'tis promis'd, that God would take Levites to himself, even from the Gentiles, *Isa. 66. 21.* (2.) When they rested, the Levites were to encamp round about the Tabernacle, *v. 50, 53.* That they might be near their Work, and Residents upon their Charge, always ready to attend; and that they might be a Guard upon the Tabernacle, to preserve it from being either plunder'd or profan'd. They must pitch round about the Tabernacle, That there be no Wrath upon the Congregation, as there would be, if the Tabernacle and the Charge of it were neglected, or those crowded upon it, that were not allow'd to come near. Note, Great Care must be taken to prevent Sin, because the preventing of Sin, is the preventing of Wrath. 2. It was their further Honour, that as Israel being a holy People was not reckon'd among the Nations, so they being a holy Tribe, were not reckon'd among other Israelites, but number'd afterwards by themselves, *v. 49.* The Service which the Levites were to do about the Sanctuary, is call'd a Warfare, *Numb. 4. 23.* And being engag'd in that Warfare, they were discharg'd from military Services, and therefore not number'd with those that were to go out to War. Note, They that minister about holy Things, should neither entangle themselves, nor be entangled in secular Affairs. The Ministry is itself Work enough for a whole Man, and all little enough to be employ'd in it. 'Tis an Admonition to Ministers to distinguish themselves by their exemplary Conversations from common Israelites, not affecting to seem greater, but aiming to be really better, every way better than others.

CHAP. II.

The Thousands of Israel having been Muster'd in the former Chapter, in this are Marshall'd, and a regular Disposition made of their Camp, by a Divine Appointment. Here's, 1. A General Order concerning it, *v. 1, 2.* 2. Particular Directions for the posting of each of the Tribes, in four distinct Squadrons, Three Tribes in each Squadron. 1. In the Van-guard, on the East, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun, were posted, *v. 3,---9.* 2. In the Right-wing, South-ward, Reuben, Simeon, and Gad, *v. 10,---16.* 3. In the Rere, Westward, Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin, *v. 18,---24.* 4. In the Left-wing, North-ward, Dan, Asher, and Naphtali, *v. 25,---31.* 5. The Tabernacle in the Centre, *v. 17.* And lastly, The Conclusion of this Appointment, *v. 32,---34.*

15 AND the LORD spake unto Moses, and unto Aaron, saying, 2 Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard, with the ensign of their fathers house: far off, about the tabernacle of the congregation shall they pitch.

Here's the general Appointment given both for their orderly Encampment where they rested, and their orderly March when they mov'd. Some Order 'tis likely they had observ'd hitherto; they came out of Egypt in Rank and File, *Exod. 13. 18.* but now they are put into a better Model. 1. They all dwell in Tents, and when they march'd, carried all their Tents along with them, for they found no City to dwell in, *Psal. 107. 4.* This represents to us our State in this World, 'tis a moveable State, we are here to Day, and gone to Morrow. And 'tis a military State; is not our Life a Warfare? We do but pitch our Tents in this World, and have in it no continuing City. Let us therefore while we are pitching in this World, be pressing through it. 2. Those of a Tribe were to pitch together, every Man by his own Standard. Note, It is the Will of God that mutual Love and Affection, Converse and Communion, should be kept up among Relations. Those that are of kin to each other, should, as much as they can, be acquainted with each other; and the Bonds of Nature should be improv'd for the strengthening of the Bonds of Christian Communion. 3. Every one must know his Place, and keep in it; they were not allow'd to fix where they pleas'd, nor to remove when they pleas'd, but God quarters them, with a charge to abide in their Quarters. Note, 'Tis God that appoints us the Bounds of our Habitation, and to him we must refer our selves, He shall chuse our Inheritance for us, *(Psal. 47. 4.)* and in his Choice we must acquiesce, and

not love to sit, nor be as a Bird that wanders from her Nest. 4. Every Tribe had its Standard, Flag, or Ensign, and it should seem every Family had some particular Ensign of their Father's House, which were carried, as with us the Colours of each Troop or Company in a Regiment are. These were of Use for the Distinction of Tribes and Families, and the gathering and keeping of them together; in Allusion to which the preaching of the Gospel is said to lift up an Ensign, to which the Gentiles shall seek, and by which they shall pitch, *Isa. 11. 10, 12.* Note, God is the God of Order, and not of Confusion. These Standards made this mighty Army seem more beautiful to its Friends, and more formidable to its Enemies. The Church of Christ is said to be as terrible as an Army with Banners, *Cant. 6. 10.* 'Tis uncertain how these Standards were distinguish'd: Some conjecture that the Standard of each Tribe was of the same Colour with the precious Stone, in which the Name of that Tribe was written in the High-Priest's Ephod, and that was all the Difference. Many of the modern Jews think there was some Coat of Arms painted in each Standard, which had Reference to the Blessing of that Tribe by Jacob. Judah bore a Lion, Dan a Serpent, Naphtali a Hind, Benjamin a Wolf, &c. Some of them say the Four principal Standards were Judah a Lion, Reuben a Man, Joseph an Ox, and Dan an Eagle; making the Appearances in Ezekiel's Vision to allude to it. Others say, the Name of each Tribe was written in its Standard; whatever it was, no doubt it gave a certain Direction. 5. They were to pitch about the Tabernacle, which was to be in the midst of them, as the Tent or Pavilion of a General in the Centre of an Army. They must encamp round the Tabernacle, (1.) That it might be equally a Comfort and Joy to them all, as it was a Token of God's gracious Presence with them, *Psal. 46. 5.* God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved. Their Camp had Reason to be heavy, when thus they had God in the Heart of them; to have Bread from Heaven every Day round about their Camp, and Fire from Heaven, with other Tokens of God's Favour in the midst of their Camp, were abundantly sufficient to answer that Question, Is the Lord among us, or is he not? Happy art thou, O Israel! 'Tis probable the Doors of all their Tents were made to look towards the Tabernacle from all Sides; for every Israelite should have his Eyes always towards the Lord; therefore they worship'd at the Tent Door. The Tabernacle was in the midst of the Camp, that it might be near to them; for it is a very desirable Thing to have the solemn Administrations of holy Ordinances near us, and within our Reach. The Kingdom of God is among you. (2.) That they might be a Guard and Defence upon the Tabernacle and the Levites on every Side. No Invader could come near God's Tabernacle, but he must first penetrate the thickest of their Squadrons. Note, If God undertake the Protection of our Comforts, we ought in our Places to undertake the Protection of his Institutions, and stand up in Defence of his Honour, and Interest, and Ministers. 6. Yet they were to pitch afar off, in Reverence to the Sanctuary, that it might not seem crowded, and thrust up among them; and that the common Business of the Camp might be no Annoyance to it. They were also taught to keep their Distance, lest too much Familiarity should breed Contempt. 'Tis suppos'd from *Josh. 3. 5.* that the Difference between the nearest Part of the Camp and the Tabernacle, (or perhaps between them and the Camp of Levites, who pitched near the Tabernacle) was Two Thousand Cubits, that is, a Thousand Yards, little more than half a measur'd Mile with us; but the outer Parts of the Camp must needs be much farther off. Some compute that the Extent of their Camp could be no less than twelve Miles square; for it was like a moveable City, with Streets and Lanes, in which perhaps the Manna fell, as well as on the outside of the Camp, that they might have it at their Doors. In the Christian Church we read of a Throne, (as in the Tabernacle there was the Mercy-Seat) which is called a glorious high Throne from the Beginning, *Jer. 17. 12.* and that Throne surrounded by spiritual Israelites, Twenty-four Elders, double to the Number of the Tribes, clothed in white Raiment, *Rev. 4. 4.* and the Banner over them is Love; but we are not order'd at they were, to pitch afar off; no, we are invited to draw near, and come boldly. The Saints of the Most High are said to be round about him, *Psal. 76. 12.* God by his Grace keep us close to him.

3 And on the east-side toward the rising of the Sun, shall they of the standard of the camp of Judah pitch, throughout their armies: and Nahshon the son of Amminadab shall be captain of the children of Judah. 4 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were threecore and fourteen thousand and six hundred. 5 And those that do pitch next unto him, shall be the tribe of Issachar: and Nathaneel the son of Zuar shall be captain of the children of Issachar. 6 And his host, and those that were

were numbred thereof, *were* fifty and four thousand and four hundred. 7 *Then* the tribe of Zebulun: and Eliab the son of Helon *shall be* captain of the children of Zebulun. 8 And his host, and those that were numbred thereof, *were* fifty and seven thousand and four hundred. 9 All that were numbred in the camp of Judah, were an hundred thousand, and fourscore thousand, and six thousand, and four hundred, throughout their Armies: These shall first set forth. 10 ¶ On the south side *shall be* the standard of the camp of Reuben, according to their armies: and the captain of the children of Reuben, *shall be* Elizar the son of Shedeur. 11 And his host, and those that were numbred thereof, *were* forty and six thousand and five hundred. 12 And those which pitch by him, *shall be* the tribe of Simeon, and the captain of the children of Simeon, *shall be* Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai. 13 And his host, and those that were numbred of them, *were* fifty and nine thousand and three hundred. 14 Then the tribe of Gad: and the captain of the sons of Gad *shall be* Eliafaph the son Reuel. 15 And his host, and those that were numbred of them, were forty and five thousand and six hundred and fifty. 16 All that were numbred in the camp of Reuben, *were* an hundred thousand, and fifty and one thousand and four hundred and fifty, throughout their armies: and they shall set forth in the second rank. 17 ¶ Then the tabernacle of the congregation shall set forward with the camp of the Levites, in the midst of the camps: as they shall encamp, so shall they set forward, every man in his place by their standards. 18 ¶ On the west-side *shall be* the standard of the camp of Ephraim, according to their armies: and the captain of the sons of Ephraim, *shall be* Elisama the son of Ammihud. 19 And his host, and those that were numbred of them, *were* forty thousand and five hundred. 20 And by him *shall be* the tribe of Manasse: and the captain of the children of Manasse *shall be* Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur. 21 And his host, and those that were numbred of them, *were* thirty and two thousand and two hundred. 22 Then the tribe of Benjamin: and the captain of the sons of Benjamin, *shall be* Abidan the son of Gideoni. 23 And his host, and those that were numbred of them, *were* thirty and five thousand and four hundred. 24 All that were numbred of the camp of Ephraim, *were* an hundred thousand, and eight thousand and an hundred, throughout their armies: And they shall go forward in the third rank. 25 ¶ The standard of the camp of Dan *shall be* on the north-side by their armies: and the captain of the children of Dan, *shall be* Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai. 26 And his host, and those that were numbred of them, *were* threescore and two thousand and seven hundred. 27 And those that encamp by him, *shall be* the tribe of Asher: and the captain of the children of Asher, *shall be* Pagiel the son of Ocran. 28 And his host, and those that were numbred of them, *were* forty and one thousand and five hundred. 29 ¶ Then the tribe of Naphtali: and the captain of the children of Naphtali, *shall be* Ahira the son of Enan. 30 And his host, and those that were numbred of them, *were* fifty and three thousand and four hundred. 31 All they that were numbred in the camp of Dan, *were* an hundred thousand, and fifty and seven thousand and six hundred: they shall go hindmost with their standards. 32 These *are* those which were numbred of the children of Israel, by the house of their fathers; all those that were numbred of the camps throughout their hosts, *were* six hundred thousand, and three thousand and five hundred and fifty. 33 But the Levites were not numbred among the children

of Israel, as the LORD commanded Moses. 34 And the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses: So they pitched by their standards, and so they set forward every one after their families, according to the house of their fathers.

We have here the particular Distribution of the Twelve Tribes into Four Squadrons, Three Tribes in a Squadron, one of which was to lead the other two.

Observe 1. God himself appointed them their Place, to prevent Strife and Envy among them. Had they been left to determine Precedency among themselves, they would have been in danger of quarrelling *with one another*, as the Disciples, who strove *which should be greatest*, each would have had a Pretence to be first, or at least not to be last. Had it been left to *Moses* to determine, they would have quarrell'd *with him*, and charg'd him with Partiality; therefore God doth it, who is himself the Fountain and Judge of Honour, and in his Appointment all must acquiesce. If God in his Providence advance others above us, and abase us, we ought to be as well satisfied in his doing it that Way, as if he did it, as this was done here, by a Voice out of the Tabernacle; and this Consideration, that it appears to be the Will of God it should be so, should effectually silence all Envyies and Discontents. And as far as our Place comes to be our Choice, our Saviour has given us a Rule, Luke 14. 8. Sit not down in the highest Room; and another, Matt. 20. 27. He that will be chief, let him be your Servant. Those that are most humble and most serviceable, are really most honourable. 2. Every Tribe had a Captain, a Prince, or Commander in chief, whom God himself nominated, the same that had been appointed to number them, ch. 1. 5. Our being all the Children of one Adam, is so far from justifying the Levellers, and taking away the Distinctions of Place and Honour, that even among the Children of the same Abraham, the same Jacob, the same Judah, God himself appointed that one should be Captain of all the rest. There are Powers ordain'd of God, and those to whom Honour and Fear is due, and must be paid. Some observe the Significance of the Names of these Princes, at least in general how much God was in the Thoughts of those that gave them their Names, for most of them have *El, God*; at one End or other of their Names. Nathaneel, the Gift of God; Eliab, my God a Father; Elizar, my God a Rock; Shelumiel, God my Peace; Eliafaph, God has added; Elisama, my God hath beard; Gamaliel, God my Reward; Pagiel, God has met me. By which it appears that the Israelites in Egypt did not quite forget the Name of their God, but when they wanted other Memorials, preserv'd the Remembrance of it in the Names of their Children, and therewith comforted themselves in their Affliction. 3. Those Tribes were placed together under the same Standard that were nearest of kin to each other; Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun, were the three youngest Sons of Leah, and they were put together, and Issachar and Zebulun would not grudge to be under Judah, since they were his younger Brethren; Reuben and Simeon would not have been content in their Place; therefore Reuben, Jacob's eldest Son, is made Chief of the next Squadron; Simeon no doubt is willing to be under him, and Gad the Son of Zilpah, Leah's Handmaid, is fitly added to them in Levi's room. Ephraim, Manasse, and Benjamin, are all, and only the Posterity of Rachel, Dan, the eldest Son of Bilhah, is made a leading Tribe, though the Son of a Concubine, that more abundant Honour might be bestow'd on that which lacked; and it was said that Dan shall judge his People, and to him were added the two younger Sons of the Handmaids. Thus unexceptionable was the Order in which they were plac'd. 4. The Tribe of Judah was in the first Post of Honour, encamp'd towards the rising of the Sun, and in their Marches led the Van, not only because it was the most numerous Tribe, but chiefly because from that Tribe Christ was to come, who is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, and was to descend from the Loins of him who was now nominated chief Captain of that Tribe. Nahshon is reckon'd among the Ancestors of Christ, Mat. 1. So that when he went before them, Christ himself went before them in effect, as their Leader. Judah was the first of the twelve Sons of Jacob that was blessed; Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, were censur'd by their dying Father: He therefore being first in Blessing, tho' not in Birth, is put first, to teach Children how to value the Smiles of their godly Parents, and dread their Frowns. 5. The Tribe of Levi pitch'd close about the Tabernacle, within the rest of their Tribes, v. 17. They must defend the Sanctuary, and then the rest of the Tribes must defend them. Thus in the Vision John saw of the Glory of Heaven, between the Elders and the Throne were Four living Creatures full of Eyes, Rev. 4. 6, 10. Civil Powers should protect the religious Interests of a Nation, and be a Defence upon that Glory.

6. The Camp of Dan, (and so that Tribe is called long after their Settlement in Canaan, Jud. 13. 25. because celebrated for their military Prowess) though posted in the Left Wing when they encamp'd, was order'd in their March to bring up the Rear, v. 31. They were the most numerous next to Judah, and therefore were order'd into a Post, which next to the Front,

requir'd most Strength; for as the Strength is, so shall the Day be. Lastly, The Children of Israel observed the Orders given them; and did as the Lord commanded Moses, v. 14. They put themselves in the Posts assign'd them, without murmuring or disputing, and as it was their Safety, so it was their Beauty; Balaam was charm'd with the Sight of it, Numb. 24. 5. How goodly are thy Tent, O Jacob. Thus the Gospel Church, called the Camp of Saints, ought to be compact together, according to the Scripture Model, every one knowing, and keeping his Place, and then all that wish well to the Church rejoice, beholding their Order, Col. 2. 5.

CHAP. III.

This Chapter and the next are concerning the Tribe of Levi, which was to be Muster'd and Marshall'd by itself, and not in common with the other Tribes, which signified the particular Honour put upon them, and the particular Duty and Service required from them. The Levites are in this Chapter consider'd. 1. As Attendants on, and Assistants to the Priests in the Temple-Service. And so we have an Account (1.) of the Priests themselves, v. 1. 4. and their Work, v. 10. (2.) Of the Gift of the Levites to them, v. 31-39. in order to which they are muster'd, v. 14-16. and the Sum of them taken, v. 39. Each particular Family of them is muster'd, has its Place assign'd, and its Charge. The Gersonites, v. 18-26. The Kohathites, v. 27-32. The Merarites, v. 33-39. 2. As Equivalents for the First-born, v. 11, 13. 1. The First-born were numbered, and the Levites taken instead of them, as far as the Number of the Levites went, v. 40-45. 2. What First-born there were more than the Levites, were redeem'd, v. 46-51.

These also are the generations of Aaron and Moses, in the day that the LORD spake with Moses in mount Sinai. 2 And these are the names of the sons of Aaron: Nadab the first born, and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. 3 These are the names of the sons of Aaron, the priests which were anointed, whom he consecrated to minister in the priests office. 4 And Nadab and Abihu died before the LORD, when they offered strange fire before the LORD, in the wilderness of Sinai, and they had no children: and Eleazar and Ithamar ministered in the priests office in the sight of Aaron their father. 5 And the LORD spake unto Moses saying, 6 Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him. 7 And they shall keep his charge, and the charge of the whole congregation, before the tabernacle of the congregation, to do the service of the tabernacle. 8 And they shall keep all the instruments of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the charge of the children of Israel, to do the service of the tabernacle. 9 And thou shalt give the Levites unto Aaron, and to his sons: they are wholly given unto him out of the children of Israel. 10 And thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall wait on their priests office: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death. 11 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 12 And I, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel, instead of all the first-born that openeth the matrix among the children of Israel: therefore the Levites shall be mine. 13 Because all the first-born are mine, for on the day that I smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, I hallowed unto me all the first-born in Israel, both man and beast, mine shall they be: I am the LORD.

Here 1. The Family of Aaron is confirm'd in the Priest's Office, v. 10. They had been call'd to it before, and consecrated; here they are appointed to wait on their Priest's Office: The Apostle uses this Phrase, Rom. 12. 7. Let us wait on our Ministry. The Work and Office of the Ministry requires a constant Attendance, and great Diligence; so frequent are the Returns of its Work, and yet so transient its favourable Opportunities, that it must be waited on. Here is repeated what was said before, Chap. 1. 51. The Stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to Death; which forbids the invading of the Priest's Office by any other Person whatsoever, none must come nigh to minister but Aaron and his Sons only, all others are Strangers. It also lays a Charge upon the Priests as Door-keepers in God's House, to take care that none should come near who were forbidden by the Law; they must keep off all Intruders, whose Approach

would be to the Profanation of the Holy Things, telling them that if they came near it was at their Peril, they would die by the Hand of God, as Uzza did. The Jews say, that afterwards there was hung over the Door of the Temple a golden Sword, perhaps alluding to that flaming Sword at the Entrance of the Garden of Eden on which was engraven, The Stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to Death. 2. A particular Account is given of this Family of Aaron, what we have met with before concerning them, is here repeated. (1.) The Consecration of all the Sons of Aaron, v. 3. They were all anointed to minister before the Lord, though it appear'd afterwards, and God knew it, that two of them were wise, and two were foolish. (2.) The Fall of the Two eldest, v. 4. they offered strange Fire, and died for so doing before the Lord. This is mentioned here in the Preamble to the Law concerning the Priesthood, for warning to all succeeding Priests; let them know by this Example, that God is a jealous God, and will not be mocked; the holy anointing Oil was an Honour to the Obedient, but not a Shelter to the Disobedient. 'Tis here said, they had no Children, Provi-dence so ordering it for their greater Punishment, that none of their Descendants should remain to be Priests, and so, to bear up their Name who had profan'd God's Name. (3.) The Continuance of the two younger, Eleazar and Ithamar ministered in the Sight of Aaron. It intimates, 1. The Care they took about their Ministration, not to make any Blunders; they kept under their Father's Eye, and took Instruction from him in all they did, because probably Nadab and Abihu got out of their Father's Sight, when they offered strange Fire. Note, It's good for young People to act under the Conduct and Inspection of those that are aged and experienced. 2. The Comfort Aaron took in it, it pleas'd him to see his younger Sons behave themselves prudently and gravely, when his two Elder had miscarried. Note, 'Tis a great Satisfaction to Parents, to see their Children walk in the Truth, 3 Joh. 4. 3. A Grant is made of the Levites to be Assistants to the Priests in their Work. Give the Levites to Aaron, v. 9. Aaron was to have a greater Propriety in, and Power over the Tribe of Levi, than any other of the Princes had in and over their respective Tribes. There was a great deal of Work belonging to the Priest's Office, and there was now but three Pair of Hands to do it all, Aaron's, and his two Sons, for it doth not appear that they had either of them any Children at this Time, at least not any that were of Age to minister, therefore God appoints the Levites to attend upon them. Note, Those whom God finds Work for, he will find Help for.

Here's (1.) The Service for which the Levites were design'd, they were to minister to the Priests, in their Ministration to the Lord, v. 6. and to keep Aaron's Charge, v. 7. as the Deacons to the Bishops in the Evangelical Constitution, serving Tables while they waited on their Ministry. The Levites kill'd the Sacrifices, and then the Priests needed only to sprinkle the Blood and burn the Fat: The Levites prepar'd the Incense, the Priests burnt it, 1 Chr. 9. 26. They were to keep not only Aaron's Charge, but the Charge of the whole Congregation. Note, It is a great Trust that is repos'd in Ministers, not only for the Glory of Christ, but for the Good of his Church; so that they must not only keep the Charge of the Great High-Priest, but must also be faithful to the Souls of Men, in Trust for whom a Dispensation is committed to them. (2.) The Consideration upon which the Levites were demanded, they were taken instead of the First-born. The Preservation of the First-born of Israel, when all the First-born of the Egyptians (with whom there were many of them mingled) were destroyed, was look'd upon by him who never makes any unreasonable Demands, as Cause sufficient for the appropriating of all the First-born from thence forward to himself, v. 11. All the First-born are mine. That was sufficient to make them his, though he had given no Reason for it, for he is the sole Fountain and Lord of all Beings and Powers: But because all Obedience must flow from Love, and Acts of Duty, must be Acts of Gratitude, before they were challeng'd into peculiar Services, they were crown'd with peculiar Favours. Note, When he that made us serves us, we are thereby laid under further Obligations to serve him, and live to him. God's Right to us by Redemption, corroborates the Right he has to us by Creation.

Now because the First-born of a Family are generally the Favourite, and some would think it a Disparagement to have their eldest Sons Servants to the Priests, and attending before the Door of the Tabernacle, God took the Tribe of Levi entire for his own, in Lieu of the First-born, v. 12. Note, God's Institutions put no Hardships upon Men in any of their just Interests, or reasonable Affections. 'Twas presum'd the Israelites would rather part with the Levites than with their First-born, and therefore God graciously order'd the Exchange, yet for us to spare not his own Son.

14 And the LORD spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, saying, 15 Number the children of Levi after the house of their fathers, by their families: every male from a month old and upward,

upward, shalt thou number them. 16 And Moses numbered them according to the word of the LORD, as he was commanded. 17 And these were the sons of Levi, by their names: Gershon, and Kohath, and Merari. 18 And these are the names of the sons of Gershon, by their families: Libni, and Shimei. 19 And the sons of Kohath, by their families: Amram, and Izehar, Hebron, and Uzziel. 20 And the sons of Merari, by their families: Mahli, and Mushi: these are the families of the Levites, according to the house of their fathers. 21 Of Gershon was the family of the Libnites, and the family of the Shimites: these are the families of the Gershonites. 22 Those that were numbered of them according to the number of all the males, from a month old and upward, even those that were numbered of them, were seven thousand and five hundred. 23 The families of the Gershonites shall pitch behind the tabernacle westward. 24 And the chief of the house of the father of the Gershonites, shall be Eliasaph the son of Lael. 25 And the charge of the sons of Gershon, in the tabernacle of the congregation, shall be the tabernacle, and the tent, the covering thereof, and the hanging for the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: 26 And the hangings of the court, and the curtain for the door of the court, which is by the tabernacle, and by the altar round about, and the cords of it, for all the service thereof. 27 And of Kohath was the family of the Ataramites, and the family of the Izeharites, and the family of the Hebronites, and the family of the Uzzielites: these are the families of the Kohathites. 28 In the number of all the males, from a month old and upward, were eight thousand and six hundred, keeping the charge of the sanctuary. 29 The families of the sons of Kohath shall pitch on the side of the tabernacle southward. 30 And the chief of the house of the father of the families of the Kohathites, shall be Elizaphan the son of Uzziel. 31 And their charge shall be the ark, and the table, and the candlestick, and the altars, and the vessels of the sanctuary, wherewith they minister, and the hanging, and all the service thereof. 32 And Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, shall be chief over the chief of the Levites, and have the oversight of them that keep the charge of the sanctuary. 33 And of Merari was the family of the Mahlites, and the family of the Mushites: these are the families of Merari. 34 And those that were numbered of them, according to the number of all the males, from a month old and upward, were six thousand and two hundred. 35 And the chief of the house of the father of the families of Merari, was Zuriel the son of Abihail: these shall pitch on the side of the tabernacle northwards. 36 And under the custody and charge of the sons of Merari, shall be the boards of the tabernacle, and the bars thereof, and the pillars thereof, and the sockets thereof, and all the vessels thereof, and all that serveth thereto: 37 And the pillars of the court round about, and their sockets, and their pins, and their cords. 38 But those that encamp before the tabernacle toward the east, even before the tabernacle of the congregation eastward, shall be Moses and Aaron, and his sons, keeping the charge of the sanctuary, for the charge of the children of Israel: and the stranger that cometh nigh, shall be put to death. 39 All that were numbered of the Levites, which Moses and Aaron numbered at the commandment of the LORD, throughout their families, all the males, from a month old and upward, were twenty and two thousand.

The Levites being granted to Aaron to minister to him, they are here deliver'd to him by Tale, that he might know what he had, and employ them accordingly.

Observe 1. By what Rule they were numbered; Every Male from a Month old and upward, v. 15. The rest of the Tribes were numbered only from twenty Years old and upward, and of them those only that were able to go forth to War: but into the Number of the Levites, they must take in both Infants and Infirm; being exempted from the War, 'twas not insisted upon that they should be of Age and Strength for the War. The it appears afterwards that little more than a Third Part of the Levites were fit to be employ'd in the Service of the Tabernacle (about eight thousand out of twenty-two) Chap. 4. v. 48. Yet God would have them all numbered as Retainers to his Family. That none may think themselves disown'd and rejected of God, because they are not in a Capacity of doing him that Service which they see others do him. The Levites of a Month old could not honour God and serve the Tabernacle; as those that were grown up; yet out of the Mouth of these Babes and Sucklings, the Levites Praise was perfected. Let not little Children be hindered from being enroll'd among the Disciples of Christ, for such was the Tribe of Levi, of such is the Kingdom of Heaven, that Kingdom of Priests. The Redemption of the First-born was reckon'd from a Month old, Num. 18. 15, 16. Therefore from that Age the Levites were numbered. They were number'd, after the House of their Fathers, not their Mothers, for if the Daughter of a Levite married one of another Tribe, her Son was not a Levite; but we read of a Spiritual Priest to our God, who inherited the assigned Path which dwelt in his Mother and Grandmother, 2 Tim. 1. 5. 2. How they were distributed into three Classes, according to the Number of the Sons of Levi, Gershon, Kohath and Merari, and these subdivided into several Families, v. 17, to the 20. Concerning each of these three Classes, we have an Account, 1. Of their Number. The Gershonites were seven thousand five hundred. The Kohathites were eight thousand six hundred. The Merarites were six thousand two hundred. The rest of the Tribes had not their subordinate Families numbred by themselves as those of Levi; this Honour God put upon his own Tribe. 2. Of their Post about the Tabernacle on which they were to attend. The Gershonites pitched behind the Tabernacle Westward, v. 23. The Kohathites on the Right-hand, Southward, v. 29. The Merarites on the Left-hand, Northward, v. 35. And to compleat the Square, Moses and Aaron, with the Priests encamp'd in the Front, Eastward, v. 36. Thus was the Tabernacle surrounded with its Guards; and thus doth the Angel of the Lord encamp round about them that fear him, those Living Temples, Psal. 34. 7. Every one knew his Place, and must therein abide with God. 3. Of their Chief, or Head. At each Class had its own Place, so each had its own Prince. The Commander of the Gershonites was Eliasaph, v. 24. Of the Kohathites, Elizaphan, v. 30. Of whom we read, Lev. 16. 4. that he was one of the Bearers at the Funeral of Nadab and Abihu. Of the Merarites, Zuriel, v. 35. 4. Of their Charge, when the Camp moved. Each Class knew their own Business; it was requisite they should, for that which is every Body's Work, often proves no Body's Work. The Gershonites were charged with the Custody and Carriage of all the Curtains and Hangings, and Coverings of the Tabernacle and Court, v. 23, 26. The Kohathites of all the Furniture of the Tabernacle, the Ark, Altar, Table, &c. v. 31, 32. The Merarites of the heavy Carriage, Boards, Bars, Pillars, &c. v. 36, 37. Here we may observe, (1.) That the Kohathites, tho' they were the second House, yet were preferred before the elder Family of the Gershonites. Besides, that Aaron and the Priests were of that Family, they were more numerous, and their Post and Charge more honourable, which probably was order'd to put an Honour upon Moses, who was of that Family. Yet, (2.) The Posterity of Moses were not at all dignified or privileged, but stood upon the Level with the other Levites; that it might appear he did not seek the Advancement of his own Family, nor to entail any Honours upon it either in Church or State; he that had Honour enough himself, coveted not to have his Name shine by that borrow'd Light, but rather to have the Levites borrow Honour from his Name. Let none think contemptibly of the Levites, though inferior to the Priests, for Moses himself thought it Preferment enough for his Sons to be Levites. Probably, 'twas because the Family of Moses were Levites only, that in the Title of this Chapter, which is concerning that Tribe, (v. 1.) Aaron is put before Moses. 5. The Sum Total of the Numbers of this Tribe, they are comput'd in all Twenty-two Thousand, v. 39. The Sums of the particular Families amount to three Hundred more; which if it had been added to the Sum Total, the Levites instead of being Two hundred seventy-three fewer than the First-born, as they were, v. 43. would have been twenty-seven more; and so the Balance would have fallen the other Way: But 'tis suppos'd that the Three Hundred that was struck off from the Account when the Exchange was to be made, were the First-born of the Levites themselves, born since their coming out of Egypt; which could not be put into the Exchange, because they were already sanctified to God. But what which is especially observ- ble

ble here is, that the Tribe of Levi was by much the least of all the Tribes. Note, God's Part in the World is too often the smallest Part. His Chosen are but a little Flock in Comparison.

40 **J** And the LORD said unto Moses, Number all the first-born of the males of the children of Israel, from a month old and upward, and take the number of their names. 41 And thou shalt take the Levites for me (I am the LORD) instead of all the first-born among the children of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of all the firstlings among the cattle of the children of Israel. 42 And Moses numbered as the LORD commanded him, all the first-born among the children of Israel. 43 And all the first-born males, by the number of names, from a month old and upward, of those that were numbered of them were twenty and two thousand two hundred and threescore and thirteen. 44 **J** And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 45 Take the Levites instead of all the first-born among the children of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of their cattle, and the Levites shall be mine: I am the LORD. 46 And for those that are to be redeemed of the two hundred and threescore and thirteen of the first-born of the children of Israel, which are more than the Levites. 47 Thou shalt even take five shekels apiece by the poll, after the shekel of the sanctuary shalt thou take them: the shekel is twenty gerahs. 48 And thou shalt give the money wherewith the odd number of them is to be redeemed, unto Aaron and to his sons. 49 And Moses took the redemption money of them that were over and above them that were redeemed by the Levites. 50 Of the first-born of the children of Israel took he the money, a thousand three hundred and threescore and five shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary. 51 And Moses gave the money of them that were redeemed unto Aaron, and to his sons, according to the word of the LORD, as the LORD commanded Moses.

Here's the Exchange made of the Levites for the First-born. 1. The First-born were number'd from a Month old, v. 42, 43. Those certainly were not reckon'd who, though First-born were become Heads of Families themselves, but those only that were under Age: And the learned Bishop Patrick is clear of Opinion, that none were number'd but those only that were born since their coming out of Egypt, when the First-born were sanctified, Exod. 12. If there were Two and twenty thousand First-born Males, we may suppose as many Females, and all these brought forth in the first Year after they came out of Egypt; we must infer from thence, that in the last Year of their Servitude, even then when it was in the greatest Extremity, there were Abundance of Marriages made among the Israelites; they were not discouraged by their *present Distress*, but married in Faith, expecting that God would shortly visit them with Mercy, and their Children, though born in Bondage, should live in Liberty and Honour. And it was a Token for Good to them, an Evidence that they were blessed of the Lord, that they were not only kept Alive, but greatly encreas'd in a barren Wilderness. 2. The Number of the First-born, and that of the Levites, by a special Providence came pretty near to each other; thus when he divided the Nations, he set the Bounds of the People according to the Number of the Children of Israel, Deut. 32. 8. Known unto God are all his Works before-hand, and there is an exact Proportion between them, and so it will appear when they come to be compared. The Levites Cattel are said to be taken instead of the Cattel of the First-born, i. e. The Levites, with all their Possessions, were devoted to God, instead of the First-born and all theirs; for when we give ourselves to God, all we have passeth as Appointments, with the Premises. 3. The small Number of First-born which exceeded the Number of the Levites, (Two hundred seventy-three in all) were to be redeemed, at five Shekels apiece, and the Redemption-Money given to Aaron; for it would not do well to have them added to the Levites. 'Tis probable in the Exchange they began with the eldest of the First-born, and so downwards; so that those were to be redeemed with Money, who were the Two hundred seventy-three youngest of the First-born; more likely so, than either that it was determin'd by Lot, or that the Money was paid out of the publick Stock. The Church is called the Church of the First-born, which is redeemed not as these were, with Silver and Gold, but being devoted by Sin to the Justice of God, is ransom'd with the precious Blood of the Son of God.

CHAP. IV.

In the former Chapter an Account was taken of the whole Tribe of Levi, in this of those of that Tribe that were in the Prime of their Time for Service, between Thirty and Fifty Years old. 1. The serviceable Men of the Kohathites are order'd to be number'd, and their Charges given them, v. 1,--20. 2. Of the Gersonites, v. 24,--28. 3. Of the Merarites, v. 29,--33. 4. The Numbers of each, and the Sum Total at last are recorded, v. 34,--49.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, and unto Aaron, saying, 2 Take the sum of the sons of Kohath, from among the sons of Levi, after their families, by the house of their fathers. 3 From thirty years old and upward, even until fifty years old, all that enter inter the host, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation. 4 This shall be the service of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation about the most holy things. 5 **J** And when the camp setteth forward, Aaron shall come and his sons, and they shall take down the covering vail, and cover the ark of testimony with it: 6 And shall put thereon the covering of badgers-skins, and shall spread over it a cloth wholly of blue, and shall put in the staves thereof. 7 And upon the Table of shew-bread they shall spread a cloth of blue, and put thereon the dishes, and the spoons, and the bowls, and covers to cover withall: and the continual bread shall be thereon. 8 And they shall spread upon them a cloth of scarlet, and cover the same with a covering of badgers-skins, and shall put in the staves thereof. 9 And they shall take a cloth of blue, and cover the candlestick of the light, and his lamps, and his tongs, and his snuff-dishes, and all the oil-vessels thereof, wherewith they minister unto it. 10 And they shall put it, and all the vessels thereof, within a covering of badgers-skins, and shall put it upon a bar. 11 And upon the golden altar they shall spread a cloth of blue, and cover it with a covering of badgers-skins, and shall put to the staves thereof. 12 And they shall take all the instruments of ministry wherewith they minister in the sanctuary, and put them in a cloth of blue, and cover them with a covering of badgers-skins, and shall put them on a bar. 13 And they shall take away the ashes from the altar, and spread a purple cloth thereon: 14 And they shall put upon it all the vessels thereof, wherewith they minister about it, even the censers, the flesh-hooks, and the shovels, and the basons, all the vessels of the altar; and they shall spread upon it a covering of badgers-skins, and put to the staves of it. 15 And when Aaron and his sons have made an end of covering the sanctuary, and all the vessels of the sanctuary, as the camp is to set forward; after that the sons of Kohath shall come to bear it: but they shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die. These things are the burden of the sons of Kohath, in the tabernacle of the congregation. 16 **J** And to the Office of Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, pertaineth the oil for the light, and sweet incense, and the daily meat-offering, and the anointing oil, and the oversight of all the Tabernacle; and of all that therein is, in the sanctuary, and in the vessels thereof. 17 **J** And the LORD spake unto Moses, and unto Aaron, saying, 18 Cut ye not off the tribe of the families of the Kohathites from among the Levites. 19 But thus do unto them, that they may live and not die: when they approach unto the most holy things, Aaron and his sons shall go in, and appoint them every one to his service, and to his burden: 20 But they shall not go in to see when the holy things are covered, lest they die.

We have here a second Muster of the Tribe of Levi. As that Tribe was taken out of all Israel, to be God's Peculiar, so

the middle ag'd Men of that Tribe were taken from among the rest, to be actually employ'd in the Service of the Tabernacle. Now observe, 1. Who are to be taken into this Number: All the Males from *Thirty Years old to Fifty*. Of the other Tribes, those that were number'd to go forth to War, were from *Twenty Years old and upward*, but of the Levites only from *Thirty to Fifty*, for the Service of God requires the best of our Strength, and the Prime of our Time, which cannot be better spent than to the Honour of him, who is the First and Best. And a Man may make a good Soldier much sooner than a good Minister.

Now, 1. They were not to be employ'd till they were *Thirty Years old*, because till then they were in Danger of retaining something childish and youthful, and had not Gravity enough to do the Service, and wear the Honour of a *Levite*. At *Twenty-five Years old* they were enter'd as Probationers, *Numb. 8. 24.* and in *David's Time*, when there was more Work to be done, at *Twenty*, *1 Chron. 23. 24.* and so, *Ezra 3. 8.* but they must be five Years learning, and waiting, and so fitting themselves for Service; nay, in *David's Time*, they were ten Years in Preparation, from *Twenty to Thirty*. *John Baptist* began his publick Ministry, and *Christ* his, at *Thirty Years old*; it is not in the Letter of it, obliging to Gospel-Ministers now, as if they must either not begin their Work till thirty Years old, or must leave it off at fifty; but it gives us two good Rules; (1.) That Ministers must not be Novices, *1 Tim. 3. 6.* 'Tis a Work that requires Ripeness of Judgment, and great Stayedness, and therefore those are very unfit for it, who are yet but Babes in Knowledge, and have not put away childish Things; (2.) That they must learn before they teach, serve before they rule, and must first be prov'd, *1 Tim. 3. 10.* 2. They were discharg'd at *Fifty Years old*, from the toilsome Part of the Service, particularly this of carrying the Tabernacle; for that's the special Service to which they are here ordain'd, and which there was most Occasion for, while they were in the Wilderness. When they began to enter upon old Age, they were dismiss'd, (1.) In Favour to them, that they might not be over-toil'd, when their Strength began to decay. *Twenty Years* good Service was thought pretty well for one Man. (2.) In Honour to the Work, that it might not be done by those who, through the Infirmities of Age, were slow and heavy. The Service of God should be done, when we are in the most lively active Frame. Those do not consider this, who put off their Repentance to old Age, and so leave the best Work to be done in the worst Time. 2. How their Work is describ'd. They are said to enter into the Host, or Warfare, to do the Work in the Tabernacle. The Ministry is, (1.) A Good Work, *1 Tim. 3. 1.* Ministers are not ordain'd to the Honour only, but to the Labour; not to have the Wages, but to do the Work. (2.) A Good Warfare, *1 Tim. 1. 18.* They that enter into the Ministry, must look upon themselves as entered into the Host, and approve themselves good Soldiers, *2 Tim. 2. 3.*

Now as to the Sons of *Kobath* in particular; here's, 1. Their Service appointed them, in the Removes of the Tabernacle. Afterwards when the Tabernacle was fix'd, they had other Work assign'd them: But this was the Work of the Day, which was to be one in its Day. Observe, wherever the Camp of *Israel* went, the Tabernacle of the Lord went with them, and Care must be taken for the Carriage of it. Note, Wherever we go, we must see to it, that we take our Religion along with us, and not forget that, or any Part of it. Now the *Kobathites* were to carry all the Holy Things of the Tabernacle: They were charg'd with those Things before, *Ch. 3. 31.* but here they have more particular Instructions given them. (1.) *Aaron*, and his Sons the Priests, must pack up the things which the *Kobathites* were to carry, as here directed, *v. 5, &c.* God had before appointed, that none should come into the most holy Place, but only *Aaron* once a Year with a Cloud of Incense, *Lev. 16. 2.* and yet the Necessity of their unsettled State requiring it, that Law is here dispens'd with; for every Time they remov'd, *Aaron* and his Sons went in to take down the Ark, and make it up for Carriage; for (as the learned Bishop *Patrick* suggests) the *Shechinah*, or Display of the Divine Majesty, which was over the Mercy-Seat, remov'd for the present in the Pillar of Cloud which was taken up, and then the Ark was not dangerous to be approach'd. (2.) All the holy Things must be cover'd; the Ark and Table, with three Coverings, all the rest with two. Even the *Altar of the Altar*, in which the holy Fire was carefully preserv'd and tak'd up, must have a Purple Cloth spread over them, *v. 13.* Even the *Brazen Altar*, though in the Court of the Sanctuary it stood open to the View of all, yet was cover'd in the Carriage of it. All these Coverings were design'd, 1. For Safety, that these Holy Things might not be ruffled with the Wind, fully'd by the Rain, or tarnish'd with the Sun, but they might be preserv'd in their Beauty. For on all the Glory shall be a Defence. The Coverings of *Badgers Skins* being thick and strong, would keep out Wet; and while we are in our Passage thro' the Wilderness of this World, it concerns us to be fenc'd for all Weathers; *Isa. 4. 5, 6.* 2. For Decency and Ornament. Most of these Things had a Cloth of Blue, or Purple, or Scarlet,

spread out-most; and the Ark was cover'd with a Cloth wholly of Blue, *v. 6.* An Emblem (say some) of the Azure Skies, which are spread like a Curtain, between us and the Majesty on high, *Job 26. 9.* Those that are faithful to God, should endeavour likewise to appear beautiful before Men, that they may adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour. 3. For Concealment. It signified the Darkness of that Dispensation. That which is now brought to Light by the Gospel, and reveal'd to Babes, was then hid from the Wise and Prudent. They saw only the Coverings, not the Holy Things themselves, (*Heb. 10. 1.*) But now *Christ* has destroy'd the Face of the Covering, *Isa. 25. 7.* (3.) When all the Holy Things were cover'd, then the *Kobathites* were to carry them on their Shoulders. Those Things that had Staves were carried by their Staves, *v. 6, 8, 11, 14.* those that had not, were carried upon a Bar, or Bier, or bearing Barrow, *v. 10, 12.* See how the Tokens of God's Presence in this World are moveable Things, but we look for a Kingdom that cannot be moved. 2. *Eleazar*, now the eldest Son of *Aaron*, is appointed Overseer of the *Kobathites* in this Service, *v. 16.* He must take Care that nothing was forgot, left behind, or displac'd. As a Priest he had more Honour than the *Levites*, but then he had more Care; and that Care was a heavier Burthen, no doubt, upon his Heart, than all the Burthens that were laid upon their Shoulders. 'Tis much easier to do the Work of the Tabernacle, than to discharge the Trusts of it, to obey than to rule. 3. Great Care must be taken to preserve the Lives of these *Levites* by preventing their unseasonable, irreverent Approach to the most Holy Things, *v. 18.* Cut ye not off the *Kobathites*. Note, Those who do not what they can to keep others from Sin, do what they can to cut them off. (1.) The *Kobathites* must not see the Holy Things till the Priests had cover'd them, *v. 20.* Even they that bore the Vessels of the Lord, saw not what they bore; so much were, even they, in the Dark concerning the Gospel, whose Office it was to expound the Law. And (2.) when they were cover'd, they might not touch them, at least not the Ark, call'd here the Holy Thing, upon Pain of Death, *v. 15.* *Uzza* was struck dead for the Breach of this Law. Thus were the Lord's Ministers themselves then kept in Fear, and that was a Dispensation of Terror, as well as Darkness, but now through *Christ* the Case is alter'd, we have seen with our Eyes, and our Hands have handled the Word of Life, *1 John 1. 1.* And we are encourag'd to come boldly to the Throne of Grace.

21 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 22 Take also the sum of the sons of Gershon, throughout the houses of their fathers, by their families: 23 From thirty years old and upward, until fifty years old shalt thou number them, all that enter in to perform the service, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation. 24 This is the service of the families of the Gershonites, to serve, and for burdens. 25 And they shall bear the curtains of the tabernacle, and the tabernacle of the congregation: his covering, and the covering of the badgers-skins that is upon it, and the hanging of the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 26 And the hangings of the court, and the hanging for the door of the gate of the court, which is by the tabernacle, and by the altar round about, and their cords, and all the instruments of their service, and all that is made for them: so shall they serve. 27 At the appointment of Aaron and his sons, shall be all the service of the sons of the Gershonites, in all their burdens, and in all their service: and ye shall appoint unto them in charge all their burdens. 28 This is the service of the families of the sons of Gershon, in the tabernacle of the congregation: and their charge shall be under the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron. 29 ¶ As for the sons of Merari, thou shalt number them after their families, by the house of their fathers. 30 from thirty years old and upward, even unto fifty years old shalt thou number them, every one that entreth in to the serve, to do the work of the tabernacle of the congregation. 31 And this is the charge of their burden, according to all their service in the tabernacle of the congregation, the boards of the tabernacle, and the bars thereof, and the pillars thereof, and sockets thereof. 32 And the pillars of the court round about, and their sockets, and their pins, and their cords, with all their instruments, and with all their service: and by name ye shall reckon

the instruments of the charge of their burden. 33 This is the service of the families of the sons of Merari, according to all their service in the tabernacle of the congregation, under the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest.

We have here the Charge of the other two Families of the Levites, which though not so honourable as the first, yet was necessary, and was to be done regularly. 1. The Gersonites were charg'd with all the Drapery of the Tabernacle. The Curtains and Hangings, and the Coverings of Badgers Skins, v. 22.--26. Those they were to take down, when the Cloud removed, and the Ark and the rest of the holy Things were carried away, to pack up and bring with them, and then to set up again, where the Cloud rested. Aaron and his Sons allotted to them their respective Charge, you shall take care of such a Curtain, and you of such a Hanging; that every one might know his Work, and there might be no Confusion, v. 27. Ithamar particularly was to take the Oversight of them, v. 28. 2. The Merarites were charg'd with the heavy Carriage, the Boards, and Bars, the Pillars and Sockets, the Pins and Cords, and those were deliver'd them by Name, v. 31, 32. An Inventory was given them of every Particular, that it might be forthcoming, and nothing to seek when the Tabernacle was to be set up again. Though those seem'd of less Importance than the other Things pertaining to the Sanctuary, yet there was this Care taken of them, to teach us with the greatest Exactness to preserve pure and entire all Divine Institutions, and to take care that nothing be lost. It also intimates the Care God has of his Church, and every Member of it; the good Shepherd calls his own Sheep by Name, John 10. 3.

Here were Thousands of Men employ'd about these Services; though a much less Number will serve for the bearing of those Burthens; but it was requisite that the Tabernacle should be taken down, and set up with great Expedition, and many Hands would make quick Work, especially when every one knew his Work. They had Tents of their own to take Care of, and to take along with them, but the young Men under thirty, and the old Men above fifty, might serve for them; nor is any mention of them, for God's House must always be prefer'd before our own. Their Care was preposterous, who built and ceil'd their own Houses, while God's House lay waste, Hag. 1. 4, 9.

The Death of the Saints is represented as the taking down of the Tabernacle, 2 Cor. 5. 1. and the putting of it off, 2 Pet. 1. 14. The Immortal Soul, like the most holy Things, is first cover'd and taken away, carried by Angels unseen, under the Inspection of the Lord Jesus, our Eleazar; and Care is taken also of the Body, the Skin and Flesh, which are as the Curtains, the Bones and Sinews, which are as the Bars and Pillars; none of these shall be lost; Commandment is given concerning the Bones, a Covenant made with the Dust; these are in safe Custody, and shall all be produc'd in the Great Day, when this Tabernacle shall be set up again, and these vile Bodies made like the glorious Body of Jesus Christ.

34 ¶ And Moses, and Aaron, and the chief of the congregation numbered the sons of the Kohathites, after their families, and after the house of their fathers: 35 From thirty years old and upward, even unto fifty years old, every one that entreth in to the service, for the work in the tabernacle of the congregation. 36 And those that were numbered of them by their families, were two thousand seven hundred and fifty. 37 These were they that were numbered of the families of the Kohathites, all that might do service in the tabernacle of the congregation, which Moses and Aaron did number, according to the commandment of the LORD by the hand of Moses. 38 And those that were numbered of the sons of Gershon, throughout their families, and by the house of their fathers; 39 From thirty years old and upward, even unto fifty years old, every one that entreth in to the service, for the work, in the tabernacle of the congregation: 40 Even those that were numbered of them, throughout their families, were two thousand and six hundred and thirty. 41 These are they that were numbered of the families of the sons of Gershon, of all that might do service in the tabernacle of the congregation, whom Moses and Aaron did number, according to the commandment of the LORD. 42 ¶ And those that were numbered of the families of the sons of Merari, throughout their families, by the house of

their fathers: 43 From thirty years old and upward, even unto fifty years old, every one that entreth in to the service, for the work in the tabernacle of the congregation: 44 Even those that were numbered of them after their families, were three thousand and two hundred. 45 These be those that were numbered of the families of the sons of Merari, whom Moses and Aaron numbered, according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses. 46 All those that were numbered of the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron, and the chief of Israel numbered after their families, and after the house of their fathers: 47 From thirty years old and upward, even unto fifty years old, every one that came to do the service of the ministry, and the service of the burden in the tabernacle of the congregation. 48 Even those that were numbered of them, were eight thousand and five hundred and fourscore. 49 According to the commandment of the LORD, they were numbered by the hand of Moses, every one according to his service, and according to his burden: thus were they numbered of him, as the LORD commanded Moses.

We have here a particular Account of the Numbers of the three Families of the Levites respectively; that is, of the effective Men between thirty Years old and fifty.

Observe 1. That the Kohathites were in all Eight thousand and six hundred, from a Month old and upward, but of those there were but Two thousand seven hundred and fifty serviceable Men, not a third Part; the Gershonites in all Seven thousand and five hundred, and of them but Two thousand six hundred and thirty serviceable Men, little more than a third Part. Note, Of the many that add to the Numbers of the Church, there are comparatively but few that contribute to the Service of it. So it has been, and so it is, many have a Place in the Tabernacle, that do but little of the Work of the Tabernacle, Phil. 2. 20, 21. 2. That the Merarites were but Six thousand and two hundred in all, and yet of these there were Three thousand and two hundred serviceable Men, which were a good deal above half. The greatest Burthen lay upon that Family, the Boards, and Pillars, and Sockets, and God so order'd it, that though they were the fewest in Number, yet they should have the most able Men among them, for whatever Service God calls Men to, he will furnish them for it, and give Strength in proportion to the Work, Grace sufficient. 3. The whole Number of the able Men of the Tribe of Levi, which enter'd into God's Host to war his Warfare, was but Eight thousand five hundred and eighty, whereas the able Men of the other Tribes that enter'd into the Host of Israel to war their Warfare, were many more. The least of the Tribes had almost four times as many able Men as the Levites, and some of them more than eight times as many: For those that are engag'd in the Service of this World, and war after the Flesh, are many more than those that are devoted to the Service of God, and fight the good Fight of Faith.

CHAP. V.

In this Chapter we have, 1. An Order pass'd pursuant to the Law already made, for the removing the Unclean out of the Camp, v. 1.--4. 2. A Repetition of the Law concerning Restitution, in Case of wrong done to a Neighbour, v. 5.--8. and concerning the Appropriation of the hallowed Things to the Priests, v. 9, 10. 3. A new Law made concerning the Trial of a Wife suspected of Adultery, by the Waters of Jealousy, v. 11.--34.

1 AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Command the children of Israel, that they put out of the camp every leper, and every one that hath an issue, and whosoever is defiled by the dead. 3 Both male and female shall ye put out, without the camp shall ye put them, that they defile not their camps in the midst whereof I dwell. 4 And the children of Israel did so, and put them out without the camp: as the LORD spake unto Moses, so did the children of Israel. 5 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 6 Spake unto the children of Israel, When a man or woman shall commit any sin that men commit, to do a trespass against the LORD, and that person be guilty: 7 Then they shall confess their sin which they have done: and

and he shall recompense his trespass with the principal thereof, and add unto it the fifth part thereof, and give it unto him against whom he hath trespassed. 8 But if the man have no kinsman to recompense the trespass unto, let the trespass be recompensed unto the LORD, even to the priest: beside the ram of the atonement, whereby an atonement shall be made for him. 9 And every offering of all the holy things of the children of Israel, which they bring unto the priest, shall be his. 10 And every mans hallowed things shall be his: whatsoever any man giveth the priest, it shall be his.

Here's 1. A Command for the purifying of the Camp, by turning out from within its Lines, all those that were ceremonially unclean, by Illnes, Leprosies, or the touch of dead Bodies, until they were cleansed according to Law, v. 2, 3. And the executing of these Orders immediately, v. 4. (1.) The Camp was now newly model'd, and put in Order, and therefore to complete the Reformation of it, it is next to be cleans'd. Note, The Purity of the Church must be as carefully consulted and preserved, as the Peace and Order of it. 'Tis requisite not only that every Israelite be confin'd to his own Standard, but that every polluted Israelite be separated from it. The Wisdom from above, is first pure, then peaceable. (2.) God's Tabernacle was now fixed in the midst of their Camp, and therefore they must be careful to keep it clean. Note, The greater Profession of Religion any House or Family makes, the more they are oblig'd to put away Iniquity far from the Tabernacle, Job 22. 25. The Person, the Place, in the midst of which God dwells, must not be defiled, for if it be, he is affronted, offended, and provoked to withdraw. 1 Cor. 3. 16, 17. 22. *Sanctum non est et non est sanctum.*

This Expulsion of the unclean out of the Camp, was to signify, (1.) What the Governours of the Church ought to do; they must separate between the Precious and the Vile, and purge out scandalous Persons, as old Leaven, 1 Cor. 5. 13: lest others be infected and defiled, Heb. 12. 15. It is for the Glory of Christ, and the Edification of his Church, that those who are openly and incorrigibly profane and vicious, should be put and kept from Christian Communion till they repent. (2.) What God himself will do in the Great Day; he will thoroughly purge his Floor, and gather out of his Kingdom all Things that offend. As here the Unclean were shut out of the Camp, so into the New Jerusalem no unclean Thing shall enter, Rev. 21. 27. 2. A Law concerning Restitution, in Case of Wrong done to a Neighbour. 'Tis called a Sin that Men commit, v. 6. because it is common among Men; a Sin of Man, i. e. a Sin against Man, so 'tis thought it should be translated and understood. If a Man over-reach or defraud his Brother in any Matter, 'tis to be look'd upon as a Trespass against the Lord, who is the Protector of Right, the Punisher of Wrong, and who doth strictly charge and command us to do justly. Now what is to be done when a Man's awaken'd Conscience charges him with Guilt of this kind, and brings it to his Remembrance, though done long ago? 1. He must confess his Sin, confess it to God, confess it to his Neighbour, and so take Shame to himself. If he have denied it before, though it go against the Grain to own himself in a Lye, yet he must do it; because his Heart was hardened he denied it; therefore he has no other Way of making it appear that his Heart is now softened, but by confessing it. 2. He must bring a Sacrifice, a Ram of Atonement, v. 8. Satisfaction must be made for the Offence done to God, whose Law is broken, as well as for the Loss sustain'd by our Neighbour; Restitution in that Case, is not sufficient without Faith and Repentance. 3. Yet the Sacrifices would not be accepted, till full Amends was made to the Party wrong'd, not only the Principal, but a fifth Part added to it, v. 7. 'Tis certain, while that which is got by Injustice, is knowingly retain'd in the Hands, the Guilt of the Injustice remains upon the Conscience, and is not purged by Sacrifice or Offering, Prayers or Tears, for it is one and the same continued Act of Sin, persisted in. This Law we had before, Lev. 6. 4. and 'tis here added, That if the Party wrong'd were dead, and he had no near Kinsman who was entitl'd to the Debt, or it were any Way uncertain to whom the Restitution should be made, that should not serve for an Excuse to detain what was unjustly gotten, to whomsoever it pertain'd, it was certainly none of his that got it by Sin, and therefore it must be given to the Priest, v. 8. If there were any that could make out a Title to it, it must not be given to the Priest, God hates Robbery for Burnt Offerings; but if there were not, then it laps'd to the Great Lord, (*ob defectum sanguinis*) and the Priests were his Receivers. Note, Some Work of Piety or Charity, is a Piece of necessary Justice to be done by those who are conscious to themselves that they have done Wrong, but know not how otherwise to make Restitution; what is not our Property, will never be our Profit. 3. A general Rule concerning hallow'd Things given upon this Occasion. That whatever was given to the Priest, his it shall be, v. 9, 10. 1. He that gave it shall not receive his Gift, upon any Pretence whatsoever. This Law

testifies and confirms all Grants for pious Uses, that People might not give Things the Priests in a Pang, and then recall them in a Fret. 2. The other Priests shall not come in Sharers with that Priest who then officiated, and to whom the hallow'd Thing, whatever it was, was given. Let him that was most ready and diligent in attending, fare the better for it: If he do the Work, let him have the Pay, and much good may it do him.

11 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 12 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any mans wife go aside, and commit a trespass against him; 13 And a man lie with her carnally, and it be hid from the eyes of her husband, and be kept close, and she be defiled, and there be no witness against her: neither she be taken with the manner; 14 And the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be defiled: or if the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be not defiled: 15 Then shall the man bring his wife unto the priest, and he shall bring her offering for her, the tenth part of an ephah of barley meal: he shall pour no oil upon it, nor put frankincense thereon; for it is an offering of jealousy, an offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance: 16 And the priest shall bring her near, and set her before the LORD. 17 And the priest shall take holy water in an earthen vessel, and of the dust that is in the floor of the tabernacle, the priest shall take, and put it into the water: 18 And the priest shall set the woman before the LORD, and uncover the womans head, and put an offering of memorial in her hands, which is the jealousy-offering: and the priest shall have in his hand the bitter water that causeth the curse. 19 And the priest shall charge her by an oath, and say unto the woman, If no man have lien with thee, and if thou hast not gone aside to uncleanness with another instead of thy husband, be thou free from this bitter water that causeth the curse: 20 But if thou hast gone aside to another instead of thy husband, and if thou be defiled, and some man hath lien with thee beside thine husband: 21 Then the priest shall charge the woman with an oath of cursing, and the priest shall say unto the woman, The LORD make thee a curse, and an oath among thy people, when the LORD doth make thy thigh to rot, and thy belly to swell. 22 And this water that causeth the curse shall go into thy bowels, to make thy belly to swell, and thy thigh to rot: and the woman shall say, Amen, Amen. 23 And the priest shall write these curses in a book, and he shall blot them out with the bitter water. 24 And he shall cause the woman to drink the bitter water that causeth the curse: and the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her, and become bitter. 25 Then the priest shall take the jealousy-offering out of the womans hand, and shall wave the offering before the LORD, and offer it upon the altar. 26 And the priest shall take an handful of the offering, even the memorial thereof, and burn it upon the altar, and afterward shall cause the woman to drink the water. 27 And when he hath made her to drink the water, then it shall come to pass, that if she be defiled, and have done trespass against her husband, that the water that causeth the curse, shall enter into her, and become bitter, and her belly shall swell, and her thigh shall rot: and the woman shall be a curse among her people. 28 And if the woman be not defiled, but be clean, then she shall be free, and shall conceive seed. 29 This is the law of jealousies, when a wife goeth aside to another instead of her husband, and is defiled: 30 Or when the spirit of jealousy cometh upon him, and he be jealous over his wife, and shall set the woman before the LORD, and the priest shall execute upon her all this law: 31

Then shall the man be guiltless from iniquity, and this woman shall bear her iniquity.

We have here the Law concerning the solemn Tryal of a Wife, whose Husband was jealous of her. *Observe*, 1. What was the Case suppos'd, that a Man had some Reason to suspect his Wife to have committed Adultery, v. 12, 13, 14. Here 1. The Sin of Adultery is justly represented as an exceeding sinful Sin; 'tis going aside, from God and Virtue, and the good Way, Prov. 2. 17. 'Tis committing a Trespass against the Husband, robbing him of his Honour, alienating his Right, introducing a spurious Brood into his Family to share with his Children in his Estate, and violating her Covenant with him: 'Tis being defiled, for Nothing pollutes the Mind and Conscience more than this Sin doth. 2. 'Tis suppos'd to be a Sin that great Care is taken by the Sinners to conceal; which there is no Witness of; the Eye of the Adulterer waits for the Twilight, Job 24. 15. and the Adulteress takes her Opportunity when the good Man is not at Home, Prov. 7. 19. 'Twould not cover to be secret if it were not shameful; and the Devil that draws Sinners to this Sin teaches them how to cover it. 3. The Spirit of Jealousie is suppos'd to come upon the Husband, of which Solomon saith it is the Rage of a Man, Prov. 6. 34. And that it is cruel as the Grave, Cant. 8. 6. 4. Yet (say the Jewish Writers) he must make it to appear that he has some just Cause for the Suspicion. The Rule they give is, if the Husband have said unto his Wife before Witnesses, Be not thou in secret with such a Man, and notwithstanding that Admonition, it is afterwards proved that she was in secret with that Man, though her Father, or Brother, then he may compel her to drink the bitter Water. But the Law here doth not tie him to that particular Method of proving the just Cause of his Suspicion, it might be otherwise prov'd. In Case it could be prov'd that she had committed Adultery she was to be put to Death, Lev. 20. 10. but if it were uncertain, then this Law took Place. From hence 1. Let all Wives be admonish'd not to give any the least Occasion for the Suspicion of their Chastity; 'tis not enough that they abstain from the Evil of Uncleaness, but they must abstain from all Appearance of it, from every Thing that looks like it, or leads to it, or may give the least Umbrage to Jealousie, for how great a Matter may a little Fire kindle. 2. Let all Husbands be admonish'd not to entertain any causeless or unjust Suspicions of their Wives. If Charity in general, much more conjugal Affection teacheth to think no Evil, 1 Cor. 13. 5. 'Tis the Happiness of the virtuous Woman that the Heart of her Husband doth safely trust in her, Prov. 31. 11. 2. What was the Course prescribed in this Case, 1. That if the suspected Wife were innocent, she might not continue under the Reproach and Uneasiness of her Husband's Jealousie. 2. That if she were guilty her Sin might find her out, and others might hear and fear and take Warning. Now the Process of the Tryal must be thus. 1. Her Husband must bring her to the Priest, with the Witnesses that could prove the Ground of his Suspicion, and desire she might be put upon her Tryal. The Jews say, the Priest was first to endeavour to persuade her to confess the Truth, saying to this Purpose, "Dear Daughter, perhaps thou wast overtaken by drinking Wine, or wast carried away by the Heat of Youth, or the Examples of ill Neighbours; come confess the Truth for the Sake of his great Name, which is described in the most sacred Ceremony, and do not let it be blotted out with the bitter Water. If she confessed, saying, I am defiled, she was not put to Death, but was divorced and left her Dowry; if she said, I am pure, then they proceeded. 2. He must bring a course Offering of Barley Meal, without Oyl or Frankincense, agreeable to the present afflicted State of his Family, for a great Affliction it was, either to have Cause to be jealous, or to be jealous without Cause. 'Tis an Offering of Memorial, to signify that what was to be done was intended as a religious Appeal to the Omniscience and Justice of God. 3. The Priest was to prepare the Water of Jealousie; holy Water out of the Laver at which the Priests were to wash when they ministred; this must be brought in an earthen Vessel, containing (they say) about a Pint, and it must be an earthen Vessel, because the courser and plainer every Thing was, the more agreeable it was to the Occasion. Dust must be put into the Water, to signify the Reproach she lay under, and the Shame she ought to take to herself, putting her Mouth in the Dust, but Dust from the Floor of the Tabernacle, to put an Honour upon every Thing that pertain'd to the Place God had chosen to put his Name there, and to keep up in the People a Reverence for it, See Job 8. 6. 4. The Woman was to be set before the Lord, at the East Gate of the Temple Court, (say the Jews) and her Head was to be uncover'd, in Token of her sorrowful Condition, and there she stood for a Spectacle to the World, that other Women might learn, not to do after her Lewdness, Ezek. 23. 48. only the Jews say, her own Servants were not to be present, that she might not seem vile in their Sight, who were to give Honour to her; her Husband also must be dismiss'd. 5. The Priest was to adjure her to tell the Truth, and to denounce the Curse of God against her if she was guilty, and to declare what

would be the Effect of her drinking the Water of Jealousie, v. 19, 20, 21, 22. He must assure her, that if she were innocent the Water would do her no Harm, v. 19. None need fear the Curse of the Law, if they have not broken the Commands of the Law. But if she were guilty, this Water would be Poison to her, 'twould make her Belly to swell, and her Thigh to rot, and she should be a Curse or Abomination among her People, v. 21, 22. To this she must say Amen, as Israel must do to the Curses pronounced on Mount Ebal, Deut. 27. 17. Some think the Amen being doubled respects both Parts of the Adjuration, both that which freed her, if innocent, and that which condemned her if guilty. No Woman if she were guilty could say Amen to this Adjuration, and drink the Water upon it, unless she disbelieved the Truth of God or defied his Justice, and was come to such a Pitch of Impudence and Hard-heartedness in Sin, as to challenge God Almighty to do his worst, and chuse rather to venture upon his Curse than to give him Glory by making Confession; thus has Whoredom taken away the Heart. 6. The Priest was to write this Curse in a Scrip or Scroll of Parchment verbatim as he had expressed it, and then to wipe or scrape out what he had written into the Water, v. 23. to signify that it was that Curse which impregnated the Water, and gave it its Strength to effect what was intended. It signified that if she were innocent the Curse should be blotted out, and never appear against her, as it is written, Isa. 43. 25. I am he that blot out thy Transgressions, and Ps. 51. 9. Blot out mine Iniquities. But that if she were guilty, the Curse, as it was written, being infus'd into the Water 'twould enter into her Bowels with the Water, even like Oil into her Bones, Ps. 109. 18. as we read of a Curse entering into a House, Zech. 5. 4, 7. The Woman must then drink the Water, v. 24. 'tis call'd the bitter Water, some think because they put Wormwood into it to make it bitter, or rather, because it caus'd the Curse. Thus Sin is called an evil Thing and a bitter, for the same Reason, because it causeth the Curse, Jer. 2. 19. If she had been guilty, (and otherwise it did not cause the Curse) she was made to know that though her stolen Waters had been sweet, and her Bread eaten in secret pleasant, yet the End was bitter as Wormwood, Prov. 9. 17—5. 4. Let all that meddle with forbidden Pleasures, know that they will be Bitterness in the latter End. The Jews say, that if upon denouncing the Curses the Woman was to terrified that she durst not drink the Water, but confess'd she was defiled, the Priest hung down the Water, and cast her Offering among the Ashes, and she was divorc'd without Dowry: If she confessed not, and yet would not drink they forced her to it, and if she were ready to throw it up again they hastned her away, that she might not pollute the holy Place. 8. Before she drank the Water, the Jealousie Offering was wav'd and offer'd upon the Altar, (v. 25, 26.) a Handful of it was burnt for a Memorial, and the Remainder of it eaten by the Priests, unless the Husband were a Priest, and then 'twas scatter'd among the Ashes. This Offering in the Midst of the Transaction, signified that the Whole was an Appeal to God, as a God that knows all Things; and from whom no Secret is hid. 9. Lastly, All Things being thus perform'd according to the Law, they were to wait the Issue. The Water with a little Dust put into it, and the Scrapings of a written Parchment had no natural Tendency at all to do either Good or Hurt, but if God was thus appeal'd to in the Way of an insinuated Ordinance, though otherwise the Innocent might have continued under Suspicion, and the Guilty undiscover'd, yet God would so far own his own Institution, as that in a little Time by the miraculous Operation of Providence, the Innocency of the Innocent should be cleared, and the Sin of the Guilty should find them out. If the suspected Woman were really guilty, the Water she drunk would be Poison to her, v. 27. Her Belly would swell and her Thigh rot, by a vile Disease for vile Deserts; and she would mourn as the last, when her Flesh and her Body are consumed, Prov. 5. 19. Bishop Patrick saith from some of the Jewish Writers, that the Effect of these Waters appeared presently, she grew pale, and her Eyes ready to start out of her Head; Dr. Lightfoot saith, that sometimes it appeared not of two or three Years, but she bare no Children, was sickly, languish'd, and rotted at last; 'tis probable some Indications appear'd presently. The Rabbins say, the Adulterer also died the same Day and Hour that the Adulteress did, and in the same Manner too, that his Belly swelled, and his secret Parts rotted; a Disease perhaps not much unlike that which in these latter Ages the avenging Hand of a righteous God has made the Scourge of Uncleaness, and with which Whores and Whoremongers infect and plague and ruin one another, since they escape Punishment from Men. The Jewish Doctors add, that the Waters had this Effect upon the Adulterers, only, in Case the Husband had never offended in the same Kind; but if he had at any Time defiled the Marriage Bed, God did not thus right him against his injurious Wife, and that therefore in the latter and degenerate Ages of the Jewish Church, when Uncleaness did abound, this Way of Tryal was generally disus'd and laid aside: Men knowing their own Crimes, were content with their Wives Crimes. And to this perhaps may refer that Threatning, Hos.

Hor. 4. 14. I will not punish your Spouses when they commit Adultery, for yourselves are separated with Whores. 2. If she were innocent, the Water she drunk would be Physick to her, v. 28. She shall be free, and shall conceive Seed. The Jewish Writers magnify the good Effects of this Water to the innocent Woman; that to recompence her for the Wrong done to her by the Suspicion, she should after the drinking of these Waters, be stronger and look better than ever; if she were sickly, she should become healthful, should bear a Man Child, and have easy Labour.

From the whole we may learn, 1. That secret Sins are known to God, and sometimes are strangely brought to Light in this Life, however there is a Day coming, when God will by Jesus Christ, as here by the Priest, judge the Secrets of Men according to the Gospel, Rom. 2. 16. 2. That in particular, Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge. The Violation of conjugal Faith and Chastity, is highly provoking to the God of Heaven, and sooner or later it will be reckoned for. Though we have not now the Waters of Jealousy to be a sensible Terror to the Unclean, yet we have a Word from God which ought to be as great a Terror, that if any Man defile the Temple of God, him shall God destroy, 1 Cor. 3. 17. 3. That God will find out some Way or other to clear the Innocency of the Innocent, and to bring forth their Righteousness as the Light. 4. That to the Pure all things are pure, but to the Defiled nothing is so, Tit. 1. 15. The same Word is to some a Saviour of Life unto Life, to others a Saviour of Death unto Death, like those Waters of Jealousy, according as they receive it: the same Providence is for good to some, and for hurt to other, Jer. 24. 3, 9. and whatsoever it is intended for, it shall not return void.

CHAP. VI.

In this Chapter we have, 1. The Law concerning Nazarites, (1.) What it was which the Vow of a Nazarite oblig'd him to, v. 1.-8. (2.) A remedial Law in case a Nazarite happen'd to be polluted by the Touch of a dead Body, v. 9.-12. (3.) The Solemnity of his Discharge when his Time was up, v. 13.-21. 2. Instructions given to the Priests how they should bless the People, v. 22.-27.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When either man or woman shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate themselves unto the LORD: 3 He shall separate himself from wine, and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink: neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried. 4 All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine-tree, from the kernels even to the husk. 5 All the days of the vow of his separation, there shall no razor come upon his head, until the days be fulfilled in the which he separateth himself unto the LORD, he shall be holy, and shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow. 6 All the days that he separateth himself unto the LORD, he shall come at no dead body. 7 He shall not make himself unclean for his father, or for his mother, for his brother, or for his sister, when they die: because the consecration of his God is upon his head. 8 All the days of his separation he is holy unto the LORD. 9 And if any man die very suddenly by him, and he hath defiled the head of his consecration, then he shall shave his head in the day of his cleansing, on the seventh day shall he shave it. 10 And on the eighth day he shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons to the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 11 And the priest shall offer the one for a sin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering, and make an atonement for him, for that he sinned by the dead, and shall hollow his head that same day. 12 And he shall consecrate unto the LORD the days of his separation, and shall bring a lamb of the first year for a trespass-offering: but the days that were before, shall be lost, because his separation was defiled. 13 And this is the law of the Nazarite: when the days of his separation are fulfilled, he shall be brought unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 14 And he

shall offer his offering unto the LORD, one he-lamb of the first year, without blemish, for a burnt-offering, and one ew-lamb of the first year, without blemish for a sin-offering, and one ram without blemish for peace-offerings, 15 And a basket of unleavened bread, cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, and wafers of unleavened bread anointed with oil, and their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings. 16 And the priest shall bring them before the LORD, and shall offer his sin-offering, and his burnt-offering. 17 And he shall offer the ram for a sacrifice of peace-offerings unto the LORD, with the basket of unleavened bread: the priest shall offer also his meat-offering, and his drink-offering. 18 And the Nazarite shall shave the head of his separation, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall take the hair of the head of his separation, and put it in the fire, which is under the sacrifice of the peace-offerings. 19 And the priest shall take the sodden shoulder of the ram, and one unleavened cake out of the basket, and one unleavened wafer, and shall put them upon the hands of the Nazarite, after the hair of his separation is shaven. 20 And the priest shall wave them for a wave-offering before the LORD: this is holy for the priest, with the wave-breast, and heave-shoulder: and after that the Nazarite may drink wine. 21 This is the law of the Nazarite, who hath vowed, and of his offering unto the LORD for his separation, besides that that his hand shall get: according to the vow which he vowed, so he must do after the law of his separation.

After the Law for the Discovery and Shame of those that by Sin had made themselves vile, fitly follows this for the Direction and Encouragement of those that by their eminent Piety and Devotion made themselves honourable, and distinguish'd themselves from their Neighbours. 'Tis very probable there were those before the making of this Law, that went under the Character of Nazarites, and were celebrated by that Title, as Persons professing greater Strictness and Zeal in Religion than other People; for the Vow of a Nazarite is spoken of here as a thing already well known; but the Obligation of it is reduc'd to a greater Certainty, than hitherto it had been. Joseph is call'd a Nazarite among his Brethren, Gen. 49. 26. Not only because Separate from them, but because Eminent among them.

Observe 1. The general Character of a Nazarite; 'tis a Person separated unto the Lord, v. 2. Some were Nazarites for Life, either by Divine Designation, as Samson, Judg. 13. 5. and John Baptist, Luke 1. 15. or by their Parents Vow concerning them, as Samuel, 1 Sam. 1. 11. Of these this Law speaks not: Others were so for a certain Time, and by their own voluntary Engagement, and concerning them Rules are given by this Law. A Woman might bind herself with the Vow of a Nazarite, under the Limitations we find, Numb. 30. 3. where the Vow which the Woman is suppos'd to vow unto the Lord, seems to be meant especially of this Vow. The Nazarites were (1.) Devoted to the Lord during the Time of their Nazariteship, and 'tis probable spent much of their Time in the Study of the Law, in Acts of Devotion, and instructing others. An Air of Piety was thereby put upon them, and upon their whole Conversation. (2.) They were separated from common Persons and common Things. Those that are consecrated to God must not be conform'd to this World. They distinguish'd themselves not only from others, but from what they themselves were before and after. (3.) They separated themselves by vowing a Vow. Every Israelite was bound by the Divine Law to love God with all his Heart, but the Nazarites by their own Act and Deed bound themselves to some religious Observances, as Fruits and Expressions of that Love, which other Israelites were not bound to. Some such there were whose Spirits God stirr'd up to be in their Day the Ornaments of the Church, the Standard-bearers of Religion, and Patterns of Piety. 'Tis spoken of as a great Favour to their Nation, that God rais'd up of their young Men for Nazarites, Amos 2. 11. The Nazarites were known in the Streets, and respect'd as purer than Snow, whiter than Milk, Lam. 4. 7. Christ was call'd in Reproach a Nazarene, so were his Followers, but he was no Nazarite according to this Law, he drank Wine, and touch'd dead Bodies, yet in him this Type had its Accomplishment, for in him all Purity and Perfection meet; and every true Christian is a spiritual Nazarite separated by Vow unto the Lord. We find St. Paul by the Persuasion of his Friends, in Compliance to the Jews, submitting to this Law of the Nazarites, but at the

same Time 'tis declar'd that the *Gentiles* should observe no such Thing, Acts 21. 24, 25. 'Twas look'd upon as a great Honour to a Man to be a *Nazarite*, and therefore if a Man speak of it as a Punishment, as suppose he say, *He be a Nazarite rather than do so or so*, he is (say the *Jews*) a *wicked Man*; but he that vows to the Lord in the Way of Holiness to be a *Nazarite*, Lo, the Crown of his God is upon his Head. 2. The particular Obligations that the *Nazarites* lay under; that the Fancies of superstitious Men might not multiply their Restraints endlessly. God himself lays down the Law for them, and gives them the Rule of their Profession. 1. They must have Nothing to do with the Fruit of the Vine, v. 3, 4. They must drink no Wine nor strong Drink, nor eat Grapes, nor the Kernel or the Husk, they might not so much as eat a Raisin. The learned Dr. *Lightfoot* hath a Conjecture (*Ho. Heb. in Luc. 1. 15.*) that as the ceremonial Pollution by Leprosy, and otherwise, represented the sinful State of fallen Man, so the Institution of the Order of *Nazarites* was design'd to represent the pure and perfect State of Man in Innocency, and that the Tree of Knowledge forbidden to Adam, was the Vine, and for that Reason it was forbidden to the *Nazarites*, and all the Produce of it. They did the Tempter's Work who gave the *Nazarites* Wine to drink, Amos 2. 12. perfwading them to that forbidden Fruit. That it was reckon'd a Perfection and Praise not to drink Wine, appears by the Instance of the *Rechabites*, Jer. 35. 6. They were to drink no Wine, 1. That they might be Examples of Temperance and Mortification. Those that separate themselves to God and to his Honour must not satisfy the Desires of the Body, but keep that under and bring it into Subjection. Drinking a little Wine for the Stomach's Sake is allow'd, to help that, 1 Tim. 5. 23. But drinking much Wine for the Palate's Sake, to please that, doth by no Means become those who profess to walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit. 2. That they might be qualified to employ themselves in the Service of God. They must not drink lest they forget the Law, Prov. 31. 5. Left they should err through Wine 1sa. 28. 7. Let all Christians oblige themselves to be very moderate in the Use of Wine and strong Drink; for if the Love of these once get the Mastery of a Man he becomes a very easy Prey to Satan. It is observable, that because they were to drink no Wine, (which was the Thing mainly intended) they were to eat Nothing that came of the Vine, to teach us with the utmost Care and Caution to avoid Sin, and every Thing that borders upon it and leads to it, or may be a Temptation to us. Abstain from all Appearance of Evil. 1 Thes. 5. 22. 2. They must not cut their Hair, v. 5. They must neither poll their Heads nor shave their Beards. This was that Mark of *Sampson's* Nazariteship which we often read of in his Story. Now (1.) This signified a noble Neglect of the Body, and the Ease and Ornament of it, which became those who being separated to God ought to be wholly taken up with their Souls, to secure their Peace and Beauty. It signified that they had for the present renounc'd all Sorts of sensual Pleasures and Delights, and resolv'd to live a Life of Self-denial and Mortification. *Mephiboseth* in Sorrow trimmed not her Beard, 2 Sam. 19. 24. (2.) Some observe that long Hair is spoken of as a Badge of Subjection, 1 Cor. 11. 15. &c. So that the long Hair of the *Nazarites* noted their Subjection to God, and their putting themselves under his Dominion. (3.) By this they were known to all that met them to be *Nazarites*, and so it command'd Respect. It made them look great without Art: 'twas Nature's Crown to the Head, and a Testimony for them that they had preserv'd their Purity. For if they had been defil'd, their Hair must have been cut, v. 9. sec, Jer. 7. 29. They must not come near any dead Body, v. 6, 7. Others might touch dead Bodies, and contract only a ceremonial Pollution by it for some Time, some must do it, else the Dead must be unburied, but the *Nazarites* must not do it upon Pain of forfeiting all the Honour of their Nazariteship. They must not attend the Funeral of any Relation, no not Father or Mother, no more than the high Priest himself, because the Consecration of his God is upon his Head. Those that separate themselves to God must learn, 1. To distinguish themselves and do more than others. 2. To keep their Consciences pure from dead Works, and not to touch the unclean Thing. The greater Profession of Religion we make, and the more eminent we appear, the greater Care we must take to avoid all Sin, for we have so much the more Honour to lose by it. 3. To moderate their Affections even to their near Relations so as not to let their Sorrow for the Loss of them break in upon their Joy in God, and Submission to his Will. See Mat. 8. 21, 22. 4. All the Days of their Separation they must be holy to the Lord, v. 8. This was the Meaning of those external Observances, and without this they were of no Account. The *Nazarites* must be devoted to God, employ'd for him, and their Minds intent upon him; they keep themselves pure in Heart and Life, and be in every Thing conformable to the divine Image and Will; this is to be holy, this is to be a *Nazarite* indeed. 3. The Provision that was made for the Cleansing of a *Nazarite*, if he happen'd unavoidably to contract a ceremonial Pollution by the Touch of a dead Body. No Penalty is order'd by this Law for the wilful

Breach of the foregoing Laws, for it was not suppos'd that a Man who had so much Religion as to make that Vow could have so little as to break it presumptuously: Nor could it be suppos'd, that he should drink Wine, or have his Hair cut, but by his own Fault; but purely by the Providence of God without any Fault of his own he might be near a dead Body, and that's the Case put, v. 9. If a Man die very suddenly by him, he has defiled the Head of his Consecration. Note, Death sometimes takes Men away very suddenly, and without any previous Warning. A Man might be well and dead in so little a Time, as that the most careful *Nazarite* could not avoid being polluted by the dead Body; so short a Step is it sometimes, and so soon taken from Time to Eternity. God prepare us for sudden Death!

In this Case, 1. He must be purified from the ceremonial Pollution he had contracted, as others must, upon the seventh Day, v. 9. Nay, more was requir'd for the purifying of a *Nazarite* than of another Person that had touch'd a dead Body; he must bring a Sin-Offering and a Burnt-Offering, and an Atonement must be made for him, v. 10, 11. This teaches us, that Sins of Infirmary, and the Faults we are overtaken in by Surprise, must be seriously repented of, and an Application made of the Virtue of Christ's Sacrifice to our Souls for the Forgiveness of them every Day, 1 John 2. 1, 2. And that if those who make an eminent Profession of Religion do any Thing toully the Reputation of their Profession, more is expected from them than others for the retrieving both of their Peace, and of their Credit. 2. He must begin the Days of his Separation again, for all that were past before his Pollution, tho' coming never so near the Period of his Time set, were lost and not reckon'd to him, v. 12. This oblig'd them to be very careful not to defile themselves by the Dead, for that was the only Thing that lost their Time, and it teaches us, that if a righteous Man turn away from his Righteousness, and defile himself with dead Works all his Righteousness that he has done shall be lost to him; Ezek. 33. 13. It's all lost, all in vain, if he do not persevere, Gal. 3. 4. He must begin again, and do his First-Works. 4. The Law for the solemn Discharge of a *Nazarite* from his Vow, when he had compleated the Time he fix'd to himself; before the Expiration of that Term he could not be discharg'd; before he vowed it was in his own Power, but it was too late after the Vow to make Enquiry; the *Jews* say, that the Time of a *Nazarite's* Vow could not be less than thirty Days; and if a Man said I will be a *Nazarite* but for two Days, yet he was bound for Thirty; but it should seem Paul's Vow was but seven Days, Acts 21. 27. Or rather then he observ'd the Ceremony of finishing that Vow of Nazariteship, from which being at a Distance from the Temple he had discharg'd himself some Years before at Cenchrea, only by the Ceremony of cutting his Hair, Acts 18. 18.

When the Time of the vowed Separation was out, he was to be made free (1.) Publickly, at the Door of the Tabernacle, v. 13. that all might take Notice of the finishing of his Vow, and none might be offended, if they saw him now drink Wine who had so lately refus'd it. (2.) 'Twas to be done with Sacrifices, v. 14. lest he should think that by this eminent Piece of Devotion he had made God a Debtor to him, he is appointed even when he had finish'd his Vow to bring an Offering to God, for when we have done our utmost in Duty to God, still we must own ourselves behind Hand with him. He must bring one of each Sort of the instituted Offerings. (1.) A Burnt-Offering as an Acknowledgment of God's sovereign Dominion over him, and all he had still, notwithstanding his Discharge from this particular Vow. (2.) A Sin-Offering. This tho' mention'd second, v. 14. yet seems to have been offer'd first (v. 16.) for Atonement must be made for our Sins, before any of our Sacrifices can be accepted. And it is very observable, that even the *Nazarite* that in the Eye of Men was purer than Snow and whiter than Milk, yet durst not appear before the holy God without a Sin-Offering. Tho' he had fulfill'd the Vow of his Separation without any Pollution, yet he must bring a Sacrifice for Sin, for there is a Guilt insensibly contracted by the best of Men, even in their best Works; some Good omitted, some Ill admitted, which if we were dealt with in strict Justice would be our Ruin; and which make it necessary for us to receive the Atonement, and plead it as our Righteousness before God. (3.) A Peace-Offering, in Thankfulness to God who had enabled him to fulfil his Vow, and in Supplication to God for Grace, to preserve him from ever doing any Thing unbecoming one that had been once a *Nazarite*; remembering that tho' he was now freed from the Bonds of his own Vow, he still remain'd under the Bonds of the divine Law. (4.) To those were added the Meat-Offerings and Drink-Offerings according to the Manner (v. 15, 17.) for these always accompanied the Burnt-Offerings and Meat-Offerings; and besides those a Basket of unleavened Cakes, and Wafers. (5.) Part of the Peace-Offering with a Cake and Wafer was to be us'd for a Wave-Offering, v. 19, 20. and this was a Gratuity to the Priest, who had it for his Pains, after it had been first presented to God. (6.) Besides all this, he might bring his Free-Will-Offerings, such as his Hand shall get, v. 21. More than this he might bring, but not less. And to grace the Solemnity, it was common upon this Occasion to have

have their Friends to be at Charges with them, Acts 21. 24. Lastly, One Ceremony more was appointed, which was like the cancelling of the Bond when the Condition is perform'd; and that was the cutting off of his Hair, which had been suffer'd to grow all the Time of his being a Nazarite, and burning it in the Fire over which the Peace-Offerings were a boiling, v. 18. This intimated, that his full Performance of his Vow was acceptable to God in Christ the great Sacrifice, and not otherwise. Learn hence, to Vow and Pay to the Lord our God, for he hath no Pleasure in Fools.

22 5 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 23 Speak unto Aaron, and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them: 24 The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: 25 The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee, 26 The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. 27 And they shall put my Name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them.

Here, 1. The Priests, among other good Offices they were to do, are appointed solemnly to bless the People in the Name of the Lord, v. 23. 'Twas part of their Work, Deut. 21. 4. Hereby God put an Honour upon the Priest, for the less is blessed of the better; and hereby he gave great Comfort and Satisfaction to the People, who look'd upon the Priest as God's Mouth to them. Though the Priest of himself could do no more but beg a Blessing, yet being an Intercessor by Office, and doing that in his Name who commands the Blessing, the Prayer carried with it a Promise, and he pronounc'd it as one having Authority, with his Hands lifted up, and his Face towards the People. Now, 1. This was a Type of Christ's Errand into the World, which was to bless us, Acts 3. 26. as the High-Priest of our Profession. The last thing he did on Earth, was with up-lifted Hands to bless his Disciples, Luke 24. 50, 51. The learned Bishop Pearson observes it as a Tradition of the Jews, that the Priests blessed the People only at the Close of the Morning Sacrifice, not of the Evening Sacrifice, to shew (saith he) that in the Last Days, the Days of the Messiah, which are (as it were) the Evening of the World, the Benediction of the Law should cease, and the Blessing of Christ should take Place. 2. It was a Pattern to Gospel Ministers, the Masters of Assemblies, who are in like manner to dismiss their solemn Assemblies with a Blessing. The same that are God's Mouth to his People to teach and command them, are his Mouth likewise to bless them, and they that receive the Law, shall receive the Blessing. The Hebrew Doctors warn the People that they say not, *What availeth the Blessing of this poor simple Priest?* For (say they) the receiving of the Blessing dependeth not on the Priest, but on the holy blessed God. 2. A Form of Blessing is here prescrib'd them in other of their Devotions; but this being God's Command of the Blessing, that it might not look like any Thing of their own, he puts the very Words into their Mouths, v. 24, 25, 26. Where observe, (1.) That the Blessing is commanded upon each particular Person, *The Lord bless thee*. They must each of them prepare themselves to receive the Blessing, and then they should find enough in it to make them every Man happy; *Blessed shalt thou be*, Deut. 28. 3. If we take the Law to ourselves, we may take the Blessing to ourselves, as if our Names were inserted. (2.) That the Name *Jehovah* is three times repeated in it, and (as the Critics observe) each with a different Accent, in the Original; the Jews themselves think there is some Mystery, and we know what it is, the New Testament having explain'd it, which directs us to expect the Blessing from the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of the Father, and the Communion of the Holy Ghost, each of which Persons is *Jehovah*; and yet they are not three Lords, but one Lord, 1 Cor. 13. 14. (3.) That the Favour of God is all in all in this Blessing, for that's the Fountain of all Good. (1.) *The Lord bless thee*. Our blessing God is only our speaking well of him, his blessing us is doing well for us; those whom he blesteth, they are blest indeed. (2.) *The Lord make his Face shine upon thee*! Alluding to the shining of the Sun upon the Earth, to enlighten and comfort it, and to renew the Face of it. The Lord love thee, and make thee know that he loves thee; we cannot but be happy if we have God's Love, and we cannot but be easy, if we know that we have it. (3.) *The Lord lift up his Countenance upon thee*. This is to the same Purpose with the former, and it seems to allude to the Smiles of a Father upon his Child, or of a Man upon his Friend whom he takes Pleasure in. If God give us the Assurances of his special Favour, and his Acceptance of us, that will put Gladness into the Heart, Psal. 4. 7, 8. (4.) That the Fruits of this Favour convey'd by this Blessing, are Protection, Pardon, and Peace. 1. Protection from Evil, v. 24. The Lord keep thee, for it is he that keepeth Israel, and neither Slumbers nor sleeps, Psal. 121. 4. And all Believers are kept by the Power of God. 2. Pardon of Sin, v. 25. The Lord be gracious,

or merciful, unto thee. 3. Peace, v. 26. including all that Good which goes to make up a compleat Happiness. 3. God here promiseth to ratify and confirm the Blessing, v. 27. *They shall put my Name upon the Children of Israel*. God gives them leave to make use of his Name in blessing the People, and to bless them as his People, called by his Name. This included all the Blessings they could pronounce upon them, to mark them for God's Peculiar, the People of his Choice and Love. God's Name upon them was their Honour, their Comfort, their Safety, their Plea, we are called by thy Name, leave us not. 'Tis added, and I will bless them. Note, A Divine Blessing goes along with Divine Institutions, and puts Virtue and Efficacy into them. What Christ saith of the Peace, is true of the Blessing, when God's Ministers pronounce the Blessing, Peace be to this Congregation; if the Sons of Peace, and Heirs of Blessing be there, the Peace, the Blessing shall rest upon them, Luke 10. 5, 6. For in every Place where God doth record his Name, he will meet his People, and bless them.

CHAP. VII.

God having set up House (as it were) in the midst of the Camp of Israel, the Princes of Israel here come a visiting with their Presents, as Tenants to their Landlord, in the Name of their respective Tribes. They brought Presents, 1. Upon the Dedication of the Tabernacle, for the Service of that, v. 1.--9. 2. Upon the Dedication of the Altar, for the Use of that, v. 10.--38. And, 3. God graciously signified his Acceptance of what was done, v. 39. The two foregoing Chapters were the Records of Additional Laws God gave to Israel, this is the History of the Additional Services which Israel perform'd to God.

1 AND it came to pass on the day that Moses had fully set up the tabernacle, and had appointed it, and sanctified it, and all the instruments thereof, both the altar and all the vessels thereof, and had anointed them and sanctified them: 2 That the princes of Israel, heads of the house of their fathers (who were the princes of the tribes, and were over them that were numbred) offered: 3 And they brought their offering before the LORD, six covered wagons, and twelve oxen: a wagon for two of the princes, and for each one an ox, and they brought them before the tabernacle. 4 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 5 Take it of them, that they may be to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation: and thou shalt give them unto the Levites: to every man according to his service. 6 And Moses took the wagons, and the oxen, and gave them unto the Levites. 7 Two wagons and four oxen he gave unto the sons of Gershon, according to their service: 8 And four wagons and eight oxen he gave unto the sons of Merari, according unto their service, under the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest. 9 But unto the sons of Kohath he gave none: because the service of the sanctuary belonging unto them, was that they should bear upon their shoulders.

Here's the Offering of the Princes to the Service of the Tabernacle. Observe, 1. When it was, not till it was fully set up, v. 1. When all Things were done both about the Tabernacle itself, and the Camp of Israel which surrounded it, according to the Directions given, then they began their Presents; probably about the eighth Day of the second Month. Note, Necessary Observances must always take Place of Free-will Offerings. First those, and then these. 2. Who they were that offer'd, The Princes of Israel, Heads of the House of their Fathers, v. 2. Note, Those that are above others in Power and Dignity, ought to go before others, and endeavour to go beyond them in every thing that is good. The more any are advanc'd, the more is expected from them, for the greater Opportunity they have of serving God and their Generation. What's Wealth and Authority good for, but as they enable a Man to do so much the more Good in the World. 3. What they offer'd; Six Waggon, with each of them a Yoke of Oxen to draw them, v. 3. Doubtless these Waggon were agreeable to the rest of the Furniture of the Tabernacle, and its Appurtenances, the best of the Kind, like the Carriages which great Princes use, when they go in Progress. Some think God by Moses intimated to them what they should bring, or, their own Consideration perhaps suggested to them to make this Present. Though God's Wisdom had ordain'd all the Essentials of the Tabernacle, yet it seems these accidental Conveniencies were left to be provided by their own Discretion, which was to set in order that which

was wanting, (Tit. i. 5.) and these Waggon's were not refus'd, though no Pattern of them was shown to Moses in the Mount. Note, It must not be expected that the Divine Institution of Ordinances should descend to all those Circumstances which are determinable, and are fit to be left alterable by Humane Prudence, that Wisdom which is profitable to all. Observe, No sooner is the Tabernacle fully set up, but this Provision is made for the Removal of it. Note, Even when we are but just settled in the World, and think we are beginning to take Root, we must be preparing for Changes and Removes, especially for the great Change. While we are here in this World, every Thing must be accommodated to a militant and moveable State. When the Tabernacle was in the framing, the Princes were very generous in their Offerings, for then they brought precious Stones, and Stones to be set, Exod. 35. 27. yet how they bring more Presents. Note, Those that have done good, should study to abound therein yet more and more, and not be weary of well doing. 4. How their Offering was dispos'd of, and what Use was made of it. The Waggon's and Oxen were given to the Levites, to be us'd in carrying the Tabernacle, both for their Ease, for God would not have any of his Servants overburthen'd with Work, and for the more safe and tight Conveyance of the several Parts of the Tabernacle, which would be best kept together, and shelter'd from the Weather in Waggon's. 1. The Gershonites that had the light Carriage, the Curtains and Hangings, had but two Waggon's, and two Yoke of Oxen, y. 7. when they had load'd those, they must carry the rest, if any remain'd, upon their Shoulders. 2. The Merarites that had the heavy Carriage, and that which was most unweildy, the Boards, Pillars, Sockets, &c. had four Waggon's, and four Yoke of Oxen allotted them, v. 8. and yet if they had not more Waggon's of their own, they would be oblig'd to carry a great deal upon their Backs too, for the very Silver Sockets weigh'd a hundred Talents, which was above four Tuns; and that was enough to load four Waggon's that were drawn but by one Yoke of Oxen apiece. But each Socket being a Talent Weight, which is about a Man's Burthen (as appears, 2 Kings 5. 23.) probably they carried those on their Backs, and put the Boards and Pillars into the Waggon's. Observe here, How God wisely and graciously order'd the most strength to those that had the most Work. Each had Waggon's according to their Service. Whatever Burthen God in his Providence lays upon us, he will by his sufficient Grace proportion the Strength to it, 1 Cor. 10. 13. 3. The Kohathites that had the most sacred Carriage had no Waggon's at all, because that which was their Charge they were to carry upon their Shoulders, (v. 21.) with a particular Care and Veneration. When in David's Time they carried the Ark in a Cart, God made them to know their Error, by the Death of Uzza, that they did not seek him in due Order. See 1 Chron. 15. 23. And the princes offer'd for dedicating of the altar, in the day that it was appointed, even the princes offer'd their offering before the altar. 11 And the LORD said unto Moses, they shall offer their offering each prince on his day, for the dedicating of the altar. 12 ¶ And he that offer'd his offering the first day, was Nahshon the son of Amminadab, of the tribe of Judah. 13 And his offering was one silver charger, the weight whereof was an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering: 14 One spoon of ten shekels of gold, full of incense: 15 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year for a burnt-offering: 16 One kid of the goats for a sin-offering: 17 And for a sacrifice of peace-offering, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This was the offering of Nahshon the son of Amminadab. 18 ¶ On the second day Nethaneel the son of Zuar, prince of Issachar, did offer. 19 He offered for his offering one silver charger, the weight whereof was an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering: 20 One spoon of gold of ten shekels, full of incense: 21 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year for a burnt-offering: 22 One kid of the goats for a sin-offering: 23 And for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This was the offering of Nethaneel the son of Zuar. 24 ¶ On the third day, Eliab the son of Helon, prince of

the children of Zebulun did offer. 25 His offering was one silver charger, the weight whereof was an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour, mingled with oil, for a meat-offering: 26 One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense: 27 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year for a burnt-offering: 28 One kid of the goats for a sin-offering: 29 And for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This was the offering of Eliab the son of Helon. 30 ¶ On the fourth day Elizur the son of Shedeur, prince of the children of Reuben, did offer. 31 His offering was one silver charger of an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering: 32 One golden spoon of ten shekels full of incense: 33 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year for a burnt-offering: 34 One kid of the goats for a sin-offering: 35 And for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This was the offering of Elizur the son of Shedeur. 36 ¶ On the fifth day Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai, prince of the children of Simeon did offer. 37 His offering was one silver charger, the weight whereof was an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flower mingled with oil, for a meat-offering: 38 One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense: 39 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year for a burnt-offering: 40 One kid of the goats for a sin-offering: 41 And for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This was the offering of Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai. 42 ¶ On the sixth day Eliasaph the son of Deuel, prince of the children of Gad, offered. 43 His offering was one silver charger, of the weight of an hundred and thirty shekels, a silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flower mingled with oil, for a meat-offering: 44 One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense: 45 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year for a burnt-offering: 46 One kid of the goats for a sin-offering: 47 And for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This was the offering of Eliasaph the son of Deuel. 48 ¶ On the seventh day Elishama the son of Amminud, prince of the children of Ephraim, offered. 49 His offering was one silver charger, the weight whereof was an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flower mingled with oil, for a meat-offering: 50 One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense: 51 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt-offering: 52 One kid of the goats for a sin-offering: 53 And for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This was the offering of Elishama the son of Amminud. 54 ¶ On the eighth day offer'd Gamaliel the son of Pedazur, prince of the children of Manasseh. 55 His offering was one silver charger, of an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering: 56 One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense: 57 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year for a burnt-offering: 58 One kid of the goats for a sin-offering: 59 And for a sacrifice of peace-offerings,

ings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This was the offering of Gamaliel the son of Pedazur. 60 ¶ On the ninth day Abidan the son of Gideoni, prince of the children of Benjamin, offered. 61 His offering was one silver charger, the weight whereof was an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flower mingled with oil, for a meat-offering: 62 One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense: 63 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt-offering: 64 One kid of the goats for a sin-offering: 65 And for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This was the offering of Abidan the son of Gideoni. 66 ¶ On the tenth day Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai, prince of the children of Dan, offered. 67 His offering was one silver charger, of an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering: 68 One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense: 69 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year for a burnt-offering: 70 One kid of the goats for a sin-offering: 71 And for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This was the offering of Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai. 72 ¶ On the eleventh day Pagiel the son of Ocran, prince of the children of Asher, offered. 73 His offering was one silver charger, the weight whereof was an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flower mingled with oil, for a meat-offering: 74 One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense: 75 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year for a burnt-offering: 76 One kid of the goats for a sin-offering: 77 And for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This was the offering of Pagiel the son of Ocran. 78 ¶ On the twelfth day, Ahira the son of Enan, prince of the children of Naphtali, offered. 79 His offering was one silver charger, the weight whereof was an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flower mingled with oil, for a meat-offering: 80 One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense: 81 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year for a burnt-offering: 82 One kid of the goats for a sin-offering: 83 And for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This was the offering of Ahira the son of Enan. 84 This was the dedication of the altar, (in the day when it was anointed) by the princes of Israel: twelve chargers of silver, twelve silver bowls, twelve spoons of gold: 85 Each charger of silver weighed an hundred and thirty shekels, each bowl seventy: all the silver vessels weighed two thousand and four hundred shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary. 86 The golden spoons were twelve full of incense, weighing ten shekels a piece, after the shekel of the sanctuary: all the gold of the spoons was an hundred and twenty shekels. 87 All the oxen for the burnt-offering were twelve bullocks, the rams twelve, the lambs of the first year twelve, with their meat-offering: and the kids of the goats for sin-offering twelve. 88 And all the oxen for the sacrifice of the peace-offerings, were twenty and four bullocks, the rams sixty, the he-goats sixty, the lambs of the first year sixty. This was the dedication of the altar, after that it was anointed. 89 And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle

of the congregation, to speak with him, then he heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy seat that was upon the ark of the testimony from between the two cherubims: and he spake unto him.

We have here an Account of the great Solemnity of dedicating the Altars, both that of Burnt-Offerings, and that of Incense; they had been sanctified before, when they were anointed, *Lev. 8. 10. 11.* but now they were hallowed as it were by the Princes, with their Freewill-Offerings. They began the Use of them with rich Presents, and great Expressions of Joy and Gladness, and extraordinary Respect to these Tokens of God's Presence with them. Now observe here, 1. That the Princes and great Men were first and forwardest in the Service of God. Those that are entitled to Precedency, should go before in good Works, and that's true Honour. This is an Example to the Nobility and Gentry, those that are in Authority, and of the first Rank in their Country; they ought to improve their Honour and Power, their Estate and Interest, for the promoting of Religion, and the Service of God in the Places where they live. 'Tis justly expected, that they that have more than others, should do more Good than others with what they have, else they are unfaithful Stewards, and will not make up their Account with Joy. Nay, great Men must not only with their Wealth and Power assist and protect those that do serve God, but they must make Conscience of being devout and religious themselves, and employing themselves in the Exercises of Piety, which will greatly redound to the Honour of God (*Psal. 138. 4. 5.*) and have a mighty good Influence upon others, who will be the easier perswaded to the Acts of Devotion, when they see them thus brought into Reputation. 'Tis certain, the greatest of Men is less than the least of the Ordinances of God; nor are the meanest Services of Religion any Disparagement to those that make the greatest Figure in the World. 2. The Offerings they brought were very rich and valuable; so rich, that some think there was not so great a Difference in Estate between them and others; as that they were able to bear the Expence of them themselves; but that the Heads of each Tribe contributed to the Offering which their Prince brought. 1. They brought some Things to remain for standing Service; 12 large silver Dishes, each about 60 Ounces weight, as many large silver Cups, or Bowls, of about 35 Ounces; the former to be us'd for the Meat-Offerings, the latter for the Drink-Offerings; the former for the Flesh of the Sacrifices, the latter for the Blood. The Altar was God's Table, (as it were) and it was fit for great a King should be serv'd in Plate. The golden Spoons being fill'd with Incense, 'tis very likely were intended for the Service of the golden Altar, for both the Altars were anointed at the same time: Note, In Works of Piety and Charity, we ought to be generous according as our Ability is. He that is the best, should be serv'd with the best we have. The Israelites indeed might well afford to part with their Gold and Silver in Abundance to the Service of the Sanctuary, for they needed it not to buy Meat, and victual their Camp, who were daily fed with Bread from Heaven; nor did they need it to buy Land, or pay their Army, who were shortly to be put in Possession of Canaan. 2. They brought some Things to be us'd immediately, Offerings of each sort, Burnt-Offerings, Sin-Offerings, and a great many Peace-Offerings, on Part of which they were to feast with their Friends, and the Meat-Offerings that were to be annex'd to them. Hereby they signified their thankful Acceptance of, and cheerful Submission to all those Laws concerning the Sacrifices, which God had lately by Moses deliver'd to them. And tho' it was a Time of Joy and Rejoicing, yet it is observable, that still in the midst of their Sacrifices we find a Sin-Offering; since in our best Services we are conscious to ourselves that there is a Mixture of Sin, 'tis fit there should be even in our most joyful Services, a Mixture of Repentance. In all our Approaches to God, we must by Faith have an Eye to Christ as the Great Sin-Offering, and make mention of him. 3. They brought their Offerings each on a several Day, in the Order that they had lately been put into, so that the Solemnity lasted twelve Days: So God appointed, *v. 11. They shall bring their Offering each Prince on his Day, and so they did.* One Sabbath must needs fall within the twelve Days, if not two; but it should seem they did not intermit on the Sabbath, for 'twas a holy Work, proper enough for a holy Day. God appointed that it should thus be done on several Days; (1.) That the Solemnity might be prolong'd, and so might be universally taken notice of by all Israel, and the Remembrance of it more effectually preserv'd. (2.) That an equal Honour might thereby be put upon each several Tribe; in Aaron's Breast-plate each had his precious Stone; so in this Offering each had his Day. (3.) That it would be done more decently and in order: God's Work should not be done confusedly, and in a Hurry; take Time, and we shall have done the sooner; or at least, we shall have done the better. (4.) God hereby signified how well-pleas'd he is, and how well-pleas'd we should be, with the Exercises of Piety and Devotion. The Repetition of them should be a continued Pleasure to us, and we must not be weary of well-

well-doing. If extraordinary Services come to be done for twelve Days together, we must not *surff at it*, nor call it a Task and a Burthen. (5.) The Priests and Levites having this Occasion to offer the same Sacrifices, and those some of every Sort, every Day, for so many Days together, would have their Hands well set in, and would be well vers'd in the Laws concerning them. (6.) The Peace-Offerings were all to be eaten the same Day they were offer'd, and *two Oxen, five Rams, five He-goats, and five Lambs*, were enough for one Day's Festival; had there been more, especially if all had been brought of a Day, there might have been danger of Excess. The Virtue of Temperance must not be left under Pretence of the Religion of Feasting. 4. All their Offerings were exactly the same, without any Variation, though 'tis probable the Princes were not all alike rich, nor the Tribes neither; but thus it was intimated, that all the Tribes of *Israel* had an equal Share in the Altar, and an equal Interest in the Sacrifices that were offer'd upon it. Though one Tribe was pos'd more honourably in the Camp than another, yet they and their Services were all alike acceptable to God. Nor must we have the Faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with respect of Persons, Jam. 2. 1. 5. *Nahshon* the Prince of the Tribe of *Judah*, offer'd first, because God had given that Tribe the first Post of Honour in the Camp, and the rest of the Tribes acquiesc'd, and offer'd in the same Order that God had appointed them to encamp. *Judah*, of which Tribe Christ came, first; and then the rest; thus in the Dedication of Souls to God, every Man is presented in his own Order, *Christ the First-fruits*, 1 Cor. 15. 23. Some observe that *Nahshon* is the only one that is not expressly call'd a Prince, v. 12. which the Jews give this Account of; he is not call'd a Prince, that he might not be puffed up because he offer'd first, and all the others are called Princes, because they (though some of them of the elder House) submitted, and offer'd after him. Or, because the Title of Prince of *Judah* did more properly belong to Christ, for unto him shall the gathering of the People be. 6. The Offerings were all the same, yet the Account of them is repeated at large for each Tribe, in the same Words. We are sure there are no vain Repetitions in Scripture, what then shall we make of these Repetitions? Might it not have served to say of this noble Jury, that the same Offering which their Foreman brought, each on his Day brought likewise? No; God would have it specified for each Tribe: And why so? 'Twas for the Encouragement of these Princes, and of their respective Tribes, that each of their Offerings being recorded at large, no Slight might seem to be put upon any of them, for Rich and Poor meet together before God. 7. 'Twas for the Encouragement of all generous Acts of Piety and Charity, by letting us know that what is so given, is sent to the Lord, and he carefully books it, with every one's Name prefix'd to his Gift, because what is so given, he will pay it again, and even a Cup of cold Water shall have its Reward. He is not unrighteous, to forget either the Cost or Labour of Love, Heb. 6. 10. We find Christ taking particular Notice what was cast into the Treasury, Mark 12. 41. Though what is offer'd be but little, while it is according to our Ability, though it be a Contribution to the Charity of others, yet it shall be recorded, that it may be recompens'd in the Resurrection of the Just. 7. The Sum total is added at the Foot of the Account, (v. 84, 88.) to shew, how well pleas'd God was with the mention of his Freewill-Offerings; and what a great deal is amounged to in the whole, when every Prince brought in his Quota; how greatly would the Sanctuary of God be enrich'd and beautify'd, if all would in their Places do their part towards it, by exemplary Purity and Devotion, extensive Charity, and universal Usefulness. 8. God signified his gracious Acceptance of these Presents that were brought him, by speaking familiarly to *Moses*, as a Man speaks to his Friend, from off the Mercy-Seat, v. 89. *Numb.* 12. 8. And in speaking to him, he did in effect speak to all *Israel*, shewing them this Token for good, Psal. 103. 7. Note, By this we may know that God hears and accepts our Prayers, if he gives us Grace to hear and receive his Word, for thus our Communion with him is maintain'd and kept up. I know not why we may not suppose that upon each of the Days on which these Offerings were brought, probably while the Priests and Officers were feasting upon the Peace-Offerings, *Moses* was in the Tabernacle receiving some of these Laws and Orders which we have already met with in this and the foregoing Book. And here the excellent Bishop Patrick observes, that God's speaking to *Moses* thus by an audible articulate Voice, as if he had been cloth'd with a Body, might be look'd upon as an Earnest of the Incarnation of the Son of God in the Fullness of Time, when the Word should be made Flesh, and speak in the Language of the Sons of Men. For however God at sundry Times, and in divers Manners, spake unto the Fathers, he has in these last Days spoken unto us by his Son. And that he that now spake to *Moses*, as the *Shechinah* or Divine Majesty from between the Cherubims, was the Eternal Word, the second Person in the Trinity, was the pious Conjecture of many of the Ancients; for all God's Communion with Man is by his Son, by whom he made the World, and rules the Church, and who is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever.

CHAP. VIII.

This Chapter is concerning the Lamps or Lights of the Sanctuary, 1. The Burning Lamps in the Candlestick, which the Priests were charg'd to tend, v. 1,--4. 2. The Living Lamps, (if I may so call them) the Levites, who as Ministers, were burning and shining Lights. The Ordination of the Priests, we had an Account of Lev. 8. Here of the Ordination of the Levites, the inferior Clergy, (1.) How they were purified, v. 5,--8. 2. How they were parted with by the People, v. 9, 10. 3. How they were presented to God in lieu of the First-born, v. 11,--18. 4. How they were assign'd to Aaron and his Sons, to be Ministers to them, v. 19. And how all these Orders were duly executed, v. 20,--22. And lastly, the Age appointed for their Ministration, v. 23,--26.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Speak unto Aaron, and say unto him, When thou lightest the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light over-against the candlestick. 3 And Aaron did so: he lighted the lamps thereof over-against the candlestick, as the LORD commanded Moses. 4 And this work of the candlestick was of beaten gold, unto the shaft thereof, unto the flowers thereof, was beaten work: according unto the pattern which the LORD had shewed Moses, so he made the candlestick.

Directions were given long before this for the making of the Golden Candlestick, Exod. 25. 31. and it was made according to the Pattern shew'd to Moses in the Mount, Exod. 37. 17. but now it was that the Lamps were first order'd to be lighted, when other Things began to be us'd. Observe 1. Who must light the Lamps, Aaron himself, he lighted the Lamps, v. 3. As the Peoples Representative to God, he thus did the Office of a Servant in God's House, lighting his Master's Candle; as the Representative of God to the People, he thus gave them the Significations of God's Will and Favour, which is thus express'd, Psal. 18. 28, *Thou wilt light my Candle*; and thus Aaron himself was now lately directed to bless the People, *The Lord make his Face shine upon thee*, Chap. 6. 25. The Commandment is a Lamp, Prov. 6. 23. The Scripture is a Light shining in a dark Place, 2 Pet. 1. 19. And a dark Place indeed even the Church would be without it, as the Tabernacle without the Lamps, for it had no Window in it. Now the Work of Ministers is to light these Lamps, by expounding and applying the Word of God. The Priest lighted the middle Lamp from the Fire of the Altar, and the rest of the Lamps he lighted one from another, which (saith Mr. Ainsworth) signifieth that the Fountain of all Light and Knowledge cometh from Christ, who has the Seven Spirits of God figur'd by the Seven Lamps of Fire, Rev. 4. 5. But that in expounding of Scripture, one Passage must borrow Light from another. He also supposeth, that Seven being a Number of Perfection, by the Seven Branches of the Candlestick is shew'd the full Perfection of the Scriptures, which are able to make us wise to Salvation. 2. To what end the Lamps were lighted, that they might give Light over-against the Candlestick, i. e. to that Part of the Tabernacle where the Table stood, with the Shew-bread upon it, over-against the Candlestick. They were not lighted like Tapers in an Urn, to burn to themselves, but to give Light to the other Side of the Tabernacle, for therefore Candles are lighted, Mat. 5. 14. Note, The Lights of the World, the Lights of the Church must shine as Lights. Therefore we have Light, that we may give Light.

5 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 6 Take the Levites from among the children of Israel, and cleanse them. 7 And thus shalt thou do unto them, to cleanse them: Sprinkle water of purifying upon them, and let them shave all their flesh, and let them wash their clothes, and so make themselves clean. 8 Then let them take a young bullock with his meat-offering, even fine flour mingled with oil, and another young bullock shalt thou take for a sin-offering. 9 And thou shalt bring the Levites before the tabernacle of the congregation, and thou shalt gather the whole assembly of the children of Israel together. 10 And thou shalt bring the Levites before the LORD, and the children of Israel shall put their hands upon the Levites. 11 And Aaron shall offer the Levites before the LORD for an offering of the children of Israel, that they may execute the service of the LORD. 12 And the Levites shall lay their hands upon

upon the heads of the bullocks: and thou shalt offer the one for a sin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering unto the LORD, to make an atonement for the Levites. 13 And thou shalt set the Levites before Aaron, and before his sons, and offer them for an offering unto the LORD. 14 Thus shalt thou separate the Levites from among the children of Israel: and the Levites shall be mine. 15 And after that shall the Levites go in, to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation: and thou shalt cleanse them, and offer them for an offering. 16 For they are wholly given unto me from among the children of Israel: instead of such as open every womb, even instead of the first-born of all the children of Israel have I taken them unto me. 17 For all the first-born of the children of Israel are mine both man and beast: on the day that I smote every first-born in the land of Egypt, I sanctified them for my self. 18 And I have taken the Levites for all the first-born of the children of Israel, 19 And I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and to his sons, from among the children of Israel, to do the service of the children of Israel in the tabernacle of the congregation, and to make an atonement for the children of Israel: that there be no plague among the children of Israel, when the children of Israel come nigh unto the sanctuary. 20 And Moses and Aaron and all the congregation of the children of Israel, did to the Levites according unto all that the LORD commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so did the children of Israel unto them. 21 And the Levites were purified, and they washed their clothes, and Aaron offered them as an offering before the LORD; and Aaron made an atonement for them, to cleanse them. 22 And after that went the Levites in, to do their service in the tabernacle of the congregation before Aaron, and before his sons: as the LORD had commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so did they unto them. 23 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 24 This is it that belongeth unto the Levites: from twenty and five years old and upward, they shall go in to wait upon the service of the tabernacle of the congregation. 25 And from the age of fifty years they shall cease waiting upon the service thereof, and shall serve no more: 26 But shall minister with their brethren in the tabernacle of the congregation, to keep the charge, and shall do no service: thus shalt thou do unto the Levites, touching their charge.

We read before of the separating of the Levites from among the Children of Israel, when they were number'd, and the numbering of them by themselves, Chap. 3. 6, 15. that they might be employ'd in the Service of the Tabernacle. Now here we have Directions given for their solemn Ordination, v. 6. and the Performance of it, v. 20. All Israel must know that they took not this Honour to themselves, but were called of God to it; nor was it enough that they were distinguish'd from their Neighbours, but they must be solemnly devoted to God. Note, All that are employ'd for God must be dedicated to him, according as the Degree of the Employment is. Christians must be baptiz'd, Ministers must be ordain'd; we must first give our own selves unto the Lord, and then our Services. Observe in what Method this was done. 1. The Levites must be cleans'd, and were so. The Rites and Ceremonies of their Cleansing were to be perform'd, (1.) By themselves. They must wash their clothes, and not only bathe but shave all their Flesh, as the Leper was to do when he was cleansed, Lev. 14. 8. They must cause a Razor to pass over all their Flesh, to clear themselves from that defilement which would not wash off. Jacob whom God loved was a smoothman, 'twas Esau that was hairy. The great pains they were to take with themselves to make themselves clean, teacheth all Christians, and Ministers particularly, by Repentance and Mortification, to cleanse themselves from all filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, that they may perfect Holiness. They must be clean that bear the vessels of the Lord. (2.) By Moses. He must

sprinkle the water of purifying upon them, which was prepar'd by Divine Direction. This signified the Application of the Blood of Christ to our Souls by Faith, for the purifying of us from an Evil Conscience, that we may be fit to serve the living God. 'Tis our Duty to cleanse our selves, and God's Promise that he will cleanse us. 2. The Levites being thus prepar'd must be brought before the Lord, in a solemn Assembly of all Israel, and the Children of Israel must put their Hands upon them, v. 10. So transferring their Interest in them, and in their Service, (to which as of a part, the whole Body of the People was intitled) to God and to his Sanctuary. They presented them to God as living Sacrifices, holy and acceptable, to perform a reasonable Service; and therefore as the Offerers in all other cases did, they laid their Hands upon them, desiring that their Service might be accepted in lieu of the attendance of the whole Congregation, particularly the First-born, which they acknowledg'd God might have intitled on. This will not serve to prove a Power in the People to ordain Ministers; for this Imposition of Hands by the Children of Israel upon the Levites did not make them Ministers of the Sanctuary, but only signified the Peoples parting with that Tribe out of their Militia, and Civil Incorporations, in order to their being made Ministers by Aaron, who was to offer them before the Lord. All the Congregation of the Children of Israel could not lay hands on them, but 'tis probable the Rulers and Elders did it, as the Representative Body of the People. Some think the First-born did it, because in their stead the Levites were consecrated to God. Whatever God calls for from us to serve his own Glory by, we must cheerfully resign it; lay our Hands upon it not to detain it, but to surrender it, and let it go to him that is intitled to it. 3. Sacrifices were to be offer'd for them; A Sin-offering first, (v. 12.) and then a Burnt-offering to make an atonement for the Levites, who as the Parties concern'd were to lay their Hands upon the Head of the Sacrifices. See here, (1.) That we are all utterly unworthy and unfit to be admitted into, and employ'd in the Service of God, till Atonement be made for Sin, and thereby our Peace made with God. That interposing Cloud must be scatter'd, before there can be any comfortable Communion settled between God and our Souls. (2.) That 'tis by Sacrifice, by Christ the great Sacrifice, that we are reconcil'd to God, and made fit to be offer'd to him. 'Tis by him that Christians are sanctified to the Work of their Christianity, and Ministers to the Work of their Ministry. The learned Bishop Patrick's Notion of this Sacrifice offer'd by the Levites, is, that the Levites were themselves consider'd as an Expiatory Sacrifice, for they were given to make Atonement for the Children of Israel, v. 19. and yet not being devoted to Death, no more than the First-born were, these two Sacrifices were substituted in their stead, upon which therefore they were to lay their Hands, that the Sin which the Children of Israel laid upon them, v. 10. might be transfer'd to these Beasts. 4. The Levites themselves were offer'd before the Lord for an Offering of the Children of Israel, v. 11. Aaron gave them up to God, as being first given up by themselves, and by the Children of Israel. The Original Word signifies a Wave-offering, not that they were actually wav'd, but they were presented to God, as the God of Heaven, and the Lord of the whole Earth, as the Wave-offerings were. And in calling them Wave-offerings, 'twas intimated to them, that they must continually lift up themselves towards God in his Service, lift up their Eyes, lift up their Hearts, and must move to and fro with readiness in the Business of their Profession. They were not ordain'd to be idle, but to be active, and stirring. 5. God here declares his Acceptance of them, v. 14. The Levites shall be mine. God took them instead of the first-born, v. 16, 17, 18. of which before, chap. 3. 41. Note, What is in sincerity offer'd to God, shall be graciously own'd and accepted by him. And his Ministers who have obtained Mercy of him to be faithful, have particular marks of Favour and Honour put upon them: they shall be mine, and then, v. 15. they shall go in to do the Service of the Tabernacle. God takes them for his own, that they might serve him. All that expect to share in the Privileges of the Tabernacle, must resolve to do the Service of the Tabernacle. As on the one hand none of God's Creatures are his necessary Servants, he needs not the Service of any of them; so on the other hand, none are taken merely as honorary Servants, to do nothing. All whom God owns he employs, Angels themselves have their Services. 6. They are then given as a Gift to Aaron and his Sons, (v. 19.) yet so as that the Benefit accrues to the Children of Israel. 1. The Levites must act under the Priests, as Attendants on them, and Assistants to them in the Service of the Sanctuary. Aaron offers them to God, v. 11. and then God gives them back to Aaron, v. 19. Note, Whatever we give up to God, he will give it back to us unspeakably to our advantage. Our Hearts, our Children, our Estates are never more ours, more truly, more comfortably ours, than when we have offer'd them up to God. 2. They must act for the People. They were taken to do the Service of the Children of Israel; i. e. not only to do the Service which they should do, but to serve their Interests, and do that which would really redound to the Honour, Safety, and Prosperity of the whole Nation. Note, They that faithfully perform the

Service of God, do one of the best Services that can be done to the publick; God's Ministers, while they keep within the Sphere of their Office, and conscientiously discharge the Duty of it, must be look'd upon as some of the most useful Servants of their Country. The *Children of Israel* can as ill spare the Tribe of *Levi* as any of their Tribes. But what is the Service they do the *Children of Israel*? It follows, 'tis to make an Atonement for them, that there be no plague among them. 'Twas the Priests Work to make Atonement by Sacrifice, but the *Levites* made Atonement by Attendance, and preserv'd the Peace with Heaven, which was made by Sacrifice. If the Service of the Priests in the Tabernacle had been left to all the First-born of *Israel* promiscuously, either it would have been neglected, or done unskilfully, and irreverently, being done by those that were neither so closely ty'd to it, nor so diligently train'd up to it, nor so constantly us'd to it as the *Levites* were; and this would bring a Plague among the *Children of Israel*, meaning perhaps the Death of the First-born themselves, which was the last and greatest of the Plagues of *Egypt*. To prevent this, and to preserve the Atonement, the *Levites* were appointed to do this Service, who should be bred up to it under their Parents from their Infancy, and therefore would be well vers'd in it: and so the *Children of Israel*, i. e. the First-born, should not need to come nigh to the Sanctuary; or when any *Israelites* had occasion, the *Levites* would be ready to instruct them, and introduce them, and so prevent any fatal Miscarriage or Mistake. Note, 'Tis a very great Kindness to the Church, that Ministers are appointed to go before them in the Things of God, as Guides, Overseers and Rulers, in Religious Worship, and to make that their Business. When Christ ascended on high he gave these Gifts, Eph. 4. 8, 11, 12. 7. The Time of their Ministration is fix'd. (1.) They were to enter upon the Service at Twenty-five Years old, v. 24. They were not charg'd with the carrying of the Tabernacle, and the Utensils of it, till they were Thirty Years old, Chap. 4. 3. But they were entred, to be other-ways serviceable, at Twenty-five Years old; a very good Age for Ministers to begin their publick Work at. The Work then required that Strength of Body, and the Work now requires that Maturity of Judgment, and Stayedness of Behaviour, which Men rarely arrive at till about that Age: And Novices are in danger of being lifted up with Pride. (2.) They were to have a Writ of Ease at Fifty Years old; then they were to return from the Warfare, as the Phrase is, v. 25. not cashier'd with Disgrace, but prefer'd rather to the Rest which their Age requir'd, to be loaded with the Honours of their Office, as hitherto they had been with the Burdens of it. They shall minister with their Brethren in the Tabernacle, to direct the Junior *Levites*, and set them in; and they shall keep the Charge, as Guards upon the Avenues of the Tabernacle, to see that no Stranger intruded, nor any Person in his Uncleanness: but they shall not be put upon any Service, which may be a Fatigue to them. If God's Grace provide that Men shall have Ability according to their Work, Man's Prudence should take care, that Men have Work but according to their Ability. The Aged are most fit for Trusts, and to keep the Charge; the Younger are most fit for Work, and to do the Service. Those that have us'd the Office of a Servant well, purchase to themselves a good Degree, 1 Tim. 3. 13. Yet indeed Gifts are not ty'd to Ages, (Job 32. 9.) but all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit. Thus was the Affair of the *Levites* settled.

CHAP. IX.

This Chapter is, 1. Concerning the great Ordinance of the Passover.

(1.) Orders given for the Observance of it, at the return of the Year, v. 1-5. (2.) Provisos added, what should be done with those that were ceremonially unclean, or otherwise disabled, at the Time when the Passover was to be kept, v. 6-14. 2. Concerning the great Favour of the Pillar of Cloud, which was a Guide to *Israel* through the Wilderness, v. 15-23.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year, after they were come out of the land of *Egypt*, saying, 2 Let the children of *Israel* also keep the passover at his appointed season. 3 In the fourteenth day of this month at even, ye shall keep it in his appointed season: according to all the rites of it, and according to all the ceremonies thereof, shall ye keep it. 4 And Moses spake unto the children of *Israel*, that they should keep the passover. 5 And they kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the first month at even, in the wilderness of Sinai: according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so did the children of *Israel*. 6 ¶ And there were certain men who

were defiled by the dead body of a man, that they could not keep the passover on that day: and they came before Moses, and before Aaron on that day. 7 And those men said unto him, We are defiled by the dead body of a man: wherefore are we kept back that we may not offer an offering of the LORD in his appointed season, among the children of *Israel*? 8 And Moses said unto them, Stand still, and I will hear what the LORD will command concerning you. 9 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 10 Speak unto the children of *Israel*, saying, If any man of you, or of your posterity shall be unclean by reason of a dead body, or be in a journey afar off, yet he shall keep the passover unto the LORD. 11 The fourteenth day of the second month at even they shall keep it, and eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. 12 They shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it: according to all the ordinances of the passover, they shall keep it. 13 But the man that is clean, and is not in a journey, and forbeareth to keep the passover, even the same soul shall be cut off from his people, because he brought not the offering of the LORD in his appointed season: that man shall bear his sin. 14 And if a stranger shall sojourn among you, and will keep the passover unto the LORD according to the ordinance of the passover, and according to the manner thereof, so shall he do: ye shall have one ordinance, both for the stranger, and for him that was born in the land.

Here's, 1. An Order given for the solemnizing of the Passover, that Day Twelve-Month after they came out of *Egypt*, on the Fourteenth Day of the first Month of the second Year, some Days before they were numbr'd, for that was done in the beginning of the second Month. Observe, (1.) God gave particular Orders for the keeping of this Passover; otherwise (it should seem) they had not kept it, for in the first Institution of this Ordinance it was appointed to be kept when they should come into the Land of Promise, *Exod.* 12. 25. And for ought appears, after this they kept no Passover till they came to *Canaan*, *Josh.* 5. 10. This was an early Indication of the abolishing of the Ceremonial Institutions at last, that so soon after they were first appointed, some of them were suffer'd to lie asleep for so many Years. The Ordinance of the Lord's Supper (which came in the room of the Passover) was not thus intermitted or set aside, in the first Days of the Christian Church, though those were Days of greater Difficulty and Distress than *Israel* knew in the Wilderness; nay, in the Times of Persecution the Lord's Supper was celebrated more frequently than afterwards. The *Israelites* in the Wilderness could not forget their Deliverance out of *Egypt*, their present State was a constant Memorandum of it to them, all the Danger was when they came to *Canaan*, there therefore they had need to be minded of the Rock out of which they were hewn. However, because the first Passover was celebrated in a Hurry, and was rather the Substance it self than the Sign, 'twas the Will of God, that at the return of the Year, when they were more compos'd, and better acquainted with the Divine Law, they should observe it again, that their Children might more distinctly understand the Solemnity, and the better remember it hereafter. Calvin supposeth they were obliged to keep it now, and notes it as an Instance of their Carelessness, that they had need to be minded of an Institution they so lately receiv'd. (2.) Moses faithfully transmitted to the People the Orders given him, v. 4. Thus St. Paul deliver'd to the Churches what he receiv'd of the Lord concerning the Gospel Passover, *1 Cor.* 11. 23. Note, Magistrates must be Monitors, and Ministers must stir up Mens Minds by way of Remembrance to that which is good. (3.) The People observ'd the Orders given them, v. 5. Tho they had lately kept the Feast of Dedication, *Lev.* 8. yet they did not desire to excuse themselves with that from keeping this Feast. Note, Extraordinary Performances must not supersede or juggle out our stated Services. They kept the Passover even in the Wilderness; though our Condition be solitary and unsettled, yet we must keep up our Attendance on God by Holy Ordinances as we have Opportunity, for in them we may find the best Conversation, and the best Repose. Thus is God's *Israel* provided for in a Desert. 2. Instructions given concerning those that were ceremonially unclean, when they were to eat the Passover. The Law of the Passover required every *Israelite* to eat of it; some subsequent Laws had forbidden those that had contracted any Ceremonial Pollution to eat of the Holy Things; those

those whose *Minds and Consciences* are defiled by Sin, are utterly unfit for Communion with God, and cannot partake of any true Comfort in the Gospel Passover, till they are cleans'd by true Repentance and Faith: and a sad Dilemma they are in; if they come not to holy Ordinances, they are guilty of a Contempt of them; if they do come in their Pollution, they are guilty of a Profanation of them. They must therefore *wash*, and then *compass* God's Altar.

Now, 1. Here's the Case that happen'd in Israel when this Passover was to be kept. *Certain Men were defiled by the dead Body of a Man*, v. 6. And they lay under that defilement seven Days, Num. 19. 11. and in that time might not eat of the holy Things, Lev. 7. 20. This was not their Iniquity, but their *Infelicity*; some or other must touch dead Bodies, to bury them out of sight, and therefore they could with the better grace bring their complaint to *Moses*. 2. The Application made to *Moses* by the Persons concern'd, v. 7. Note, It is Peoples Wisdom in difficult Cases concerning Sin and Duty, to consult with their Ministers whom God has set over them, and to ask the Law at their Mouth, Mal. 2. 7. These Means we must use in pursuance of our Prayers to God to lead us in a plain Path. It is observable with what trouble and concern these Men complain that they were kept back from offering to the Lord. They did not complain of the Law as unjust, but lamented their Unhappiness, that they fell under the Restraint of it at this time, and desir'd some Expedient might be found out for their Relief. Note, It is a blessed Sight to see People hungry and thirsting after God's Ordinances, and to hear them complaining of that which prevents their Enjoyment of them. It should be a trouble to us when by any Occasion we are kept back from bringing our Offerings, in the solemnities of a Sabbath or a Sacrament, as it was to David, when he was banish'd from the Altar, Psal. 42. 1, 2. 3. The Deliberation of *Moses* in resolving this Case: Here seem'd to be Law against Law, and tho it is a Rule that the latter Law must explain the former, yet he pitied those *Israelites*, that were thus debarr'd the Privilege of the Passover; and therefore took Time to consult the Oracle, and to know what was the Mind of God in this Case, v. 8. *I will hear what the Lord will command concerning you*. Ministers must take Example from hence in resolving Cases of Conscience. (1.) They must not determine rashly, but take Time to consider, that every Circumstance may be duly weigh'd, the Case view'd in a true Light, and spiritual Things compar'd with spirtual. (2.) They must ask Counsel at God's Mouth, and not determine, according to the bias of their own Fancy or Affection, but impartially according to the Mind of God, to the best of their Knowledge. We have now no such Oracle to consult as *Moses* had, but we must have recourse to the Law and the Testimony, and speak according to that Rule; and if in difficult Cases, we take Time to spread the Matter in particular before God, by an humble believing Prayer, we have reason to hope that that Spirit which is promis'd to lead us into all Truth, shall direct us to direct others in the good and the right Way. 4. The Directions which God gave in this Case, and in other the like Cases, explanatory of the Law of the Passover. This ill Accident produc'd good Laws. 1. Those that happen'd to be ceremonially unclean at the Time when the Passover should be eaten, were allow'd to eat it that Day Month when they were clean; so were those that happen'd to be in a Journey, afar off, v. 10, 11. See here, (1.) That when we are to attend upon God in solemn Ordinances, it is very necessary, both that we be clean, and that we be compos'd. (2.) That that may excuse the deferring of a Duty for a Time, which yet will not justify us in the total Neglect and Omission of it. He that is at variance with his Brother may leave his Gift before the Altar, while he goes to be reconcil'd to his Brother; but when he has done his Part towards it, whether it be effected or no, he must come again, and offer his Gift, Mat. 5. 23, 24. This Secondary Passover was to be kept on the same Day of the Month with the first, because the Ordinance was a Memorial of their Deliverance on that Day of the Month. Once we find the whole Congregation keeping the Passover, on this Fourteenth Day of the Second Month, in *Hezekiah's* Time, 2 Chron. 30. 15. Which perhaps may help to account for the Admission of some that were not clean, to the eating of it; had the general Passover been kept in the First Month, the Unclean might have been put off till the Second; but that being kept in the Second Month, they had no warrant to eat it in the Third Month; and therefore rather than not eat of it at all, they were admitted, tho not cleansed according to the Purification of the Sanctuary, v. 19, 20. 2. When the Passover was eaten in the Second Month, all the Rites and Ceremonies of it must be strictly observ'd, v. 12. They must not think that, because the Time was dispens'd with, any part of the Solemnity of it might be abated; no, when we cannot do as we would, we must do the utmost we can in the Service of God. 3. This Allowance in a Case of Necessity should by no means countenance or indulge any in their Neglect to keep the Passover at the Time appointed, when they were not under that Necessity, v. 13. He that is under no Incapacity to eat the Passover in the

appointed Time, if he neglect it then upon the Presumption of the Liberty granted by this Law, he puts an Affront upon God, impiously abuseth his Kindness, and he shall certainly bear his Sin, and be cut off from his People. Note, As those who against their Minds are forc'd to be absent from God's Ordinances, may comfortably expect the Favours of God's Grace under their Affliction; so those who of choice absent themselves, may justly expect the Tokens of God's Wrath for their Sin: *Be not deceived, God is not mocked*. 4. Here's a Clause added in favour of Strangers, v. 14. Tho it was requisite, that the Stranger who would join with them in eating the Passover should be circumcis'd, as a Profelyte to their Religion, Exod. 12. 48, 49. Yet this kind Admission of those that were not native *Israelites* to eat the Passover, was an Intimation of the Favour design'd for the poor *Gentiles* by Christ. As then there was one Law, so in the Days of the Messiah, there should be one Gospel, for the Stranger, and for him that was born in the Land. For in every Nation, he that fears God and works Righteousness is accepted of him, and this was a Truth before Peter perceived it, Acts 10. 34, 35.

15 ¶ And on the day that the tabernacle was reared up, the cloud covered the tabernacle, namely the tent of the testimony: and at even there was upon the tabernacle as it were the appearance of fire, until the morning. 16 So it was alway: the cloud covered it by day, and the appearance of fire by night. 17 And when the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, then after that the children of Israel journeyed: and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents. 18 At the commandment of the LORD the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of the LORD they pitched: as long as the cloud abode upon the tabernacle, they rested in the tents. 19 And when the cloud tarried long upon the tabernacle many days, then the children of Israel kept the charge of the LORD, and journeyed not. 20 And so it was when the cloud was a few days upon the tabernacle, according to the commandment of the LORD they abode in their tents, and according to the commandment of the LORD they journeyed. 21 And so it was when the cloud abode from even unto the morning, and that the cloud was taken up in the morning, then they journeyed: whether it was by day or by night that the cloud was taken up, they journeyed. 22 Or whether it were two days, or a month, or a year, that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, remaining thereon, the children of Israel abode in their tents, and journeyed not: but when it was taken up, they journeyed. 23 At the commandment of the LORD they rested in the tents, and at the commandment of the LORD they journeyed: they kept the charge of the LORD, at the commandment of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

We have here the History of the Cloud; not a natural History, who knows the Balancings of the Clouds? but a divine History, of a Cloud that was appointed to be the visible Sign and Symbol of God's Presence with Israel. 1. When the Tabernacle was finish'd, this Cloud which before had hung on high over their Camp, settled upon the Tabernacle, and cover'd it, to shew, that God manifests his Presence with his People, in and by his Ordinances; there he makes himself known, and to them we must look, if we would see the Beauty of the Lord, Ezek. 37. 26, 27. Thus God own'd his own Appointments, and signified his Acceptance of his People's Love and Obedience. 2. That which appear'd as a Cloud by Day, appear'd as a Fire all Night; had it been a Cloud only, it had not been visible by Night, and had it been a Fire only, it would have been scarce discernable by Day, but God would give them sensible Demonstrations of the Constancy of his Presence with them, and his Care of them, and that he kept them Night and Day, Isa. 27. 5. Psalm 121. 6. And thus we are taught to set God always before us, and to see him near us both Night and Day. Something of the Nature of that divine Revelation which the Old Testament Church was govern'd by, might also be signified by these visible Signs of God's Presence; the Cloud noting the Darkeness, and the Fire the Terror of that Dispensation, in Comparison with the more clear and comfortable Discoveries God has made of his Glory, in the Face of Jesus Christ. 3. This Pillar of Cloud and Fire directed and determin'd all the Motions, Marches, and Encampments

ments of *Israel* in the Wilderness. (1.) As long as the Cloud rested upon the Tabernacle, so long they continued in the same Place, and never stirr'd; tho, no doubt, they were very desirous to be pressing forward in the Journey towards *Canaan*, where they long'd to be, and hoped to be quickly, yet as long as the Cloud rested, if it were a Month, or a Year, so long they rested, v. 22. Note, He that believeth doth not make haste. There's no Time lost, while we are waiting God's Time. 'Tis as acceptable a Piece of Submission to the Will of God, to sit still contentedly when our Lot requires it, as to work for him when we are call'd to it. (2.) When the Cloud was taken up, they remov'd, how comfortably soever they were encamp'd, v. 17. Whether it mov'd by Day or Night, they delay'd not to attend its Motions, v. 21. and probably there were some appointed to stand Centinel, Day and Night, within ken of it, to give timely Notice to the Camp of its beginning to stir, and this is call'd keeping the Charge of the Lord. The People being thus kept at a constant uncertainty, and having no time fix'd for their Stays and Removes, were oblig'd to hold themselves in a constant readiness to march upon very short warning. And for the same Reason, we are kept at uncertainty, concerning the time of our putting off the earthly House of this Tabernacle, that we may be always ready to remove, at the Commandment of the Lord. (3.) As long and as far as the Cloud mov'd, so long and so far they march'd; and just there where it abode, they pitched their Tents about it, and God's Tent under it, v. 17. Note, It's uncomfortable staying when God is departed, but very safe and pleasant going, when we see God go before us, and resting where he appoints us to rest. This is repeated again and again in these Verses, because it was a constant Miracle, and oft repeated, and what never fail'd in all their Travels, and because it is a Matter which we should take particular notice of, as very significant and instructive. 'Tis mention'd long after by *David*, Ps. 105. 39. and by the People of God after their Captivity, *Neh.* 9. 19. And the Conduct of this Cloud is spoken of, as signifying the Guidance of the Blessed Spirit, *Isa.* 63. 14. The Spirit of the Lord caused him to rest, and so didst thou lead thy People.

This teacheth us, 1. The particular Care God takes of his People. Nothing could be more expressive and significant of God's Tenderness of *Israel*, than the Conduct of this Cloud was, it led them by the right way, Psal. 107. 7. went on their pace; God, did by it, as it were, cover them with his Feathers. We are not now to expect such sensible Tokens of the divine Presence and Guidance as this was, but the Promise is sure to all God's spiritual *Israel*, that he will guide them by his Counsel, Ps. 73. 24. even unto Death, Ps. 48. 14. That all the Children of God shall be led by the Spirit of God, Rom. 8. 14. That he will direct their Paths, who in all their ways acknowledge him, Pr. 3. 6. There is a particular Providence conversant about all their Affairs, to direct and over-rule them for the best: The Steps of a good Man are ordered by the Lord, Ps. 37. 23. 2. The particular Regard we ought to have to God in all our Ways. In our Affections and Actions we must follow the Direction of his Word and Spirit; all the Motions of our Soul must be guided by the divine Will, at the Commandment of the Lord our Heart should always move, and rest; in all our Affairs we must follow Providence, reconciling our selves to all its Disposals, and bringing our Mind to our Condition, whatever it is. The People of *Israel* having the Cloud for their Conduct, were eas'd of the Trouble of holding Councils of War, to consider when and whither they should march, which might have occasion'd Strifes and Debates among them: Nor needed they to send Spies before to inform them of the Posture of the Country, or Pioneers to clear the Way, or Officers to mark out their Camp; the Pillar of Cloud did all this for them: And those that by Faith commit their Works unto the Lord, tho' they are bound to the prudent use of Means, yet may in like manner be easy in the Expectation of the Event; Father, thy Will be done: dispose of me and mine as thou pleasest; here I am, desirous to be found, waiting on my God continually, to journey and rest at the Commandment of the Lord. What thou wilt, and where thou wilt, only let me be thine, and always in the way of my Duty.

CHAP. X.

In this Chapter we have, 1. Orders given about the making and using of silver Trumpets, which seems to have been the last of all the Commandments God gave upon Mount Sinai, and one of the least, yet not without its significance, v. 1—10. 2. The History of the Removal of *Israel*'s Camp from Mount Sinai, and their orderly March into the Wilderness of Paran, v. 11—28. 3. Moses's Treaty with Hobab, his Brother-in-law, v. 29—32. 4. Moses's Prayer at the removing and resting of the Ark, v. 33—36.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Make thee two trumpets of silver: of an whole piece shalt thou make them, that thou may-

est use them for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camp. 3 And when they shall blow with them, all the assembly shall assemble themselves to thee at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 4 And if they blow but with one trumpet, then the princes which are heads of the thousands of *Israel*, shall gather themselves unto thee. 5 When ye blow an alarm, then the camps that lie on the east parts shall go forward. 6 When ye blow an alarm the second time, then the camps that lie on the south-side, shall take their journey: they shall blow an alarm for their journeys. 7 But when the congregation is to be gathered together, you shall blow: but you shall not sound an alarm. 8 And the sons of Aaron the priests shall blow with the trumpets: and they shall be to you for an ordinance for ever throughout your generations. 9 And if ye go to war in your land, against the enemy that oppresseth you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets, and ye shall be remembered before the LORD your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies. 10 Also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months, ye shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt-offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace-offerings, that they may be to you for a memorial before your God: I am the LORD your God.

We have here Directions concerning the publick Notices that were to be given to the People upon several Occasions, by sound of Trumpet. In a thing of this Nature one would think Moses needed not to have been taught of God, his own Reason might teach him the conveniency of Trumpets; but their Constitution was to be in every thing divine, and therefore even in this matter, as small as it seems, Moses is here directed, 1. About the making of them. They must be made of Silver, not cast, but of beaten Work, (as some read it) the Matter and Shape no doubt very fit for the Purpose. He was now order'd to make but Two, because there were but two Priests to use them. But in Solomon's Time we read of an Hundred and Twenty Priests sounding with Trumpets, 2 Chr. 5. 12. The Form of these Trumpets is suppos'd to be much like ours at this Day. 2. Who were to make use of them, not any inferior Person, but the Priests themselves, the Sons of Aaron, v. 8. As great as they were, they must not think it a Disparagement to them to be Trumpeters in the House of God; the meanest Office there was honourable. This signified that the Lord's Ministers should lift up their Voice like a Trumpet, to shew People their Sins, *Isa.* 48. 1. and to call them to Christ, *Isa.* 27. 13. 3. Upon what Occasions the Trumpets were to be sounded. 1. For the Calling of Assemblies, v. 2. Thus they are bid to blow the Trumpet in Zion, for the calling of a solemn Assembly together, to sanctify a Fast, *Joel* 2. 13. Publick notice ought to be given of the Time and Place of religious Assemblies, for the invitation to the Benefit of Ordinances is general, whoever will let him come. Wisdom cries in the chief Places of concourse. But that the Trumpet might not give an uncertain sound, they are directed, if only the Princes and Elders were to meet, to blow only one of the Trumpets; less should serve to call them together who ought to be Examples of Forwardness in any thing that's good: But if the Body of the People were to be call'd together, both the Trumpets must be sounded, that they might be the further heard. In allusion to this they are said to be blessed that hear the joyful Sound, Ps. 89. 15. i. e. That are invited, and call'd upon to wait upon God in publick Ordinances, Ps. 122. 7. And the General Assembly at the Great Day will be summon'd by the Sound of the Archangel's Trumpet, Mat. 24. 31. 2. For the journeying of the Camps; to give notice when each Squadron must move, for no Man's Voice could reach to give the Word of Command: Soldiers with us that are well disciplin'd may be exercised by beat of Drum. When the Trumpets were blown for this Purpose, they must sound an Alarm, v. 5. a broken, quavering, interrupted Sound, which was proper to excite and encourage the Minds of People in their Marches against their Enemies; whereas a continued equal Sound was more proper for the calling of the Assembly together, v. 7. yet when the People were call'd together to deprecate God's judgments, we find an Alarm sounded, *Joel* 2. 3. At the first founding Judah's Squadron march'd, at the second Reuben's, at the third Ephraim's, at the fourth Dan's, v. 5, 6. And some think this was intended to sanctify their Marches; for thus was proclaim'd by the Priests, who were God's Mouth to the People,

not only the Divine Orders given them to move, but the Divine Blessing upon them in all their Motions. He that hath Ears let him hear, that *God is with them of a Truth*. King *Abijah* valu'd himself and his Army very much upon this, 2 Chr. 13. 12. *God himself is with us for our Captain, and his Priests with sounding Trumpets*. 3. For the animating and encouraging of their Armies, when they went out to Battle, v. 9. *If ye go to War, blow with the Trumpets*, signifying thereby your Appeal to Heaven, for the Decision of the Controversy, and your Prayer to God to give you Victory, and God will own this his own Institution, and *you shall be remembered before the Lord your God*. God will take Notice of this Sound of the Trumpet, and be engag'd to fight *their* Battles, and let all the People take Notice of it, and be encouraged to fight *his*, as *David* when he heard a sound of a going upon the top of the Mulberry Trees. Not that God needed to be awak'd by Sound of Trumpet, no more than *Christ* needed to be awak'd by his Disciples in the Storm, Mat. 8. 25. but where he intends Mercy, 'tis his Will that we should solicit for it. Ministers must stir up the good Soldiers of *Jesus Christ*, to fight manfully against Sin, the World, and the Devil, by assuring them that *Christ* is the Captain of their Salvation, and will tread Satan under their Feet. 4. For the solemnizing of their sacred Feasts, v. 10. One of their Feasts, was called the Feast of Trumpets, Lev. 23. 23. And it should seem they were thus to grace the Solemnity of all their Feasts, Psal. 81. 3. and their Sacrifices, 2 Chr. 29. 27. to intimate with what Joy and Delight they perform'd their Duty to God, and to raise the Minds of those that attended the Services, to a holy Triumph in the God they worshipped. And then their Performances were for a Memorial before God; for then he takes Pleasure in our Religious Exercises, when we take Pleasure in them. Holy Work should be done with holy Joy.

11 ¶ And it came it to pass on the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year, that the cloud was taken up from off the tabernacle of the testimony. 12 And the children of Israel took their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai, and the cloud rested in the wilderness of Paran. 13 And they first took their journey according to the commandment of the LORD, by the hand of Moses. 14 ¶ In the first place went the standard of the camp of the children of Judah, according to their armies: and over his host was *Nahshon* the son of *Ammiadab*. 15 And over the host of the tribe of the children of *Issachar*, was *Nethaneel* the son of *Zuar*. 16 And over the host of the tribe of the children of *Zebulun*, was *Eliab* the son of *Helon*. 17 And the tabernacle was taken down, and the sons of *Gershon*, and the sons of *Merari* set forward, bearing the tabernacle. 18 ¶ And the standard of the camp of *Reuben* set forward according to their armies: and over his host was *Elizur* the son of *Shedeur*. 19 And over the host of the tribe of the children of *Simeon*, was *Shelumiel* the son of *Zurishaddai*. 20 And over the host of the tribe of the children of *Gad*, was *Eliafaph* the son of *Deuel*. 21 And the *Kohathites* set forward, bearing the sanctuary, and the other did set up the tabernacle against they came. 22 ¶ And the standard of the camp of the children of *Ephraim*, set forward according to their armies: and over his host was *Elishama* the son of *Ammiud*. 23 And over the host of the tribe of the children of *Manasseh*, was *Gamaliel* the son of *Pedazur*. 24 And over the host of the tribe of the children of *Benjamin*, was *Abidan* the son of *Gideon*. 25 ¶ And the standard of the camp of the children of *Dan* set forward, which was the rereward of all the camps throughout their hosts: and over his host was *Ahiezzer* the son of *Ammishaddai*. 26 And over the host of the tribe of the children of *Asher*, was *Pagiel* the son of *Ocran*. 27 And over the host of the tribe of the children of *Naphthali*, was *Ahira* the son of *Enan*. 28 Thus were the journeyings of the children of Israel, according to their armies, when they set forward.

Here's, 1. A general Account of the Remove of the Camp of Israel, from Mount Sinai, before which Mountain it had lain now about a Year, in which Time and Place a great deal of

memorable Business was done. Of this Remove, it should seem God gave them Notice some time before, Deut. 1. 6. *Ye have dwelt long enough in this Mountain, Turn you and take your Journey towards the Land of Promise*. The Apostle tells us, that Mount Sinai gendereth to Bondage, (Gal. 4. 24.) and signifies the Law there given, which tho' of use as a School Master to bring us to Christ, yet we must not rest in it, but advance towards the Joys and Liberties of the Children of God, for our Happiness is conferr'd not by the Law, but by Promise.

Observe, 1. The Signal given, v. 11. *The Cloud was taken up*; and we must suppose it stood for some time, till they were ready to march; and a great deal of Work it was to take down all those Tents, and pack up all those Goods that they had there; but every Family being employ'd about their own, and all at the same time, many Hands made quick Work of it. 2. The March begun; *They took their Journey according to the Commandment of the Lord*, and just as the Cloud led them, v. 13. Some think mention is thus frequently made in this and the foregoing Chapter of the Commandment of the Lord, guiding and governing them in all their Travels, to obviate the Calumny and Reproach which was afterwards thrown upon Israel, that they tarried so long in the Wilderness, because they had lost themselves there, and could not find the Way out: No, the Matter was not so; in every Stage, in every Step, they were under a Divine Conduct, and if they knew not where they were, yet he that led them did. Note, Those that have given up themselves to the Conduct of God's Word and Spirit, steer a steady Course, even then when they seem to be bewildred. While they are sure they cannot lose their God and Guide, they need not fear losing their Way. 3. The Place they rested in after three Days March. They went out of the Wilderness of Sinai, and rested in the Wilderness of Paran. Note, All our Removes in this World are but from one Wilderness to another. The Changes which we think will be for the better, do not always prove so; while we carry about with us wherever we go, the common Infirmities of the humane Nature, we must expect where-ever we go, to meet with its common Calamities; we shall never be at rest, never at home, till we come to Heaven, and all will be well there. 2. A particular Draught of the order of the March, according to the late Model. 1. *Judah's Squadron* march'd first, v. 14, 15, 16. The leading Standard now lodg'd with that Tribe, was an Earnest of the Sceptre, which in *David's* time should be committed to it, and look'd further to the Captain of our Salvation, of whom it was likewise foretold, that unto him should the gathering of the People be. 2. Then came those two Families of the *Levites* which were intrusted to carry the Tabernacle. As soon as ever the Cloud was taken up, the Tabernacle was taken down, and pack'd up for a Remove, v. 15. And here the six Waggon came laden with the more bulky Part of the Tabernacle. This frequent removing of the Tabernacle in all their Journeys, signified the Moveableness of that Ceremonial Dispensation. That which was so often shifted, would at length vanish away, Heb. 12. 27, 28. 3. *Reuben's Squadron* march'd forward next, taking Place after *Judah*, according to the Commandment of the Lord, v. 18, 19, 20. 4. Then the *Kohathites* followed with their Charge, the sacred Furniture of the Tabernacle, in the midst of the Camp, the safest and most honourable Place, v. 21. And they, that is, faith the Margin, the *Gerashonites* and *Merarites*, did set up the Tabernacle against they came; and perhaps it is express'd thus generally, because if there were occasion, not those *Levites* only, but the other *Israelites* that were in the first Squadron, lent a Hand to the Tabernacle, to hasten the rearing of it up, even before they set up their own Tents. 5. *Ephraim's Squadron* follow'd next after the Ark, v. 22, 23, 24. to which some think the Psalmist alludes, when he prays, Psal. 80. 2. *Before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh*, the three Tribes that compos'd this Squadron, stir up thy Strength (and the Ark is call'd his Strength, Psal. 78. 6.) and come and save us. 6. *Dan's Squadron* follow'd last, v. 25, 26, 27. 'Tis call'd the Rearward, or gathering Host, of all the Camp, because it gather'd up all that were left behind; not the Women and Children, those we may suppose were taken care of by the Heads of their Families in their respective Tribes; but all the unclean, the mix'd Multitude, and all that were weak and feeble, and cast behind in their March. Note, He that leadeth Joseph like a Flock, has a tender Regard to the hindmost, that cannot keep pace with the rest, and of all that are given him he will lose none. See Ezek. 34. 16.

29 ¶ And Moses said unto Hobab the son of Raguel the Midianite, Moses father in law, We are journeying unto the place of which the LORD said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the LORD hath spoken good concerning Israel. 30 And he said unto him, I will not go, but I will depart to mine own land, and to my kindred. 31 And he said, Leave us not, I pray thee, forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp

camp in the wilderness, and thou mayst be to us instead of eyes. 32 And it shall be if thou go with us, yea it shall be, that what goodness the LORD shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee. 33 And they departed from the mount of the LORD three days journey: and the ark of the covenant of the LORD went before them in the three days journey, to search out a resting place for them. 34 And the cloud of the LORD was upon them by day, when they went out of the camp. 35 And it came to pass when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, LORD, and let thine enemies be scatter'd, and let them that hate thee flee before thee. 36 And when it rested, he said, Return, O LORD, unto the many thousands of Israel.

Here's, 1. An Account of what pass'd between Moses and Hobab, now upon this Advance which the Camp of Israel made towards Canaan. Hobab some think was the same with Jethro, Moses's Father-in-law, and that the Story, *Exod. 18.* should come in here: It seems more probable that Hobab was the son of Jethro, alias Reuel, or Raguel, *Exod. 2. 18.* and when the Father, being aged, went to his own Land, *Exod. 18. 27.* he left his Son Hobab with Moses, as Barzillai left Chimham with David; and the same Word signifies both a Father-in-law and a Brother-in-law. Now this Hobab stay'd contentedly with Israel, while they encamped at Mount Sinai, near his own Country; but now they were removing he was for going back to his own Country, and Kindred, and his Father's House.

Here's, (1.) The kind Invitation Moses gives him to go forward with them to Canaan, *v. 29.* He tempts him with a Promise that they would certainly be kind to him, and puts God's Word in for Security, *the Lord has spoken good concerning Israel, q. d.* Come cast in thy Lot among us, and thou shalt fare as we fare, and we have the Promise of God for it, that we shall fare well. Note, Those that are bound for the Heavenly Canaan should invite and encourage all their Friends to go along with them; for we shall have never the less of the Treasures of the Covenant, and the Joys of Heaven, for others coming in to share with us. And what Argument can be more powerful with us, to take God's People for our People than this, that God hath spoken good concerning them? 'Tis good having Fellowship with those that have Fellowship with God, *1 John 1. 3.* and going with those, with whom God is, *Zech. 8. 23.* (2.) Hobab's Inclination, and present Resolution, to go back to his own Country, *v. 30.* One would have thought, he that had seen so much of the special Presence of God with Israel, and such surprizing Tokens of his Favour to them, should not have needed much Invitation to embark with them. But his Refusal must be imputed to the Affection he had for his native Air and Soil, which was not over-power'd as it ought to have been, by a believing Regard to the Promise of God, and a Value for Covenant Blessings. He was indeed a Son of Abraham's Loins (for the Midianites descended from Abraham by Keturah) but not an Heir of Abraham's Faith, (*Heb. 11. 8.*) else he had not given Moses this Answer. Note, The Things of this World that are seen, draw strongly from the pursuit of the Things of t'other World that are not seen. The magnetick Virtue of this Earth prevails with most People above the Attractives of Heaven it self. (3.) The great Importunity Moses us'd with him to alter his Resolution, *v. 31, 32.* He urgeth, (1.) That he might be serviceable to them, *we are to encamp in the Wilderness,* (a Country well known to Hobab) and thou mayst be to us instead of Eyes; not to shew us where we must encamp, nor where we must march, the Cloud was to direct that, but to shew us the Conveniences and Inconveniences of the Places we march through, and encamp in, that we may make the best use we can of the Conveniences, and the best fence we can against the Inconveniences. Note, It will very well consist with our Trust in God's Providence to make use of the help of our Friends, in those Things wherein they are capable of being serviceable to us. Even they that were led by Miracle, yet must not slight the ordinary means of Direction. Some think Moses suggests this to Hobab, not because he expected much Benefit by his Informations, but to please him with the Thought of being some way useful to so great a Body, and so to draw him on with them by the Ambition of that Honour. Calvin gives quite another Sense of this Place, very agreeable with the Original, which yet I do not find taken Notice of by any since. *Leave us not, I pray thee, but come along, to share with us in the Promised Land; for therefore hast thou known our Encampment in the Wilderness, and hast been to us instead of Eyes, and we cannot make thee amends for sharing with us in our Hardships, and doing us so many good Offices,*

unless thou go with us to Canaan. Surely for this Reason thou didst set out with us, that thou might'st go on with us. Note, Those that have begun well, should use that as a Reason for their persevering, because otherwise they lose the Benefit and Recompence of all they have done and suffer'd. (2.) That they would be kind to him, *v. 32.* What Goodness the Lord shall do to us, the same will we do to thee. Note, 1. We can but give what we receive. We can do no more Service and Kindness to our Friends than God is pleas'd to put into the Power of our Hand to do. This is all we dare promise, to do good, as God shall enable us. 2. Those that share with God's Israel in their Labours and Hardships, shall share with them in their Comforts and Honours. Those that are willing to take their Lot with them in a Wilderness, shall have their Lot with them in Canaan; if we suffer with them, we shall reign with them, *Luke 22. 28, 29.*

We do not find any Reply that Hobab here made to Moses, and therefore we hope his Silence gave consent, and he did not leave them. When he perceiv'd he might be useful, he prefer'd that before the gratifying of his own Inclination; and hath therein left us a good Example. And we find, *Judg. 1. 16.* that his Family was no loser by it. And see *1 Sam. 15. 6.* 2. An Account of the Communion between God and Israel in this Remove. They left the Mount of the Lord, *v. 33.* That Mount Sinai, where they had seen his Glory, and heard his Voice, and had been taken into Covenant with him; they must not expect that such Appearances of God to them, as they had there been blest'd with, should be constant; they depart from that celebrated Mount, which we never read of in Scripture any more, unless with Reference to these past Stories: Now Farewel Sinai, Sion is the Mountain of which God has said, *This is my Rest for ever, Psal. 132. 14.* and of which we must say so. But when they left that Mount of the Lord, they took with them the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, by which their stated Communion with God was to be kept up. For, 1. By it God did direct their Paths: The Ark of the Covenant went before them, some think in Place, at least in this Remove, others think only in Influence; tho it was carried in the midst of the Camp, yet the Cloud that hover'd over it directed all their Motions. The Ark, that is, the God of the Ark, is said to search out a Resting-place for them; not that God's infinite Wisdom and Knowledge needs to make searches, but every Place they were directed to was as convenient for them, as if the wisest Man they had among them had been employ'd to go before them, and mark out their Camp to the best Advantage. Thus Canaan is said to be a Land which God spied out, *Ezek. 20. 6.* 2. By it they did in all their Ways acknowledge God, looking upon it as a Token of God's Presence; when that mov'd or rested, they had their Eye up unto God. Moses, as the Mouth of the Congregation, lift up a Prayer, both at the removing, and at the resting of the Ark; thus their going out and coming in were sanctified by Prayer, and it is an Example to us to begin and end every Days Journey, and every Days Work with Prayer. 1. Here's his Prayer when the Ark set forward, *v. 35.* Rise up, Lord, and let thine Enemies be scatter'd. They were now in a desolate Country, but they were marching towards an Enemies Country, and their Dependence was upon God for Success and Victory in their Wars, as well as for Directions and Supply in the Wilderness. David us'd this Prayer long after, *Psal. 68. 1.* For he also fought the Lord's Battles. Note, (1.) There are those in the World that are Enemies to God, and Haters of him. Secret and open Enemies: Enemies to his Truths, his Laws, his Ordinances, his People. (2.) The scattering and defeating God's Enemies, is a Thing to be earnestly desir'd, and believingly expected by all the Lord's People. This Prayer is a Prophecy. Those that persist in Rebellion against God, are hastening towards their own Ruin. (3.) For the scattering and defeating of God's Enemies, there needs no more but God's arising. When God arise to Judgment, the Work was soon done, *Psal. 76. 8, 9.* Rise, Lord, as the Sun riseth to scatter the Shadows of the Night. Christ's rising from the Dead scatter'd his Enemies, *Psal. 68. 18.* 2. His Prayer when the Ark rested, *v. 36.* (1.) That God would cause his People to rest. So some read it, Return, O Lord, the many Thousands of Israel, return them to their Rest again after this Fatigue. Thus it is said, *Isa. 63. 14.* The Spirit of the Lord caused him to rest. Thus he prays that God would give Israel Success and Victory abroad, and Peace and Tranquillity at home. (2.) That God himself would take up his Rest among them. So we read it: Return to the Thousands of Israel, the Ten thousand Thousand: So the Word is. Note, 1. The Church of God is a great Body; there are many Thousands belonging to God's Israel. 2. We ought in our Prayers to concern our selves for this Body. 3. The Welfare and Happiness of the Israel of God consists in the remaining Presence of God among them. Their Safety consists not in their Numbers, tho they are Thousands, many Thousands, but in the Favour of God, and his gracious Return to them, and Residence with them. These Thousands are Cyphers, he is the Figure; and upon this Account, Happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee, O People?

CHAP. XI.

Hitherto things had gone pretty well in Israel, little Interruption had been given to the Methods of God's Favour to them since the Master of the Golden Calf; the People seem'd teachable in marshalling and purifying the Camp, the Princes devout and generous in dedicating the Altar, and there was good hope that they would be in Canaan presently. But at this Chapter begins a melancholy Scene; the Measures are all broke, God is turn'd to be their Enemy and fights against them, and 'tis Sin, Sin, that makes all the Mischief. 1. Their Murmurings kindled a Fire among them, which yet was soon quench'd by the Prayer of Moses, v. 1-3. 2. No sooner was that Fire of Judgment quench'd, but the Fire of Sin break'd out again, and God takes occasion from it to magnify both his Mercy and his Justice. 1. The People fret for want of Flesh, v. 4-9. 2. Moses frets for want of Help, v. 10-15. Now, 1. God promiseth to gratify them both, to appoint Help for Moses, v. 16, 17. And to give the People Flesh, v. 18-23. And, 2. He presently makes good both his Promises. For, 1. The Spirit of God qualifies the Seventy Elders for the Government, v. 24-30. 2. The Power of God brings Quails to feast the People, v. 31, 32. Yet, 3. The Justice of God plagued them for their Murmurings, v. 33-35.

AND when the people complained, it displeased the LORD, and the LORD heard it, and his anger was kindled, and the fire of the LORD burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp. 2 And the people cried unto Moses: and when Moses prayed unto the LORD, the fire was quenched. 3 And he called the name of the place Taberah; because the fire of the LORD burnt among them.

Here's, 1. The Peoples Sin. They complained, v. 1. They were as it were complainers. So 'tis in the Margin. There were some secret Grudgings and Discontents among them, which as yet did not break out in an open Mutiny. But how great a Matter did this little Fire kindle! They had received from God excellent Laws and Ordinances, and yet no sooner were they departed from the Mount of the Lord, but they began to quarrel with God himself. See in this, (1.) The sinfulness of Sin, which takes occasion from the Commandment to be the more provoking. (2.) The Weakness of the Law thro the Flesh, Rom. 8. 3. The Law discovered Sin, but could not destroy it; check'd it, but could not conquer it.

They complain'd. Interpreters enquire what they complain'd of; and truly when they were furnished with so much matter for Thanksgiving, one may justly wonder where they found any Matter for Complaint: and 'tis likely all that complain'd did not agree in the Cause. Some perhaps complain'd that they were remov'd from Mount Sinai, where they had been at rest so long, others that they did not remove sooner: Some complain'd of the Weather, others of the Ways: Some perhaps thought three Days Journey was too long a March, others thought it not long enough, because it did not bring them into Canaan. When we consider how their Camp was guided, guarded, graced, what good Victuals they had, and good Company, and what care was taken of them in their Marches, that their Feet should not swell, nor their Clothes wear, (Deut. 8. 4.) we may ask what could have been done more for a People to make them easy? And yet they complained. Note, Those that are of a fretful discontented Spirit, will always find something or other to quarrel with, tho the Circumstances of their outward Condition be never so favourable. 2. God's just Resentment of the Affront given him by this Sin. The Lord heard it, tho it doth not appear that Moses did. Note, God is acquainted with the secret Frets and Murmurings of the Heart, tho they are industriously conceal'd from Men. What he took Notice of, he was much displeas'd with, and his Anger was kindled. Note, Tho God graciously gives us leave to complain to him, when there is Cause (Psal. 142. 2.) yet he is justly provok'd, and takes it very ill, if we complain of him when there is no Cause; we do so from our Inferiours. 3. The Judgment wherewith God chastis'd them for this Sin. The Fire of the Lord burnt among them; such Flashes of Fire from the Clouds as had consum'd Nadab and Abihu. The Fire of their Wrath against God burn'd in their Minds, (Psal. 39. 3.) and justly doth the Fire of God's Wrath fasten upon their Bodies. We read of their Murmurings several times, when they came first out of Egypt, Exod. 15. and 16. and 17. But we do not read of any Plagues inflict'd on them for their Murmurings, as there were now; for now they had had great Experience of God's Care of them, and therefore now to distrust him was so much the more inexcusable. Now a Fire was kindled against Jacob, Psal. 78. 21. but to shew how unwilling God was to

contend with them, it fasten'd on those only that were in the uttermost parts of the Camp. Thus God's Judgments came upon them gradually, that they might take warning. 4. Their Cry to Moses, who was their try'd Intercessor, v. 3. When he flew them then they sought him, and made their Application to Moses to stand their Friend. Note, 1. When we complain without cause, it is just with God to give us cause to complain. 2. Those that slight God's Friends, when they are in Prosperity, would be glad to make 'em their Friends when they are in Distress. Father Abraham, send Lazarus. 3. The Prevalency of Moses's Intercession for them; when Moses prayed unto the Lord, as he was always ready to stand in the Gap to turn away the Wrath of God, God had respect to him and his Offering, and the Fire was quench'd. By this it appears, that God delights not in punishing, for when he has begun his Controversy, he is soon prevail'd with to let it fall. Moses was one of those Worthies, who by Faith quench'd the violence of Fire. 5. A new Name given hereupon to the Place, to perpetuate the Shame of a murmuring People, and the Honour of a righteous God; the Place was call'd Taberah, A Burning, v. 3. that others might hear and fear, and take warning not to sin as they did, lest they smart as they did, 1 Cor. 10. 10.

4 ¶ And the mixt multitude that was among them, fell a lusting, and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? 5 We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely: the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick. 6 But now our soul is dried away, there is nothing at all besides this manna before our eyes. 7 And the manna was as coriander seed, and the colour thereof as the colour of bdellium: 8 And the people went about, and gathered it, and ground it in mills, or beat it in a mortar, and baked it in pans, and made cakes of it: and the taste of it was as the taste of fresh oil. 9 And when the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell upon it. 10 ¶ Then Moses heard the people weep throughout their families, every man in the door of his tent: and the anger of the LORD was kindled greatly, Moses also was displeased. 11 And Moses said unto the LORD, Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant? and wherefore have I not found favour in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me? 12 Have I conceived all this people? have I begotten them, that thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom (as a nursing father beareth the sucking child) unto the land which thou swarest unto their fathers? 13 Whence should I have flesh to give unto all this people? for they weep unto me, saying, Give us flesh that we may eat. 14 I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me. 15 And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favour in thy sight, and let me not see my wretchedness.

These Verses represent Things sadly unhing'd, and out of order, in Israel. Both the People and the Prince are uneasy.

1. Here's the People fretting, and speaking against God himself, (as 'tis interpreted, Psal. 78. 19.) notwithstanding his glorious Appearances both to them, and for them.

Observe, 1. Who were the Criminals. (1.) The mixt Multitude began, they fell a lusting, v. 4. The Rabble that came with them out of Egypt, expecting only the Land of Promise, but not a State of Probation in the way to it. They were Hangers on, which took hold of the Skirts of the Jews, and would go with them, only because they knew not how to live at Home, and were minded to seek their Fortune (as we say) Abroad. These were the scabbed Sheep that infected the Flock, the Leaven that leavened the whole Lump. Note, A few factious, discontented, ill-natur'd People, may do a great deal of Mischief in the best of Societies, if great Care be not taken to discountenance them. Such as these are an untoward Generation, from which it is our Wisdom to save our selves, Acts 2. 40. (2.) Even the Children of Israel took the Infection, so it follows, v. 4. The holy Seed join'd themselves to the People of these Abominations. This mixt Multitude was not numbered with the Children of Israel, but were set aside as People God made no Account of; and yet the Children of Israel forgetting that

their own Character and Distinction herded themselves with them, and learn'd their Way; as if the Scum and Out-cast of the Camp were to be the Privy-Counsellors of it. The *Children of Israel*, a People near to God, and highly privileg'd, yet drawn into a Rebellion against him. O! how little Honour hath God in the World, when even that People which he form'd for himself to shew forth his Praise, were so much a Dishonour to him. Therefore let none think that their external Professions and Privileges will be their Security either against Satan's Temptations to Sin, or against God's Judgments for Sin, 1 Cor. 10. 1, 2, 12. 2. What was the Crime; they *lusted and murmur'd*. Tho they were newly correct'd for this Sin, and many of them overthrown for it, as God overthrew *Sodom and Gomorrah*, and the Smell of the Fire was still in their Nostrils, yet they return'd to it. See *Prov.* 27. 22.

1. They magnified the Plenty and Dainties they had had in *Egypt*, v. 5. as if God had done them a great deal of Wrong in taking them thence. While they were in *Egypt* they sigh'd by reason of their Burdens, for their *Lives were made bitter* to them with *hard Bondage*; and yet now they talk of *Egypt*, as if they had all liv'd like Princes there, when this serves as a Colour for their present Discontent. But with what Face can they talk of eating Fish in *Egypt* freely, or for nought, as if it cost 'em nothing, when they paid so dear for it with their hard Service? They remember the Cucumbers, and the Melons, and the Leeks, and the Onions, and the Garlick, (precious Stuff indeed to be fond of) but they do not remember the Brick-kilns, and the Task-masters, the Voice of the Oppressor, and the Smart of the Whip. No, these are forgotten by this ungrateful People. 2. They were sick of the good Provision God had made for them, v. 6. 'Twas Bread from Heaven, Angels Food; to shew how unreasonable their Complaint was, 'tis here describ'd, v. 7, 8, 9. 'Twas good for Food, and pleasant to the Eye, every Grain like an Orient Pearl, 'twas wholesome Food and nourishing, 'twas not to be call'd dry Bread, for it *tasted like fresh Oil*; it was agreeable (the Jews say) to every Man's Palate, and tasted as he would have; and tho it was still the same, yet by the different ways of dressing it, it yielded them a grateful Variety: It cost them no Money, nor Care, for it fell in the Night, while they slept, and the labour of gathering it was not worth speaking of; they liv'd upon free Quarter, and yet could talk of *Egypt's* Cheapness; and the Fish they eat there freely. Nay, which was much more valuable than all this, the Manna came from the immediate Power and Bounty of God, not from common Providence, but from special Favour. 'Twas as God's Compassion, *new every Morning*, always fresh, not as *their* Food that live on Ship-board. While they liv'd on Manna, they seem'd to have been exempted from the Curse which Sin had brought on Man, that in the Sweat of his Face he should eat bread. And yet they speak of the Manna with such Scorn, as if it were not good enough to be Swine-meat. *Our Soul is dried away*. They speak as if God dealt hardly with them in allowing them no better Food; at first they admir'd it, *Exod.* 16. 5. *What is this?* What a curious precious thing is this? But now they despis'd it. Note, Peevish discontented Minds will find fault with that which hath no Fault in it, but that it's too good for them. 'Tis very provoking to God, to *under-value* his Favours, and to put a but upon our common Mercies. *Nothing but Manna*. Those that are very happy, oft make themselves very miserable by their Discontents. 3. They could not be satisfy'd unless they had *Flesh to eat*. They brought *Flocks and Herds* with them in abundance out of *Egypt*, but either they were covetous and could not find in their Hearts to kill them, lest they should lessen their Stocks; they must have *Flesh* as cheap as they had Bread, or they would not be pleas'd: Or else they were *curious*, Beef and Mutton would not please them, they must have something more nice and delicate, like *the Fish* they did eat in *Egypt*. Food would not serve, they must be feasted; they had feasted with God upon the Peace-Offerings, which they had their share of; but it seems God did not keep a Table good enough for them, they must have dantier Bits than any came to his Altar. Note, It is an Evidence of the Dominion of the carnal Mind, when we are solicitous to have all the Delights and Satisfactions of Sense wound up to the height of Pleasurableness. *Be not desirous of Dainties*, *Prov.* 23. 1, 2, 3. If God gives us Food convenient, we ought to be thankful, tho we do not eat the Fat, and drink the Sweet. 4. They distrusted the Power and Goodness of God as insufficient for their Supply. *Who will give us Flesh to eat?* Taking it for granted, that God could not: Thus this Question is commented upon, *Psal.* 78. 19, 20. *Can he give Flesh also?* Tho he had given them *Flesh* with their Bread once, when he saw fit, *Exod.* 16. 13. and they might have expected that he would have done it again, and in Mercy, if instead of murmuring they had pray'd. Note, It is an Offence to God, to let our Desires go beyond our Faith. 5. They were eager and importunate in their Desires, *they lusted a Lust*; so the Word is: Lusted greatly, and greedily, till they wept again for Vexation. So childish

were the *Children of Israel*, and so humourfome; they cried because they had not what they would have, and when they would have it. They did not offer up this Desire to God, but would rather be beholden to any one else than to him. We should not indulge our selves in any desire, which we cannot in Faith turn into Prayer, as we cannot when we ask *Meat for our Lust*, *Psal.* 78. 18. For this Sin the *Anger of the Lord* was kindled greatly against them, which is written for our Admonition, that we should not *lust after evil Things, as they lusted*, 1 Cor. 10. 10. *Flesh* is good Food, and may lawfully be eaten, yet they are said to *lust after evil Things*; what is lawful in it self becomes evil to us, when 'tis what God doth not allot to us, and yet we eagerly desire it.

2. *Moses* himself, tho so meek and good a Man, is uneasy upon this Occasion: *Moses also was displeased*. Now, 1. It must be confess'd, that the Provocation was very great. These Murmurings of their's reflected great Dishonour upon God, and *Moses* laid to Heart the Reproaches cast on him. They also created great Vexation to himself; they knew he did his utmost for their Good, and that he did nothing, nor could, without a divine Appointment: and yet to be thus continually teaz'd and clamour'd upon by an unreasonable ungrateful People, would break in upon the Temper even of *Moses* himself. God consider'd this, and therefore we do not find, that he chid him for his Uneasiness. 2. Yet *Moses* express'd himself otherwise than became him upon this Provocation, and came short of his Duty both to God and *Israel* in these Expostulations. 1. He *undervalues* the Honour God had put upon him, in making him the illustrious Minister of his Power and Grace, in the Deliverance and Conduct of that peculiar People, which might have been sufficient to ballance the Burden. 2. He complains too much of a sensible Grievance, and lays too near his Heart a little Noise and Fatigue. If he could not bear the Toil of Government, which was but *running with the Footman*, how would he bear the Terrors of War, which was *contending with Horses*? He might easily have furnish'd himself with Considerations enough to enable him to slight their Clamours, and make nothing of them. 3. He magnifies his own Performances, that all the Burden of the People lay upon him: whereas God himself did, in effect, ease him of all the Burden. *Moses* needed not to be in Care to provide Quarters for 'em, or Victuals; God did all: And if any difficult Case happen'd, he needed not be in any Perplexity, while he had the Oracle to consult, and in it the divine Wisdom to direct him, the divine Authority to back him, and bear him out, and Almighty Power it self to dispense Rewards and Punishments. 4. He is not so sensible as he ought to be, of the Obligation he lay under from the divine Commission and Command, to do the utmost he could for this People, when he suggests, that because they were not the Children of his Body begotten, therefore he was not concern'd to take a fatherly Care of them, tho God himself, who might employ him as he pleas'd, had appointed him to be a Father to them. 5. He takes too much to himself, when he asks, *Whence should I have flesh to give them?* v. 13. as if he were the House-keeper, and not God. *Moses gave them not the Bread*, *John* 6. 34. Nor was it expected that he should give them the *Flesh*, but as an Instrument in God's Hand; and if he meant, whence should God have it for them, he too much limited the Power of the Holy One of *Israel*. 6. He speaks distrustfully of the divine Grace, when he despairs of being able to bear all this People, v. 14. Had the Work been much less, he could not have gave gone thro it in his own Strength; but had it been much greater, thro God strengthening him he might have done it. 7. 'Twas worst of all passionately to wish for Death, and desire to be *kill'd out of Hand*, because just at this time his Life was made a little uneasy to him, v. 15. Is this *Moses*? Is this the meekest of all the Men on the Earth? The best have their Infirmitates, and fall sometimes in the Exercise of that Grace, which they are most eminent for. But God graciously over-look'd *Moses's* Passion at this time, and therefore we must not be severe in our Animadversions upon it, but pray, *Lord, lead us not into Temptation*.

16 ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them, and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee. 17 And I will come down and talk with thee there: and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee; that thou bear it not thy self alone. 18 And say thou unto the people, Sanctify your selves against to-morrow, and ye shall eat flesh (for you have wept in the ears of the LORD, saying, Who shall give

us flesh to eat? for it was well with us in Egypt) therefore the LORD will give you flesh, and ye shall eat. 19 Ye shall not eat one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days; 20 But even a whole month, until it come out at your nostrils, and it be loathsome unto you: because that ye have despised the LORD which is among you, and have wept before him, saying, Why came we forth out of Egypt? 21 And Moses said, The People amongst whom I am, are six hundred thousand footmen: and thou hast said, I will give them flesh, that they may eat a whole month. 22 Shall the flocks, and the herds be slain for them, to suffice them? or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to suffice them? 23 And the LORD said unto Moses, Is the Lord's hand waxed short? thou shalt see now whether my word shall come to pass unto thee, or not.

We have here God's gracious Answer to both the foregoing Complaints, wherein his Goodness takes occasion from Man's Badness to appear so much the more illustrious. 1. Provision is made for the redress of the Grievances Moses complains of. If he find the weight of Government lye too heavy upon him, tho' he was a little too passionate in his Remonstrance, yet he shall be eas'd, not by being discarded from the Government himself, as he justly might have been, if God had been extream to mark what he said amiss, but by having Assistants appointed him, who should be as the Apostle speaks, 1 Cor. 12. 28. *Helps, Governments*, i. e. Helps in Government, not at all to lessen or eclipse his Honour, but to make the Work more easie to him, and to bear the Burthen of the People with him. And that this Provision might be both agreeable, and really serviceable, (1.) Moses is directed to nominate the Persons, v. 16. The People were too hot and heady, and tumultuous to be intrusted with the Election, Moses must please himself in the Choice, that he may not afterwards complain. The number he is to chuse is *Seventy Men*, according to the number of the Souls that went down into Egypt. He must chuse such as he knew to be *Elders*, i. e. wise and experienced Men. Those that had acquitted themselves best, as *Rulers of Thousands and Hundreds* Exod. 18. 25. purchase to themselves now this good Degree. Chuse such as *thou knowest* to be *Elders* indeed, and not in Name only, *Officers* that do their Office. We read of the same number of Elders, Exod. 24. 1. that went up with Moses to Mount Sinai; but they were distinguished only for that Occasion, these for a Perpetuity; and according to this Constitution the Sanhedrin, or Great Council of the Jews, which in after Ages sat at Jerusalem, and was the highest Court of Judgment among them, consisted of Seventy Men. And our Saviour seems to have had an Eye to it, in the Choice of Seventy Disciples, who were to be Assistants to the Apostles, Luke 10. (2.) God promiseth to qualify them. If they were not found fit for the Employ, they should be made fit, else they might prove more a Hindrance than a Help to Moses; ver. 17. Though Moses had talk'd too boldly with God, yet God doth not therefore break off Communion with him; He bears a great deal with us, and we must with one another; *I will come down* (saith God) *and talk with thee*, when thou art more calm and compos'd; and *I will take of the same Spirit* of Wisdom, and Piety, and Courage that is upon thee, and put it upon them. Not that Moses had the less of the Spirit for their sharing, nor that they were hereby made equal with him, Moses was still a *Non-such*, Deut. 34. 10. But they were cloth'd with a Spirit of Government proportionable to their Place, and with a Spirit of Prophecy to evidence their Divine Call to it, the Government being a Theocracy. Note, 1. Those whom God employs in any Service he qualifies for it, and those that are not in some measure qualified cannot think themselves duly call'd. 2. All good Qualifications are from God; every perfect Gift is from the Father of Lights. 3. Even the Humour of the discontented People shall be gratified too, that every mouth may be stopped. They are bid to *sanctify themselves*, ver. 18. i. e. To put themselves into a posture to receive such a Proof of God's Power as should be a Token both of Mercy and Judgment. Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel, Amos 4. 12.

1. God promiseth (shall I say?) He threatens rather, that they should have their Belly-full of Flesh; that for a month together, they should not only be fed, but feasted with Flesh, besides their daily Manna, and if they had not a better Government of their Appetites than now it appear'd they had, they should be surfeited with it, ver. 19, 20. you shall eat till it come out at your nostrils, and become loathsome to you. See here 1. The Vanity of all the Delights of Sense, they will cloy, but not satisfy; spiritual Pleasures are the contrary. As the World passeth away, so do the Lusts of it, 1 John 2. 17. What was greedily craved in a little time comes to be nauseated, 2. What

brutish Sins (and worse than brutish) Gluttony and Drunkenness are. They put a force upon nature, and make that the Sickness of the Body which should be it's Health; they are Sins that are their own Punishments, and yet not the worst that attend them. 3. What a righteous thing it is with God to make that loathsome to Men, which they have inordinately lusted after. God could make them despise Flesh, as much as they had despis'd Manna. 2. Moses objects the improbability of making good this Word, v. 21, 22. 'Tis an Objection like that which the Disciples made, Mar. 8. 4. *Whence can a Man satisfy these Men?* Some excuse Moses here, and construe what he saith as only a modest Enquiry, which way the Supply must be expected; but it favours too much of Diffidence and Distrust of God to be justified. He objects the number of the People, as if he that provided Bread for them all could not by the same unlimited Power provide Flesh too. He reckons it must be the Flesh either of *Beasts or Fishes*, because of them are the most bulky Animals, little thinking that the Flesh of Birds, little Birds, should serve the Purpose. God sees not as Man sees, but his Thoughts are above ours. He objects the greediness of the Peoples Desire, in that Word, *to suffice them*. Note, Even true and great Believers sometimes find it hard to trust God under the Discouragements of second Causes, and against Hope to believe in Hope. Moses himself can scarce forbear saying, Can God furnish a Table in the Wilderness? when this was become the common Cry. No doubt *this was his Infirmary*. 3. God gives a short but sufficient Answer to the Objection, in that Question, *Is the Lord's Hand waxed short?* ver. 23. If Moses had remember'd the years of the Right-hand of the Most High, he had not started at these Difficulties, therefore God minds him of them, intimating, that this Objection reflected upon the Divine Power, which he himself had been so oft not only the Witness, but the Instrument of. Had he forgot what Wonders the Divine Power had wrought for that People, inflicted the Plagues of Egypt, divided the Sea, breach'd the Rock, and rain'd Bread from Heaven? And is that Power abated? Is God weaker than he us'd to be? Or, is he tir'd with what he has done? Whatever our unbelieving Hearts may suggest to the contrary, 'tis certain, 1. That God's Hand is not short. His Power cannot be restrain'd in the exerting of it self by any Thing but his own Will, with him nothing is impossible. That Hand is not short which measures the Waters, metes out the Heavens (Isa. 40. 12.) and grasps the Winds (Prov. 30. 4.) 2. That it is not waxed short. He is as strong as ever he was; *faintest not, neither is weary*. And this is sufficient to silence all our Distrusts, when Means fail us, *Is any thing too hard for the Lord?* God here brings Moses to this first Principle, sets him back in his Lesson to learn the Ancient Name of God, *The Lord God Almighty*, and puts the Proof upon the Issue, *thou shalt see whether my Word shall come to pass or not*. This magnifies God's Word above all his Name, that his Works never come short of it. If he speaks 'tis done.

24 ¶ And Moses went out, and told the people the words of the LORD; and gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people, and set them round about the tabernacle. 25 And the LORD came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the Spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, that when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease. 26 But there remained two of the men in the camp, the name of the one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad; and the spirit rested upon them, (and they were of them that were written, but went not out unto the tabernacle) and they prophesied in the camp. 27 And there ran a young man, and told Moses, and said, Eldad and Medad do prophesie in the camp. 28 And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Moses, one of his young men, answered and said, My lord Moses forbid them. 29 And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the LORD's people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his spirit upon them. 30 And Moses gat him into the camp, he and the elders of Israel.

We have here the Performance of God's Word to Moses, that he should have Help in the Government of Israel. 1. Here's the Case of the Seventy Privy Counsellors in General, Moses, tho' a little disturb'd by the Tumult of the People, yet was thoroughly compos'd by the Communion he had with God, and soon came to himself again. And according to the Matter was concerted, (1.) He did his Part, he presented the Seventy Elders before the Lord round the Tabernacle, ver. 24. that they

might there stand ready to receive the Grace of God, in the Place where he manifested himself, and that the People also might be Witnesses of their solemn Call. *Note*, Those that expect Favour from God, must humbly offer themselves, and their Service to him. (2.) God was not wanting to do his Part. He gave of his Spirit to the Seventy Elders, (v. 25.) which enabled them, whose Capacities and Education set them but on a level with their Neighbours, yet of a sudden to say and do that which was extraordinary, and which shew'd them acted by a Divine Inspiration, they prophesied and did not cease, all that Day, and (some think) only that Day. They discours'd to the People of the Things of God, and perhaps commented upon the Law they had lately received with admirable clearness, and fulness, and readiness and aptness of Expression, so that all that heard them might see and say, That God was with them of a Truth, see 1 Cor. 14. 24, 25. Thus long after Saul was mark'd for the Government by the Gift of Prophecy, which came upon him for a Day and a Night, 1 Sam. 10. 6, 11. When Moses was to fetch Israel out of Egypt, Aaron was appointed to be his Prophet, Exod. 7. 1. but now God had call'd him to other Work, in his room Moses has Seventy Prophets to attend him. *Note*, Those are fittest to rule in God's Israel, that are well acquainted with Divine Things, and are apt to teach to Edification. 2. Here's the particular Case of two of them, Eldad and Medad, probably two Brothers. 1. They were nominated by Moses, to be Assistants in the Government, but they went not out unto the Tabernacle as the rest did, ver. 26. Calvin conjectures that the Summons was sent them, yet it did not find them, they were some where out of the Way, so that though they were written, yet they were not call'd. Most think they declin'd coming to the Tabernacle, out of an excess of Modesty and Humility; being sensible of their own Weakness and Unworthiness, they desir'd to be excus'd from coming into the Government. Their Principle was their Praise, but their Practice in not obeying Orders was their Fault. 2. The Spirit of God found them out in the Camp, where they were hid among the Stuff, and there they prophesied, i. e. they exercis'd their Gift of Praying, Preaching and Praising God in some private Tent. *Note*, The Spirit of God is not ty'd to the Tabernacle, but like the Wind, blows where he listeth, John 3. 8. *Whither can we go from this Spirit?* There was a special Providence in it, that these two should be absent, for thus it appear'd that it was indeed a Divine Spirit which the Elders were acted by, and that Moses gave them not that Spirit, but God himself. They modestly declin'd Preferment, but God forces it upon them, nay, they have the Honour of being named, which the rest have not: For they that humble themselves shall be exalted; and those are most fit for Government that are least ambitious of it. 3. Information of this is given to Moses, v. 27. Eldad and Medad prophesied in the Camp, there's a Conventicle in such a Tent, and Eldad and Medad are holding forth there, from under the Inspection and Presidency of Moses, and out of the Communion of the rest of the Elders. Whoever the Person was that brought the Tidings, he seems to have look'd upon it as an irregularity. 4. Joshua moves to have them silenced, v. 28. My Lord Moses, forbid them: 'tis probable Joshua was himself one of the Seventy, which made him the more jealous for the Honour of their Order. He takes it for granted, that they were not under any necessitating Impulse, for the Spirit of the Prophets is subject to the Prophets, and therefore he would have them either not to prophesy at all, or to come to the Tabernacle and prophesy in Consonance with the rest. He doth not desire they should be punish'd for what they had done, but only restrain'd for the future. This Motion he made from a good Principle, not out of any personal disgust to Eldad and Medad, but out of an honest Zeal for that which he apprehended to be the Unity of the Church, and in concern for the Honour of God and Moses. 5. Moses rejects the Motion, and reproves him that made it, ver. 29. Envyest thou for my sake? Thou knowest not what manner of Spirit thou art of. The Joshua was Moses's particular Friend and Confident, though he said this out of a respect to Moses, whose Honour he was very loth to see lessen'd by the Call of those Elders, yet Moses reproves him, and in him all that are so spirited. (1.) We must not secretly grieve at the Gifts, Graces, and Usefulness of others. 'Twas the Fault of Jesus's Disciples, that they envy'd Christ's Honour because it shad'd their Master's, John 3. 26, &c. (2.) We must not be transported into Heats against the Weaknesses and Infirmities of others. Supposing it was an Irregularity that Eldad and Medad were guilty of, yet Joshua was too quick, and too warm upon them. Our Zeal must always be temper'd with the meekness of Wisdom. The Righteousness of God needs not the Wrath of Man, James 1. 20. (3.) We must not make the best and most useful Men Heads of a Party. Paul would not have his Name made use of to patronize a Faction, 1 Corinthians 1. 12, 13. (4.) We must not be forward to condemn and silence those that differ from us, as if they did not follow Christ, because they do not follow him with us, Mark 9. 38. Shall we reject those whom Christ has own'd? Or restrain any from doing good, because they are

not in every Thing of our Mind? Moses was of another Spirit, so far from silencing these two, and quenching the Spirit in them, that he wishes all the Lord's People were prophets, that is, that he would put his Spirit upon them. Not that he would have any set up for Prophets, that were not duly qualified, or that he expected that the Spirit of Prophecy should be made thus common, but thus he expresseth the Love and Esteem he had for all the Lord's People, the Complacency he took in the Gifts of others, and how far he was from being displac'd at Eldad's and Medad's prophesying from under his Eye. Such an excellent Spirit as this blessed Paul was of, rejoicing that Christ was preached, though it were by those who therein intended to add Affliction to his Bonds, Phil. 1. 18. We ought to be pleas'd that God is serv'd and glorified, and good done; though to the lessening of our Credit, and the Credit of our Way. 6. The Elders now newly Ordin'd, immediately enter'd upon their Administration, ver. 30. when their Call was sufficiently attested by their prophesying, they went with Moses to the Camp, and applied themselves to Business. Having received the Gift they ministr'd the same as good Stewards. And now Moses was pleas'd that he had so many to share with him in his Work, and Honour; And 1. Let the Testimony of Moses be credited by those who desire to be in Power, That Government is a Burthen. 'Tis a Burthen of Care and Trouble to those who make Conscience of the Duty of it, and to those who do not, it will prove a heavier Burthen in the Day of Account, when they fall under the Doom of the unprofitable Servant that buried his Talent. 2. Let the Example of Moses be imitated by those that are in Power; let them not despise the Advice and Assistance of others, but desire it, and be thankful for it: not coveting to monopolize Wisdom and Power. In multitude of Counsellors, there is Safety.

31. ¶ And there went forth a wind from the LORD, and brought quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp, as it were a day's journey on this side, and as it were a day's journey on the other side, round about the camp, and as it were two cubits high upon the face of the earth. 32. And the people stood up all that day, and all that night, and all the next day, and they gathered the quails: he that gathered least, gathered ten homers: and they spread them all abroad for themselves round about the camp. 33. And while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the LORD was kindled against the people, and the LORD smote the people with a very great plague. 34. And he called the name of that place, Kibroth-Hattaavah: because there they buried the people that lusted. 35. And the people journeyed from Kibroth-Hattaavah unto Hazeroth: and abode at Hazeroth.

God having perform'd his Promise to Moses, in giving him Assistors in the Government, and proving thereby the Power he has over the Spirits of Men, by his Spirit: He here performs his Promise to the People in giving them Flesh, and proving thereby his Power over the Inferiour Creatures, and his Dominion in the Kingdom of Nature. Observe 1. How the People were gratified with Flesh in abundance, ver. 31. A Wind (a South-east wind,) as appears (Psalm 78. 26.) brought Quails. 'Tis uncertain what sort of Animals they were; the Psalmist calls them, feather'd Fowl, or, Fowl of Wing. The Learned Bishop Patrick inclines to agree with some Modern Writers, who think they were Locusts, a delicious sort of Food well known in those Parts, the rather, because they were brought with a Wind, lay in heaps, and were dried in the Sun for use. Whatever they were they answer'd the Intention, they serv'd for a Month's Feast for Israel: such an indulgent Father was God to this forward Family. 2. Locusts that had been a Plague to fruitful Egypt, feeding upon the Fruits, were a Blessing to a barren Wilderness, being themselves fed upon. 3. How greedy they were of this Flesh that God sent them; they flew upon the Spoil, with an insatiable Appetite, not regarding what Moses had told them from God, that they would surfeit upon it, ver. 32. Two Days and a Night they were at it, gathering Flesh, till every Master of a Family had brought home Ten Homers, (that was Ten Ass load) at least. David long'd for the Water of the Well of Bethlehem, but would not drink it when he had it, because it was obtain'd by venturing, much more reason the Israelites had to refuse this Flesh which was obtain'd by murmuring; and which they might easily perceive by what Moses said, was given them in Anger; but those that are under the Power of a carnal Mind will have their Lusts fulfilled, though it be to the certain Damage and Ruin

of their precious Souls. 3. How dear they paid for their Feasts when it came into the reckoning, v. 33. *The Lord smote them with a very great Plague; some bodily Disease, which probably was the effect of their Surfeit, and was the Death of many of them, and those, 'tis likely, the Ring-leaders in the Mutiny.* Note, God often grants the Desires of Sinners in wrath, while he denies the Desires of his own People in Love. He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their Soul, Psal. 106. 15. By all that was said to them they were not estranged from their Lust, and therefore while the meat was in their mouths, the wrath of God came upon them, Ps. 78. 30, 31. What we inordinately desire, if we obtain it, we have reason to fear that it will be some way or other a Grief and Cross to us. God sufficed them first, and then plagued them, (1.) To save the Reputation of his own Power, that it might not be said, He had not cut them off but because he was not able to suffice them. And, (2.) To shew us the meaning of the Prosperity of Sinners, 'tis their Preparation for Ruin; they are fed as an Ox for the Slaughter. Lastly, The Remembrance of this is preserved in the Name given to the Place, v. 34. Moses called it *Kibroth-Hattaavah*, the Graves of Lusts, or, of Lust. And well it had been, if these Graves of Israel's Lusts had proved the Graves of Israel's Lust: The warning was design'd to be so, but it had not its due Effect, for it follows, Ps. 78. 32. *For all this they sinned still.*

CHAP. XII.

In the foregoing Chapter we had the Vexation which the People gave to Moses, in this we have his Patience tried by his own Relations.

1. Miriam and Aaron his own Brother and Sister affronted him, v. 1.—3. 2. God called them to an account for it, v. 4.—9. 3. Miriam was smitten with a Leprosy for it, v. 10. 4. Aaron submits, and Moses meekly intercedes for her, v. 11.—13. 5. She is healed, but put to shame for seven Days, v. 14.—16. And this is recorded to shew that the best Persons Families have both their Follies, and their Crosses.

1 AND Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses, because of the Ethiopian woman, whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman. 2 And they said, Hath the LORD indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? And the LORD heard it. 3 (Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.)

Here's 1. The wonderful Passion of Aaron and Miriam, they spake against Moses, v. 1. If Moses that receiv'd so much Honour from God, yet receiv'd so many Sights and Affronts from Men, shall any of us think such Trials either strange, or hard, and be either provok'd or discouraged by them. But who would have thought that Disturbance should be created to Moses, (1.) From those that were themselves serious and good; nay, that were eminent in Religion, Miriam a Prophetess, Aaron the High-Priest, both of them joint Commissioners with Moses, for the Deliverance of Israel, Mic. 6. 4. *I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.* (2.) From those that were his nearest Relations, his own Brother and Sister, who thone so much by raies borrow'd from him. Thus the Spouse complains, Cant. 1. 6. *My Mothers children were angry with me, and Quarrels among Relations are in a special manner grievous; A Brother offended is harder to be won than a strong City.* Yet this helps to confirm the Call of Moses, and shews that his Advancement was purely by the Divine Favour, and not by any Compact or Collusion with his Kindred, who themselves grudg'd at his Advancement. Neither did many of our Saviour's Kindred believe on him, John 7. 5. It should seem that Miriam began the Quarrel, and Aaron having not been employed or consulted in the Choice of the Seventy Elders, was for the present somewhat disgusted, and so was the sooner drawn in to take his Sisters part. 'Twould grieve one to see the Hand of Aaron in so many Trespasses, but it shews that the Law made men Priests which had infirmity. Satan prevail'd first with Eve, and by her with Adam; see what need we have to take heed of being drawn into Quarrels by our Relations, for we know not how great a Matter a little Fire may kindle. Aaron ought to have remembered how Moses stood his Friend, when God was angry with him for making the Golden Calf, (Deut. 9. 20.) And not to have render'd him Evil for Good.

Two things they quarrell'd with Moses about, 1. About his Marriage: Some think a late Marriage, with a Cushite or Arabian; others because of Zipporah, whom on this Occasion they call'd in scorn an Ethiopian Woman; and who, they insinuated, had too great an Influence upon Moses, in the Choice of these Seventy Elders; Perhaps there was some private falling out between Zipporah and Miriam, which occasion'd some hot Words, and one peevish Reflection introduc'd another, till Moses and Aaron came to be interested. 2. About his Government,

not the Mismanagement of it, but the Monopolizing of it, ver. 2. *Hath the Lord spoken only by Moses?* Must he only have the Choice of the Persons on whom the Spirit of Prophecy shall come, hath he not spoken also by us? Might not we have had a Hand in that Affair, and prefer'd our Friends as well as Moses his. They could not deny that God had spoken by Moses, but it was plain he had sometimes spoken also by them, and that which they intended was to make themselves equal with him, though God had so many Ways distinguish'd him. Note, Striving to be greatest is a Sin which easily begets Disciples themselves, and it is exceeding sinful. Even those that are well prefer'd, are seldom pleas'd, if others be better prefer'd. Those that excel are commonly envied. 2. The wonderful Patience of Moses under this Provocation. The Lord heard it, ver. 2. But Moses himself took no Notice of it, for ver. 3. he was very meek. He had a great deal of Reason to resent the Affront, 'twas ill-natur'd, and ill-tim'd, when the People were dispos'd to Mutiny, and had lately given him a great deal of Vexation with their Murmurings, which would be in danger of breaking out again when thus headed and countenanced by Aaron and Miriam; but he as a deaf Man heard not. When God's Honour was concern'd, as in the Case of the Golden Calf, no Man more zealous than Moses, but when his own Honour was touch'd, no Man more meek; as bold as a Lion in the Cause of God, but as mild as a Lamb in his own Cause. God's People are the meek of the Earth, Zeph. 2. 3. But some are more remarkable than others for this Grace, as Moses, who was thus fitted for the Work he was call'd to, which requir'd all the Meekness he had, and sometimes more. And sometimes the Unkindness of our Friends is a greater Trial of our Meekness than the Malice of our Enemies. Christ himself records his own Meekness, Matthew 11. 29. *I am meek and lowly in Heart,* and the Copy of Meekness Christ has set was without a blot, Moses's was not.

4 And the LORD spake suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam, Come out ye three unto the tabernacle of the congregation: and they three came out. 5 And the LORD came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam: and they both came forth. 6 And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a Prophet among you, I the LORD will make my self known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. 7 My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. 8 With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches, and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses? 9 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them, and he departed.

Moses did not resent the Injury done him, nor complain'd of it to God, or made any Appeal to him, but God relented it; he hears all we say in our Passion, and is a swift Witness of our hasty Speeches, which is a Reason why we should resolutely bridle our Tongues that we speak not ill of others, and why we should patiently stop our Ears, and not take Notice of it, if others speak ill of us. *I heard not, for thou wilt hear,* Ps. 38. 13, 14, 15. The more silent we are in our own Cause, the more is God engag'd to plead it. The accused Innocent needs to say little, if he knows the Judge himself will be his Advocate.

1. The Cause is call'd, and the Parties summon'd forthwith to attend at the Door of the Tabernacle, ver. 4, 5. Moses had often show'd himself zealous for God's Honour, and now God show'd himself jealous for his Reputation; for those that honour God he will honour, nor will he ever be behind hand with any that appear for him. Judges of old sat in the Gate of the City to try Causes, and so on this Occasion, the Shechinah, in the Cloud of Glory stood at the Door of the Tabernacle, and Aaron and Miriam as Delinquents were called to the Bar. 2. Aaron and Miriam are made to know, that as great as they were, they must not pretend to be equal to Moses, nor set up as Rivals with him, ver. 6, 7, 8. Were they Prophets of the Lord? Of Moses it might be truly said, *He more.* 1. It was true, that God put a great deal of Honour upon the Prophets; however, Men mock'd them, and misus'd them, they were the Favourites and Intimates of Heaven. God made himself known to them, either by Dreams when they were asleep, or by Visions when they were awake, and by them made himself known to others. And those are happy, those are great, truly great, truly happy, to whom God makes himself known. Now he doth

it not by *Dreams and Visions* as of old, but by the *Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation*, who makes known those things to *Babes*, which *Prophets and Kings* desir'd to see, and might not. Hence in the *last Days*, the Days of the Messiah, the *Sons and Daughters* are said to *Prophesie*, *Joel* 2. 28. Because they shall be better acquainted with the *Mysteries of the Kingdom of Grace* than even the *Prophets* themselves were. See *Heb.* 1. 1. 2. Yet the Honour put upon *Moses* was far greater, v. 7. *My Servant Moses is not so*, he excelleth them all. To recompence *Moses* for his meek and patient bearing the Affronts which *Miriam* and *Aaron* gave him, God not only *clear'd* him, but *prais'd* him; and took that Occasion to give him an *Encomium* which remains upon Record to his immortal Honour; and thus shall they that are reviled and persecuted for Righteousness sake have a *great Reward in Heaven*, Christ will confess them before his Father and the holy Angels. (1.) *Moses* was a Man of great Integrity, and tried Fidelity. He is *faithful in my House*. This is put first in his Character, because *Grace* excels *Gifts*, *Love* excels *Knowledge*, and Sincerity in the Service of God puts a greater Honour upon a Man, and recommends him to the Divine Favour, more than Learning, abstruse Speculations, and an Ability to *speake with Tongues*. This is that part of *Moses's* Character which the Apostle quotes, when he would shew that Christ was greater than *Moses*; making it out, that he was so in this chief Instance of his Greatness, for *Moses* was faithful only as a *Servant*, but Christ as a *Son*, *Heb.* 3. 2, 5, 6. God intrusted *Moses* to deliver his Mind in all things to *Israel*; *Israel* intrusted him to treat for them with God, and he was faithful to both. He said and did every thing in the Management of that great Affair as became an honest good Man, that aim'd at nothing else but the Honour of God, and the Welfare of *Israel*. (2.) *Moses* was therefore honoured with clearer Discoveries of God's Mind, and a more intimate Communion with God, than any other Prophet whatsoever. He shall (1.) Hear more from God than any other Prophet, more clearly and distinctly; *with him will I speak Mouth to Mouth*, or, *Face to Face*, *Exod.* 33. 11. as a man speaks to his Friend, whom he discourseth with freely and familiarly, and without any Confusion or Consternation, such as sometimes other Prophets were under; as *Ezekiel*, and *Daniel*, and *St. John* himself when God spake to them. By other Prophets God sent to his People *Reproofs* and *Predictions* of good or evil, which were properly enough deliver'd in *dark Speeches*, Figures, Types, and Parables; but by *Moses* he gave *Laws* to his People, and the Institution of *Holy Ordinances*, which could by no means be deliver'd by *dark Speeches*, but must be express'd in the plainest, and most intelligible manner. (2.) He shall see more of God, than any other Prophet; the *similitude of the Lord* shall he behold, as he hath seen it in *Horeb*, when God proclaim'd his Name before him. Yet he saw only the *Similitude* of the Lord, Angels and glorified Saints *always behold the Face* of our Father. *Moses* had the Spirit of Prophecy in a way peculiar to himself, and which set him far above all other Prophets, yet he *thus is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he*, much more doth our Lord Jesus infinitely excel him, *Heb.* 3. 1.

Now let *Miriam* and *Aaron* consider who it was they insulted. Were ye not afraid to speak against my Servant *Moses*? Against my Servant, against *Moses*, so it runs in the Original. How dare you abuse any Servant of mine, especially such a Servant as *Moses*, who is a Friend, a Confident, and Steward of the House. How durst they speak to the Grief and Reproach of one whom God had so much to say in the Commendation of? Might they not expect that God would resent it, and take it as an Affront to himself? Note, We have reason to be afraid of saying or doing any thing against the Servants of God, 'tis at our Peril if we do, for God will plead their Cause, and reckons that what touches them, touches the Apple of his Eye. 'Tis a dangerous thing to offend Christ's little ones, *Matthew* 18. 6. Those are presumptuous indeed that are not afraid to speak evil of Dignities, 2 Peter 2. 10. 3. God having thus shew'd them their Fault and Folly, he next shews them his Displeasure, v. 9. The Anger of the Lord was kindled against them, of which perhaps some sensible Indications were given in the change of the Colour of the Cloud, or some Flashes of Lightning from it. But indeed it was Indication enough of his Displeasure, that he departed, and would not so much as hear their Excuse, for he needed not, understanding their Thoughts afar off; and thus he would shew that he was displeas'd. Note, The Removal of God's Presence from us is the surest and saddest Token of God's Displeasure against us. Wo unto us if he departs; and he never departs, till we by our Sin and Folly drive him from us.

10 And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle, and behold, *Miriam* became leprous *white as snow*: and *Aaron* looked upon *Miriam*, and behold she was leprous. 11 And *Aaron* said unto *Moses*, Alas my lord! I beseech thee lay not the sin upon us, wherein we have done foolishly, and

wherein we have sinned: 12 Let her not be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed, when he cometh out of his mothers womb. 13 And *Moses* cried unto the LORD, saying, Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee. 14 ¶ And the LORD said unto *Moses*, If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days? let her be shut out from the camp seven days, and after that let her be received in again. 15 And *Miriam* was shut out from the camp seven days: and the people journeyed not, till *Miriam* was brought in again. 16 And afterward the people removed from *Hazereth*, and pitched in the wilderness of *Paran*.

Here's 1. God's Judgment upon *Miriam*, v. 10. The Cloud departed from off that Part of the Tabernacle, in token of God's Departure, and presently *Miriam* became leprous; when God goes, Evil comes: expect no Good when God departs. The Leprosie was a Disease oft inflicted by the immediate Hand of God, as the Punishment of some particular Sin, as on *Gehazi* for lying, on *Uzziah* for invading the Priest's Office, and here on *Miriam* for scolding, and making Mischief among Relations. The Plague of the Leprosie 'tis likely appear'd in her Face, so that it appear'd to all that saw her she was struck with it, with the worst of it, she was leprous, as *snow*, not only so white but so soft, the solid Flesh losing its consistency, as that which putrifies doth. Her foul Tongue (saith Bishop Hall) is justly punished with a foul Face, and her Folly in pretending to be a Rival with *Moses* is made manifest to all Men, for every one sees his Face to be glorious, and her's to be leprous. While *Moses* needs a Veil to hide his Glory, *Miriam* needs one to hide her Shame. Note, Those Distempers which any way deform us, ought to be construed as a Rebuke to our Pride, and improv'd for the Cure of it, and under such humbling Providences, we ought to be very humble. 'Tis a sign the Heart is hard indeed if the Flesh be mortified, and yet the Lusts of the Flesh remain unmortified. It should seem that this Plague upon *Miriam* was design'd for an Exposition of the Law concerning the Leprosie, *Lev.* 13. for it is refer'd to, upon the Rehearsal of that Law, *Deut.* 24. 8, 9.

Miriam was struck with a Leprosie, but not *Aaron*, because she was first in the Transgression, and God would put a Difference between those that mislead, and those that are misled. *Aaron's* Office, though it sav'd him not from God's Displeasure, yet it help'd to secure him from this Token of his Displeasure; it would not only have suspended him for the present from officiating, when (there being no Priests but himself and his two Sons) he could ill be spar'd, but it would have rendred him and his Office mean, and would have been a lasting Blot upon his Family. *Aaron* as Priest was to be the Judge of the Leprosie, and his performing that part of his Office upon this occasion, when he looked upon *Miriam*, and behold she was leprous, was a sufficient Mortification to him. He was struck through her side, and he could not pronounce her leprous without blushing and trembling, knowing himself to be equally obnoxious. This Judgment upon *Miriam* is improveable by us, as a warning to take heed of putting any Affront upon our Lord Jesus. If she was thus chastis'd for speaking against *Moses*, what will become of those that sin against Christ. 2. *Aaron's* Submission hereupon, ver. 11, 12. he humbles himself to *Moses*, confesses his Fault, and begs Pardon. He that but just now join'd with his Sister in speaking against *Moses*, here is forc'd for himself and his Sister to make a penitent Address to him, and in the highest degree to magnifie him, as if he had the Power of God to forgive and heal, whom he had so lately vilified. Note, Those that trample upon the Saints and Servants of God, will one Day be glad to make court to them; at furthest, in the other World, as the foolish Virgins to the wife for a little Oil, and the rich Man to *Lazarus* for a little Water; and perhaps in this World, as *Job's* Friends to him for his Prayers, and here *Aaron* to *Moses*, *Revelation* 3. 9. In his Submission. (1.) He confesseth his own and his Sister's Sin, ver. 11. He speaks respectfully to *Moses*, of whom he had spoken slightly, calls him his Lord; and now turns the Reproach upon himself, speaks as one ashamed of what he had said, we have sinned, we have done foolishly; those sin, and do foolishly who revile and speak evil of any, especially of good People, or of those in Authority. Repentance is the unsaying of that which we have said amiss, and better it be unsaid, than that we be undone by it. (2.) He begs *Moses's* Pardon, lay not the Sin upon us. *Aaron* was to bring his Gift to the Altar, but knowing that his Brother had something against him, he of all Men was concern'd to reconcile himself to his Brother, that he might be qualified to offer his Gift. Some think this speedy Submission which God saw him ready to make, was that which prevented his being struck with

with a Leprosie as his Sister was. (3.) He recommends the deplorable Condition of his Sister to Moses's compassionate Consideration, v. 12. *Let her not be as one dead*, i. e. let her not continue so separated from Conversation, defiling all she toucheth, and even to putrify above Ground as one dead. He elegantly describes the Misery of her Case to move his Pity. 3. The Intercession Moses made to Miriam, v. 13. He cried unto the Lord, with a loud Voice, because the Cloud, the Symbol of his Presence, was removed, and stood at some Distance, and to express his Fervency in this Request, *Heal her now, O Lord, I beseech thee*. By this he made it to appear, that he did heartily forgive her the Injury she had done him, that he had not accus'd her to God, nor call'd for Justice against her, so far from that, that when God, in Tenderness to his Honour, had chastis'd her Insolence, he was the first that mov'd for reverting the Judgment. By this Example we are taught to pray for them that despitely use us; and not to take Pleasure in the most righteous Punishment inflicted either by God or Man on those that have been injurious to us. Jeroboam's wither'd Hand was restor'd at the special Instance and Request of the Prophet against whom it had been stretched out, 1 King 13. 6. So Miriam here was heal'd by the Prayer of Moses, whom she had abus'd, and Abimelech by the Prayer of Abraham, Gen. 20. 7. Moses might have stood off, and have said, She is serv'd well enough, let her govern her Tongue better next time; but not content with being able to say, that he had not pray'd for the inflicting of the Judgment, he prays earnestly for the Removal of it. This Pattern of Moses, and that of our Saviour, *Father forgive them*, we must study to conform to. 4. The accommodating of this Matter, so as that Mercy and Justice might meet together. (1.) Mercy takes place, so far as that Miriam shall be heal'd; Moses forgives her, and God will, (allu. 2 Cor. 2. 10.) But (2.) Justice takes Place, so far as that Miriam shall be humbled, v. 14. *Let her be shut out from the Camp seven days*. That she her self might be made more sensible of her Fault, and penitent for it; and that her Punishment might be the more publick, and all Israel might take Notice of it, and take Warning by it not to mutiny. If Miriam the Prophetess be put under such Marks of Humiliation for one hasty Word spoken against Moses, what may we expect for our Murmurings. *If this be done in a green Tree, what shall be done in the dry*. See how People debase and diminish themselves by Sin, stain their Glory, and lay their Honour in the Dust; when Miriam praised God, we find her at the Head of the Congregation, and one of the brightest Ornaments of it, Exod. 15. 20. Now she quarrell'd with God, we find her expell'd as the Filth and Off-scouring of it.

A Reason is given for her being put out of the Camp for seven Days, because thus she ought to accept of the Punishment of her Iniquity. If her Father, her earthly Father, had but spits in her Face, and so signified his Displeasure against her, would she not be so troubled and concern'd at it, and so sorry that she had deserv'd it, as to shut her self up for some time in her Room, and not come into his Presence, or shew her Face in the Family, being asham'd of her own Folly and Unhappiness; if such Reverence as this be owing to the Fathers of our Flesh when they correct us, much more ought we to humble our selves under the mighty Hand of the Father of Spirits, Hebr. 12. 9. Note, When we are under the Tokens of God's Displeasure for Sin, it becomes us to take Shame to our selves, and to lie down in that Shame, owning, that *to us belongs Confusion of Face*. If by our own Fault and Folly we expose our selves to the Reproach and Contempt of Men, the just Censures of the Church, or the Rebukes of the Divine Providence, we must confess that our Father justly spits in our Face and be ashamed. 5. The Hindrance that this gave to the People's Progress, v. 15. *The People journey'd not till Miriam was brought in again*. God did not remove the Cloud, and therefore they did not remove their Camp. This was intended (1.) as a Rebuke to the People, who were conscious to themselves of having sinn'd after the Similitude of Miriam's Transgression, in speaking against Moses: Thus far therefore they shall share in her Punishment, that it shall retard their March forwards towards Canaan. Many things oppose us, but nothing hinders us in the Way to Heaven, so as Sin doth. (2.) As a Respect to Miriam. If the Camp had remov'd during the Days of her Suspension, her Trouble and Shame had been the greater, therefore in Compassion to her they shall stay till her Excommunication be taken off, and she taken in again, 'tis likely with the usual Ceremonies of cleansing Lepers. Note, Those that are under Censure and Rebuke for Sin, ought to be treated with a great deal of Tenderness, and not be over-loaded, no not with the Shame they have deserv'd, not counted as Enemies, 2 Thes. 3. 15. 15. but forgiven and comforted, 2 Cor. 2. 7. Sinners must be cast out with Grief, and Penitents taken in with Joy. When Miriam was absolv'd, and re-admitted, the People went forward into the Wilderness of Paran, which join'd up to the South Border of Canaan, and into that their next Remove had been, if they had not put a Bar in their own Way.

CHAP. XIII.

'Tis a memorable and very melancholly Story which is related in this and the following Chapter, of the turning back of Israel, from the Borders of Canaan, when they were just ready to set Foot in it, and the sentencing of them to wander and perish in the Wilderness for their Unbelief and Murmuring. 'Tis refer'd to, Psalm 95. 7. &c. and improv'd for Warning to us Christians, Heb. 3. 7. &c. In this Chapter we have, 1. The sending of Twelve Spies before them into Canaan, v. 1.—16. 2. The Instructions given to these Spies, v. 17.—20. 3. Their executing of their Commission according to their Instructions, and their Return from the Search, v. 21.—25. 4. The Report they brought back to the Camp of Israel, v. 26.—33.

1 AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying; 2 Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan which I give unto the children of Israel: of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every one a ruler among them. 3 And Moses, by the commandment of the LORD, sent them from the wilderness of Paran: all those men were heads of the children of Israel. 4 And these were their names. Of the tribe of Reuben, Shammua the son of Zaccur. 5 Of the tribe of Simeon Shaphat the son of Hori. 6 Of the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh. 7 Of the tribe of Issachar, Igal the son of Joseph. 8 Of the tribe of Ephraim, Oshea the son of Nun. 9 Of the tribe of Benjamin, Palti the son of Raphu. 10 Of the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel the son of Sodi. 11 Of the tribe of Joseph, namely of the tribe of Manasseh, Gaddi the son of Sufi. 12 Of the tribe of Dan, Ammiel the son of Gemalli. 13 Of the tribe of Asher, Sethur the son of Michael. 14 Of the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi the son of Vophsi. 15 Of the tribe of Gad, Geuel the son of Machi. 16 These are the names of the men which Moses sent to spie out the land: and Moses called Oshea the son of Nun, Jehoshua. 17 ¶ And Moses sent them to spie out the land of Canaan, and said unto them, Get you up this way southward, and go up into the mountain: 18 And see the land what it is, and the people that dwelleth therein, whether they be strong or weak, few or many: 19 And what the land is that they dwell in, whether it be good or bad, and what cities they be that they dwell in, whether in tents, or in strong holds: 20 And what the land is, whether it be fat or lean, whether there be wood therein, or not. And be ye of good courage, and bring of the fruit of the land: (now the time was the time of the first ripe grapes.)

Here's 1. Orders given to send spies to search out the Land of Canaan. 'Tis here said, God directed Moses to send them, v. 1, 2. But it appears by the Repetition of the Story afterwards, Deut. 1. 22. That the Motion came Originally from the People; they came to Moses, and said, *we will send Men before us*; and it was the Fruit of their Unbelief. They would not take God's Word that it was a good Land, and that he would without fail put them in Possession of it: They could not trust the Pillar of Cloud and Fire to shew them the Way to it, but have a better Opinion of their own Politicks than of God's Wisdom. How absurd was it for them to send to spy out a Land, which God himself had spied out for them; to enquire the Way into it, when God himself had undertaken to shew them the Way. But thus we ruin our selves by giving more Credit to the Reports and Representations of Sense than to Divine Revelation; we walk by Sight, not by Faith, whereas if we will receive the Witness of Men, without doubt the Witness of God is greater. The People making this Motion to Moses, he (perhaps not aware of the Unbelief at the bottom of it) consulted God in the Case, who bid him to gratify the People in this Matter, and send Spies before them; let them walk in their own Counsels. Yet God was no way accessary to the Sin that follow'd, for the sending of these Spies was so far from being the Cause of the Sin, that if the Spies had done their Duty, and the People theirs, it might have been the Confirmation of their Faith, and of good Service to them. 2. The Persons nominated that were to be employ'd in this Service, v. 3. One of each Tribe, that it might appear to be the Act of the People in general; and Rulers, Persons

Persons of Figure in their respective Tribes, some of the Rulers of Thousands or Hundreds, to put the greater Credit upon their Embassy: This was design'd for the best, but it prov'd to have this ill Effect, that the Quality of the Persons occasion'd the evil Report they brought up to be the more credited, and the People to be the more influenc'd by it. Some think they are all nam'd for the sake of two good ones that were among them, *Caleb* and *Joshua*. Notice is taken of the Change of *Joshua's* Name upon this Occasion, v. 16. He was *Moses's* Minister, but had been employ'd as General of the Forces that were sent out against *Amalek*, though of the Tribe of *Ephraim*. The Name by which he was generally called and known in his own Tribe, was *Oshea*, but *Moses* called him *Joshua* in Token of his Affection to him, and Power over him; and now it should seem he order'd others to call him so, and fix'd that to be his Name from hence forward. *Oshea* signifies a Prayer for Salvation, *Save thou*; *Joshua* signifies a Promise of Salvation; *He will save*; in answer to that Prayer; so near is the Relation between Prayers and Promises. Prayers prevail for Promises, and Promises direct and encourage Prayers. Some think *Moses* design'd, by taking the first Syllable of the Name of *Jehovah*, and prefixing it to his Name, which turn'd *Hoshea* into *Jehoshua*, to put an Honour upon him, and to encourage him in this, and all his future Services, with the Assurances of God's Presence. Yet after this he is called *Hoshea*, Deut. 32. 44. *Jesus* is the same Name with *Joshua*, and it is the Name of our Lord Christ, of whom *Joshua* was a Type, as Successor to *Moses*, *Israel's* Captain, and Conqueror of *Canaan*. There was another of the same Name, who was also a Type of Christ, *Zech. 6. 11.* *Joshua* was the Saviour of God's People from the Powers of *Canaan*, but Christ is their Saviour from the Powers of Hell. 3. The Instructions given to those Spies. They were sent into the Land of *Canaan*, the next Way, to traverse the Country, and to take Account of its present State, v. 17. Two Heads of Enquiry were given them in Charge, (1.) Concerning the Land it self; See *what it is*, v. 18. And again, v. 19. See whether it be good or bad, and v. 20. *whether it be fat or lean*. All Parts of the Earth do not share alike in the Blessing of Fruitfulness; some Countries are bless'd with a richer Soil than others: *Moses* himself was well satisfied that *Canaan* was a very good Land, but he sent these Spies, to bring an Account of it for the Satisfaction of the People; as *John Baptist* sent to *Jesus* to ask whether he was the Christ; not to inform himself, but to inform those he sent. They must take Notice whether the Air was healthful or no, what the Soil was, and what the Products; and for the better Satisfaction of the People, they must bring with them some of the Fruits. (2.) Concerning the Inhabitants, their Number, few or many; their Size and Stature, whether strong able bodied Men, or weak; their Habitations, whether they liv'd in Tents or Houses, whether in open Villages, or in walled Towns; whether the Woods were standing as in those Countries that are uncultivated, through the unskillfulness and slothfulness of the Inhabitants; or whether the Woods were cut down, and the Country made Champion, for the Convenience of Tillage.

These were the Things they were to enquire about. Perhaps there had been of late Years such Commerce between *Egypt* and *Canaan*, as there was in *Jacob's* time, else they might have inform'd themselves of these Things without sending Men on purpose to search. See the Advantage we have by Books and Learning, which acquaints those that are curious and inquisitive with the State of Foreign Countries, at a much greater distance than *Canaan* was now from *Israel*, without this Trouble and Expence.

Moses dismisseth the Spies with this Charge; *Be of good Courage*; intimating not only that they should be themselves encouraged against the Difficulties of this Expedition, but that they should bring an encouraging Account to the People, and make the best of every Thing. It was not only a great Undertaking they were put upon, which required good Management and Resolution, but it was a great Trust that was repos'd in them, which requir'd that they should be faithful.

21 ¶ So they went up, and searched the land, from the wilderness of *Zin*, unto *Rehob*, as men come to *Hamath*. 22 And they ascended by the south, and came to *Hebron*: where *Ahiman*, *Sheshai*, and *Talmi*, the children of *Anak* were: now *Hebron* was built seven Years before *Zoan* in *Egypt*. 23 And they came unto the brook of *Eshcol*, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff, and they brought of the pomegranates, and of the figs. 24 The place was called the brook of *Eshcol*, because of the cluster of grapes which the chil-

dren of *Israel* cut down from thence. 25 And they returned from searching of the land after forty days.

We have here a short Account of the Survey which the Spies made of the promised Land. 1. They went quite through it, from *Zin* in the South, to *Rehob* near *Hamath* in the North, v. 21. See *Numb. 34. 3. 8.* 'Tis likely they did not go all together in a Body, lest they should have been suspected, and taken up, which there would be the more Danger of, if the *Canaanites* knew, (and one would think they could not but know) how near the *Israelites* were to them; but they divided themselves into several Companies, and so pass'd unsuspected, as way-faring Men. 2. They took particular Notice of *Hebron*, v. 22. probably because near there was the Field of *Macpelah*, where the Patriarchs were buried, *Gen. 23. 2.* Whose dead Bodies did as it were keep Possession of that Land for their Posterity. To this Sepulchre they made a particular Visit, and found the adjoining City in the Possession of the Sons of *Anak*, who are here named. In that Place where they expected the greatest Encouragements, they met with the greatest Discouragements. Where the Bodies of their Ancestors kept Possession for them, the Giants kept Possession against them. In the Original it is, *they ascended by the South*, and came to *Hebron*; i. e. *Caleb*, say the Jews, in particular, for to his being there we find express Reference, *Joshua 14. 9. 12.* But that others of the Spies were there too, appears by their Description of the *Anakim*, v. 33. 3. They brought a Bunch of Grapes with them, and some other of the Fruits of the Land, as a Proof of the extraordinary Goodness of the Country. Probably they furnished themselves with these Fruits, when they were leaving the Country and returning. The Cluster of Grapes was so large, and so heavy, that they hung it upon a Bar, and carried it between two of them, v. 23, 24. The Place whence they took it, was from thence called the *Vally of the Cluster*; that famous Cluster, which was to *Israel*, both the Earnest and the Specimen of all the Fruits of *Canaan*. Such are the present Comforts which we have in Communion with God, Foretastes of the Fulness of Joy we expect in the heavenly *Canaan*. We may see by them what Heaven is.

26 ¶ And they went and came unto *Moses*, and to *Aaron*, and to all the congregation of the children of *Israel* unto the wilderness of *Paran*, to *Kadesh*, and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and shewed them the fruit of the land. 27 And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey, and this is the fruit of it. 28 Nevertheless, the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover, we saw the children of *Anak* there. 29 The *Amalekites* dwell in the land of the south: and the *Hittites*, and the *Jebusites*, and the *Amorites* dwell in the mountains: and the *Canaanites* dwell by the sea, and by the coast of *Jordan*. 30 And *Caleb* stilled the people before *Moses*, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it. 31 But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we. 32 And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched, unto the children of *Israel*, saying, The land through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof, and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. 33 And there we saw the giants, the sons of *Anak*, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.

'Tis a Wonder how the People of *Israel* had Patience to stay Forty Days for the Return of their Spies, when they were just ready to enter *Canaan*, under all the Assurances of Success they could have from the Divine Power, and a constant Series of Miracles that had hitherto attended them; but they distrusted God's Power and Promise, and were willing to be held in suspense by their own Counsels, rather than be brought to a Certainty of God's Covenant. How much do we stand in our own Light by our Unbelief! Well, at length the Messengers return, but they agree not in their Report.

1. The major Part discourage the People from going forwards to Canaan; and justly is Israel left to this Temptation, for putting so much Confidence in the Judgment of Men, when they had the Word of God to trust to. 'Tis a righteous Thing with God to give those up to strong Delusion, who will not receive his Truth in the love of it. Observe their Report. 1. They cannot deny but that the Land of Canaan was a very fruitful Land; the Bunch of Grapes they brought with them was an Ocular Demonstration of it, v. 27. God had promised them a Land flowing with Milk and Honey, and the evil Spies themselves own that it is such a Land. Thus even out of the Mouths of Adversaries will God be glorified, and the Truth of his Promise attested. And yet afterwards they contradict themselves, when they say, v. 32. *It is a Land that eats up the Inhabitants thereof*; as if, though it had Milk, and Honey, and Grapes, yet it wanted other necessary Provisions; some think there was a great Plague in the Country, at the time that they survey'd it, which they ought to have imputed to the Wisdom of the Divine Providence, which thus lessen'd the Numbers of their Enemies, to facilitate their Conquests, but they invidiously imputed it to the unwholesomeness of the Air, and thence took Occasion to disparage the Country. For this unreasonable Fear of a Plague in Canaan, they justly were cut off immediately by a Plague in the Wilderness, chap. 14. 37. But, 2. They represent the Conquest of it as altogether impracticable, and that it was to no Purpose to attempt it. The People are strong, v. 28. Men of a great Stature, v. 32. Stronger than we, v. 31. The Cities are represented as impregnable Fortresses, they are walled, and very great, v. 28. But nothing serv'd their ill Purpose more than a Description of the Giants, which they lay a great Stress upon. *We saw the Children of Anak there*, v. 28. And again, *we saw the Giants*, those Men of a prodigious Size, the Sons of Anak, which come of the Giants, v. 33. They speak as if they were ready to tremble at the mention of them, as they had done at the sight of them. O these terrible Giants, when we were near them, *we were in our own sight as Grasshoppers*, not only little and weak, but trembling and daunted, compare Job 39. 20. *Canst thou make him afraid as a Grasshopper?* Nay, and so we were in their sight; they look'd upon us with as much Scorn and Disdain, as we did upon them with Fear and Trembling. So that upon the whole Matter, they give it in as their Judgment, *We be not able to go up against them*, v. 31. and therefore must think of taking some other Course.

Now if they had been to judge only by humane Probabilities, they could not have been excus'd from the Imputation of Cowardice. Were not the Hosts of Israel very numerous? Six hundred thousand effective Men, well marshall'd and modell'd, closely embody'd, and entirely united in Interest and Affection, was as formidable an Army, as perhaps was ever brought into the Field; many a less has done more than perhaps the conquering of Canaan was; witness Alexander's Army. Moses, their Commander in Chief, was wise and brave, and if the People had but put on Resolution, and behaved themselves valiantly, what could have stood before them? 'Tis true the Canaanites were strong, but they were dispers'd, v. 29. *Some dwell in the South, and others in the Mountains*; so that by reason of their Distance they could not soon get together, and by reason of their divided Interests they could not long keep together, to oppose Israel. The Country being plentiful, would sustain an Army; and though the Cities were walled, if they could beat them in the Field, the strong Holds would fall of course into their Hands. And lastly, as for the Giants, their overgrown Stature would but make them the better Mark, and the bulkier Men have not always the best Mettle.

But though they deserve to be punish'd for Cowards, that was not the worst, the Scripture brands them for Unbelievers. It was not any human Probabilities they were requir'd to depend upon, but 1. They had the manifest and sensible Tokens of God's Presence with them, and the Engagements of his Power for them. The Canaanites were stronger than Israel; suppose they were, but were they stronger than the God of Israel? We are not able to deal with them, but is not God Almighty able? Have we not him in the midst of us? Doth not he go before us? And is any thing too hard for him? Were we as Grasshoppers before the Giants, and are not they less than Grasshoppers before God? Their Cities are wall'd against us, but can they be wall'd against Heaven? Besides this, 2. They had had very great Experience of the length and strength of God's Arm lifted up, and made bare on their Behalf. Were not the Egyptians as much stronger than they as the Canaanites were, and yet without a Sword drawn by Israel, or a stroke struck, the Chariots and Horsemen of Egypt were quite routed and ruin'd. The Amalekites took them at great Disadvantages, and yet they were discomfited. Miracles were at this Time their daily Breads; were there nothing else, an Army so well victuall'd as theirs was, so constantly, so plentifully, and all on Free-cost, would have a mighty Advantage against any other Forces. Nay, 3. They had had particular

Promises made them of Victory and Success in their Wars against the Canaanites. God had given Abraham all possible Assurances that he would put his Seed into Possession of that Land, Gen. 15. 18.—17. 8. He had expressly promised them by Moses, that he would drive out the Canaanites from before them, Exod. 33. 2. And that he would do it by little and little, Exod. 23. 30. And after all this, for them to say, *We be not able to go up against them*, was in effect to say, God himself is not able to make his Words good. 'Twas in effect to give him the Lye, and to tell him he had undertaken more than he could perform. We have a short Account of their Sin, with which they infected the whole Congregation, Psalm 106. 24. *They despised the Land, they believed not his Word*. Though upon Search they had found it as good as he had said, a Land flowing with Milk and Honey; yet they would not believe it as sure as he had said, but despair'd of having it, though eternal Truth it self had engag'd it to them. And now this is the Representation of the evil Spies. 1. Caleb encouraged them to go forward, though he was seconded by Joshua only, v. 30. Caleb filled the People, whom he saw already put into a Ferment, even before Moses himself, whose shining Face could not daunt them, when they began to grow unruly. Caleb signifies, *All Hears*, and he answer'd his Name; was hearty himself, and would have made the People so, if they would have hearken'd to him. If Joshua had begun to stem the Tide, he would have been suspected of Partiality to Moses, whose Minister he was, and therefore he prudently left it to Caleb's Management at first, who was of the Tribe of Judah, the leading Tribe, and therefore fittest to be heard. Caleb had seen and observ'd the Strength of the Inhabitants as much as his Fellows, and upon the whole Matter, 1. He speaks very confidently of Success, *We are well able to overcome them*, as strong as they are. 2. He animates the People to go on, and his Lot lying in the Van, he speaks as one resolv'd to lead them on with Bravery, *let us go up at once*, one bold Step; one bold Stroke will do our Business, it's all our own, if we have but Courage to make it so. *Let us go up and possess it*. He doth not say, let us go up and conquer it, he looks upon that to be as good as done already, but let us go up and possess it; there's nothing to be done but to enter and take the Possession which God our great Lord is ready to give us. Note. The Righteous is bold as a Lion. Difficulties that lye in the way of Salvation dwindle and vanish before a lively active Faith in the Power and Promise of God. *All things are possible*, if they be but promis'd, to him that believes.

CHAP. XIV.

This Chapter gives us an Account of that fatal Quarrel between God and Israel, upon which, for their murmuring and Unbelief, he swore in his Wrath that they should not enter into his Rest. Here's 1. The Mutiny and Rebellion of Israel against God, upon the Report of the evil Spies, v. 1.—4. 2. The fruitless Endeavour of Moses and Aaron, Caleb and Joshua, to still the Tumult, v. 5.—10. 3. Their utter Ruin justly threaten'd by an offended God, v. 11.—12. 4. The humble Intercession of Moses for them, v. 13.—19. 5. A Mitigation of the Sentence, in answer to the Prayer of Moses, they shall not all be cut off, but the Decree goes forth ratified with an Oath, published to the People, again and again repeated, that this whole Generation should perish in the Wilderness, and none of them enter Canaan, but Caleb and Joshua only, v. 20.—35. 6. The present Death of the evil Spies, v. 36.—39. 7. The Rebuke given to them who attempted to go forward, notwithstanding, v. 40.—45. And this is written for our Admonition, that we fall not after the same Example of Unbelief.

AND all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried: and the people wept that night. 2 And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses, and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt, or would God that we had died in this wilderness! 3 And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt? 4 And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.

Here we see what Mischief the evil Spies made by their unfair Representation. We may suppose these Twelve that were empannell'd to enquire concerning Canaan, had talk'd it over among themselves before they brought in their Report in publick, and Caleb and Joshua 'tis likely had done their utmost to bring the rest over to be of their Mind, and if they would but have,

have agreed that *Caleb*, according to his Post, should have spoke for them all, as their Foreman, all had been well; but the evil Spies, it should seem, wilfully design'd to raise this Mutiny, purely in opposition to *Moses* and *Aaron*, though they could not propose any Advantage to themselves by it, unless they hoped to be Captains and Commanders of the Retreat into *Egypt*, they were now meditating. But what came of it? Here in these Verses we find those whom they studied to humour put into a Vexation, and before the end of the Chapter brought to Ruin.

Observe 1. How the People fretted themselves. *They lifted up their Voices and cried*, v. 1. Giving Credit to the Report of the Spies, rather than to the Word of God, and imagining their Condition desperate, they laid the Reins on the Necks of their Passions, and could keep no manner of Temper; like foolish froward Children they fall a crying, yet know not what they cryed for. It had been time enough to cry out if the Enemies had beaten up their Quarters, and they had seen the Sons of *Anak* at the Gate of their Camp, but they that cried when nothing hurt them deserved to have something given them to cry for. And as if all had been already gone, they sat them down and *weped out that Night*. Note, Unbelief and Distrust of God is a Sin that is its own Punishment. Those that do not trust God are continually vexing themselves.

The World's Mourners are more than God's, and the Sorrow of the World worketh Death. 2. How they flew in the Face of their Governors; murmured against *Moses* and *Aaron*, and in them reproached the Lord, v. 2. 3. The Congregation of Elders began the Discontent, v. 1. But the Contagion soon spread through the whole Camp, for the Children of *Israel* murmured. Jealousies and Discontents spread like Wild-fire among the unthinking Multitude, who are easily taught to despise Dominions, and to speak evil of Dignities. 1. They look back with a causeless Quarrel; they wish they had died in *Egypt* with the First-born that were slain there; or in the Wilderness, with those that lately dy'd of the Plague for Lustful.

See the prodigious Madness of unbridled Passions, which make Men Prodigal even of that which Nature accounts most dear, Life itself. Never were so many Months spent so pleasantly, as these which they had spent since they came out of *Egypt*, loaded with Honours, compass'd with Favours, and continually entertain'd with something or other that was surprizing, and yet as if all these Things had not made it worth their while to live, they wish they had died in *Egypt*. And such a light Opinion had they of God's tremendous Judgments executed on their Neighbours for their Sin, that they wish they had shar'd with them in their Plagues, rather than run the Hazard of making a Descent upon *Canaan*. They wish rather to die Criminals under God's Justice, than live Conquerors in his Favour. Some read it, *O that we had died in Egypt, or in this Wilderness, O that we might die*. They wish to die for fear of dying; and have not Sense enough to reason as the poor Lepers, when rather than die upon the Spot, they ventur'd into an Enemies Camp, *If they kill us, we shall but die*, 2 Kings 7. 4. How base were the Spirits of these degenerate *Israelites*! Who rather than die (if it come to the worst) like Soldiers in the Bed of Honour, with their Swords in their Hands, desire to die like rotten Sheep in the Wilderness. 2. They look forward with a groundless Despair; taking it for granted, v. 3. that if they went on, they must fall by the Sword, and pretend to lay the Cause of their Fear upon the great Care they had for their Wives and Children, who they conclude will be a Prey to the *Canaanites*. And here is a most wicked blasphemous Reflection upon God himself, as if he had brought them hither on Purpose, that they might fall by the Sword, and that their Wives and Children, those poor Innocents, should be a Prey. Thus do they in effect, charge that God, who is Love it self, with the worst of Malice, and eternal Truth with the basest Hypocrisy; suggesting, that all the kind Things he had said to them, and done for them hitherto, were intended only to decoy them into a Snare, and to cover a secret Design carried on all along to ruin them. Daring Impudence! But what will not that Tongue speak against Heaven, that is set on Fire of Hell! The Devil keeps up his Interest in the Hearts of Men, by insinuating to them ill Thoughts of God, as if he desired the Death of Sinners, and delighted in the Hardships and Sufferings of his own Servants, whereas he knows his Thoughts to us ward, (whether we know them so or no) to be Thoughts of Good and not of Evil, Jer. 29. 11. 3. How they came at last to this desperate Resolve, That instead of going forward to *Canaan*, they would go back again to *Egypt*. The Motion is first made by way of Query only, v. 3. *Were it not better for us to return into Egypt?* But the Ferment being high, and the Spirits of the People being dispos'd to entertain any Thing that was perverse, it soon ripen'd to a Resolution without a Debate, v. 4. *Let us make a Captain and return to Egypt*, and it is lamented long after, *Neh. 9. 17. That in their Rebellion they did appoint a Captain to return to their Bondage*; for they knew *Moses* would not be their Captain in this Retreat.

Now 1. It was the greatest Folly in the World to wish themselves in *Egypt*, or to think if they were there it would be better with them than it was. If they durst not go forward to *Canaan*, yet better be as they were than go back to *Egypt*. What did they want? What had they to complain of? They had Plenty, and Peace, and Rest; were under a good Government; had good Company, had the Tokens of God's Presence with them, and enough to make them easy even in the Wilderness, if they had but Hearts to be content. But whither were they thus fond to go to mend themselves? To *Egypt*? Had they so soon forgot the sore Bondage they were in there? Would they be again under the Tyranny of their Task-masters, and at the Drudgery of making Bricks? And after all the Plagues which *Egypt* had suffer'd for their Sakes, could they expect any better Treatment there than they had formerly, and not rather much worse? In how little Time (not a Year and a half) have they forgot all the Sighs of their Bondage, and all the Songs of their Deliverance? Like brute Beasts, they mind only that which is present, and their Memories, with the other Powers of Reason, are sacrific'd to their Passions. See *Psalms* 106. 7. We find it threatned, *Deut. 28. 68.* as the completing of their Misery, that they should be brought into *Egypt* again, and yet that's it they here wish for. Sinners are Enemies to themselves, and those that walk not in God's Councils, consult their own Mischief and Ruin. 2. It was a most senseless ridiculous Thing to talk of returning thither through the Wilderness. Could they expect that God's Cloud would lead them, or his Manna attend them? And if they did not, the Thousands of *Israel* must unavoidably be lost, and perish in the Wilderness. Suppose the Difficulties of conquering *Canaan* were as great as they imagin'd, those of returning to *Egypt* were much greater. In this let us see, 1. The Folly of Discontent and Impatience, under the Crosses of our outward Condition. We are uneasy at that which is, complain of our Place and Lot, and we would shift; But is there any Place or Condition in this World, that has not something in it to make us uneasy, if we are dispos'd to be so? The way to better our Condition, is to get our Spirits into a better Frame; and instead of asking *were it not better to go to Egypt*; ask, *were it not better to be content, and make the best of that which is*. 2. The Folly of Apostacy from the Ways of God. Heaven is the *Canaan* set before us, a Land flowing with Milk and Honey: Those that bring up never so ill a Report of it, cannot but say that it is indeed a good Land, only it's hard to get to it, strict and serious Godliness is look'd upon as an impracticable Thing, and this deters many who begun well from going on, rather than undergo the imaginary Hardships of a Religious Life, they run themselves upon the certain fatal Consequences of a sinful Course; and so they transcribe the Folly of *Israel*, who when they were within a Step of *Canaan*, would make a Captain, and return to *Egypt*.

5 Then *Moses* and *Aaron* fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of *Israel*. 6 ¶ And *Joshua* the son of *Nun*, and *Caleb* the son of *Jephunneh*, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes. 7 And they spake unto all the company of the children of *Israel*, saying, The land which we pass'd through to search it, is an exceeding good land. 8 If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us, a land which floweth with milk and honey. 9 Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land: for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not. 10 But all the congregation bad, stone them with stones: and the glory of the LORD appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation, before all the children of *Israel*.

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The Friends of *Israel* here interpose, to save them, if possible, from ruining themselves, but in vain. The Physicians of their State would have heal'd them, but they would not be heal'd; their Watchmen gave them warning, but they would not take the Warning, and so their Blood is upon their own Heads.

1. The best Endeavours were us'd to still the Tumult, and if now at last they would have understood the Things that belong'd to their Peace, all the following Mischief had been prevented. (1.) *Moses* and *Aaron* did their Part, v. 5. Tho' 'twas against them that they murmur'd, v. 2. yet they bravely overlook'd the Affront and Injury done them, and approve themselves faithful Friends to those who were outrageous Enemies to

to them. The Clamour and Noise of the People was so great, that Moses and Aaron could not be heard; should they order any of their Servants to proclaim Silence, the angry Multitude would perhaps be the more Clamorous, and therefore to gain Audience in the sight of all the Assembly, they fell on their Faces, thus expressing, (1.) Their humble Prayers to God to still the noise of this Sea; the noise of its Waves, even the Tumult of the People. (2.) The great Trouble and Concern of their own Spirits; they fell down as Men astonished, and even Thunderstruck, amaz'd to see a People throw away their own Mercies: to see those so ill-humour'd, who were so well taught. And (3.) Their great Earnestness with the People to cease their Murmurings; they hoped to work upon them by this humble Posture; and to prevail with them not to persist in their Rebellion; Moses and Aaron beseech them, as tho' by them God himself did beseech them, to be reconciled unto God. What they said to them, Moses relates in the Repetition of this Story, Deut. 1. 29, 30. *Be not afraid, the Lord your God shall fight for you.* Note, Those that are zealous Friends to precious Souls, will stoop to any thing for their Salvation. Moses and Aaron notwithstanding the Posts of Honour they are in, prostrate themselves to the People to beg of them not to ruin themselves. (2.) Caleb and Joshua did their Part, rent their Clothes in a holy Indignation at the Sin of the People; and a holy Dread of the Wrath of God, which they saw ready to break out against them; It was the greater Trouble to those good Men, because the Tumult was occasion'd by those Spies with whom they had been joyn'd in Commission; and therefore they thought themselves oblig'd to do what they could to still the Storm, which their Fellows had rais'd. No reasoning could be more pertinent and parhetical than theirs here, v. 7, 8, 9. and they spake as with Authority. 1. They assur'd them of the Goodness of the Land they had survey'd, and that it was really worth venturing for, and not a Land that eat up the Inhabitants, as the evil Spies had represented it. It is an exceeding good Land, v. 7. 'tis very, very good; so the Word is: So that they had no Reason to despise this pleasant Land. Note, If Men were but thoroughly convinc'd of the Desirableness of the Gains of Religion, they would not stick at the Services of it. 2. They made nothing of the Difficulties that seem'd to lye in the way of their gaining the Possession of it. Fear not the People of the Land, v. 9. Whatever formidable Ideas have been given you of them, the Lyon is not so fierce as he is painted; they are Bread for us, i. e. they are fit before us rather to be fed upon, than to be fought with; so easily, so pleasantly, and with so much Advantage to ourselves shall we Master them. Pharaoh is said to have been given them for Meat, Psalm 74. 14. and the Canaanites will be so too. They shew that whatever was suggested to the contrary, the Advantage was clear on Israel's side. For (1.) Tho' the Canaanites dwell in walled Cities, they are naked, their Defence was departed from them; that Common Providence which preserves the Rights of Nations has abandon'd them, and will be no Shelter or Protection to them. The other Spies took Notice of their Strength, but these of their Wickedness, and from thence infer'd that God had forsaken them, and therefore their Defence was departed. No People can be safe, when they have provoked God to leave them. (2.) Tho' Israel dwell in Tents, they are fortified, the Lord is with us, and his Name is a strong Tower; fear them not. Note, While we have the Presence of God with us, we need not fear the most powerful Force against us. 3. They shew'd them plainly, that all the Danger they were in was from their own Discontents, and that they would deal well enough with all their Enemies, if they did not make God their Enemy. On this Point alone the Cause would turn, v. 8. If the Lord delight in us, as certainly he doth and will, if we do not provoke him, he will bring us into this good Land, we shall without fail get it in Possession by his Favour, and the Light of his Countenance, (Psalm 44. 3.) if we do not forfeit his Favour, and by our own Follies turn away our own Mercies. 'Tis come to this Issue, v. 9. Only rebel not ye against the Lord. Note, Nothing can ruin Sinners, but their own Rebellion. If God leave them, 'tis because, they drive him from them; and they die because they will dye. None are excluded the Heavenly Canaan, but those that exclude themselves. And now, could the Case have been made more plain, could it have been urg'd more close? But what was the Effect; 2. 'Twas all to no Purpose; they were deaf to this fair Reasoning; nay, they were exasperated by it, and grew more Outragious, v. 10. All the Congregation had stone them with stones. The Rulers of the Congregation, and the great Men, (so Bishop Patrick) order'd the common People to fall upon them, and knock their Brains out: Their Case was sad indeed, when their Leaders thus caus'd them to err. Note, It is common for those whose Hearts are fully set in them to do evil, to rage at those who give them good Counsel. They who hate to be reform'd, hate those that would reform them, and count them their Enemies because they tell them the Truth. Thus early did Israel begin to misuse the Prophets, and stone those that were sent to them, and this was it that fill'd the Measure of their Sin, Mat. 23. 37. Stone them with Stones! Why,

what Evil have they done? No Crime can be laid to the Charge, but the Truth is, those two Witnesses tormented them, they were obstinate in their Infidelity, Rev. 11. 10.

Caleb and Joshua had but just said, *The Lord is with us, fear them not*, v. 9. and if Israel will not apply, those encouraging Words to their own Fears, they that said them, know how to encourage themselves with them against this enraged Multitude that spake of stoning them; as David in a like Case, 1 Sam. 30. 6. Those that cannot prevail to edify others with their Counsels and Comforts, should endeavour at least to edify themselves. Caleb and Joshua knew they appear'd for God and his Glory, and therefore doubted not but God would appear for them and their Safety. And they were not disappointed, for immediately the Glory of the Lord appear'd to the Terror and Confusion of those that were for stoning the Servants of God: When they reflected upon God, v. 3. his Glory appear'd not to silence their Blasphemies, but when they threaten'd Caleb and Joshua, they touch'd the Apple of his Eye, and his Glory appear'd immediately. Note, Those who faithfully expose themselves for God, are sure to be taken under his special Protection, and shall be hid from the Rage, of Men, either under Heaven, or in Hell.

11 ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have shewed among them. 12 I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation, and mightier than they. 13 ¶ And Moses said unto the LORD, Then the Egyptians shall hear it, (for thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them:) 14 And they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land: for they have heard that thou, LORD, art among this people, that thou, LORD, art seen face to face, and that thy cloud standeth over them, and that thou goest before them, by day-time in a pillar of a cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night. 15 ¶ Now if thou shalt kill all this people, as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of thee, will speak, saying, 16 Because the LORD was not able to bring this people into the land which he swear unto them; therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness. 17 And now, I beseech thee, let the power of my LORD be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying, 18 The LORD is long-suffering, and of great mercy; forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation. 19 Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people: according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people from Egypt, even until now.

Here's 1. The righteous Sentence which God gave against Israel for their Murmuring and Unbelief, which tho' afterwards mitigated, shews what was the Desert of their Sin, and the Demand of injur'd Justice; and what would have been done, if Moses had not interpos'd. When the Glory of the Lord appear'd in the Tabernacle, we may suppose Moses took it for a Call to him immediately to come and attend there, as before the Tabernacle was erected he went up to the Mount in a like Case, Exod. 32. 30. Thus while the People were studying to disgrace him, God publicly put Honour upon him, as the Man of his Counsel. Now here we are told, what God said to him there. 1. He shew'd him the great Evil of the People's Sin, v. 11: What pass'd between God and Israel went through the Hands of Moses, when they were displeas'd with God they told Moses of it, v. 2. When God was displeas'd with them he told Moses too, revealing his Secret to his Servant the Prophet, Amos 3. 7. Two things God justly complains of to Moses, (1.) Their Sin. They provoke me. Or, as the Word signifies, they reject, reproach, despise me, for they will not believe me. That was the bitter Root which bore the Gall and Wormwood. 'Twas their Unbelief, that made this a Day of Provocation in the Wilderness, Heb. 3. 8. Note, Distrust of God and his Power, and Promise is itself a very great Provocation, and at the bottom of many other Provocations. Unbelief is a great Sin, 1 John 5. 10. and a Root-Sin, Heb. 3. 12. (2.) Their Continuance in it: How long will they do so! Note, The God of Heaven keeps an Account how long Sinners persist in their Provocations, and the longer it is, the more he is displeas'd. The Aggravations of

their Sin were, 1. The Relation to God. *This People*, a peculiar People; a professing People. The nearer any are to God in Name and Profession, the more is he provoked by their Sins, especially their Unbelief. 2. The Experience they had had of God's Power and Goodness, in all the Signs which he had shewed among them, by which one would think he had effectually oblig'd them to trust him and follow him. The more God has done for us, the greater is the Provocation if we distrust him. 2. He shew'd him the Sentence which Justice pass'd upon them for it, v. 12. What remains now, but that I should make a full End of them. 'Twill be soon done, *I will smite them with the Pestilence*, nor leave a Man of them alive, but wholly blot out their Name and Race, and so disinherit them, and be no more troubled with them. *Ah, I will ease me of mine Adversaries*. They wish to die, and let them die; and neither Root nor Branch be left of them. Such rebellious Children deserve to be disinherited. And if it be ask'd, What will become of God's Covenant with Abraham then? Here's an Answer, it shall be preserv'd in the Family of Moses, *I will make of thee a greater Nation*. Thus (1.) God would try Moses, whether he still continued the same Affection for Israel, he had formerly express'd upon a like Occasion, in preferring their Interests before the Advancement of his own Family, and it prov'd Moses was still of the same publick Spirit, and could not bear the thought of raising his own Name, upon the Ruin of the Name of Israel. (2.) God would teach us, that he will not be a Loser by the Ruin of Sinners. If Adam and Eve had been cut off and disinherited, he could have made another Adam and another Eve, and have glorified his Mercy in them, as here in Moses, tho' Israel were ruin'd. 2. The humble Intercession Moses made for them. Their Sin had made a fatal Breach in the Wall of their Defence, at which Destruction had certainly enter'd, if Moses had not seasonably step in, and made it good. Here he was a Type of Christ, who interceded for his Persecutors, and pray'd for them that despitefully us'd him, leaving us an Example to his own Rule, *Mat. 5. 44*. 1. The Prayer of his Petition is in one Word, *Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this People*, v. 19. i. e. Do not bring upon them the Ruin they deserve. This was Christ's Prayer for those that crucified him, *Father, forgive them*. The Pardon of a National Sin, as such, consists in the turning away of National Punishment; and that's it for which Moses is here so earnest. 2. The Pleas are many; and strongly urg'd. 1. He insists most upon the Plea that's taken from the Glory of God, v. 13, 14, 15, 16. with this he begins, and somewhat abruptly, taking occasion from that dreadful Word, *I will disinherit them*; Lord, (saith he) *then the Egyptians shall hear it*. God's Honour lay nearer his Heart, than any Interests of his own. Observe, how he orders this Cause before God. 1. He pleads that the Eyes both of Egypt and Canaan were upon them, and great Expectations were rais'd concerning them. They could not but have heard, *that thou Lord art among this People*, v. 14. The neighbouring Countries rung of it, how much this People were the particular Care of Heaven, so as never any People under the Sun were. 2. That if they should be cut off, great Notice would be taken of it. *The Egyptians will hear it*, v. 13. for they have their Spies among us, and they will tell it to the Inhabitants of this Land, v. 14. for there was great Correspondence between Egypt and Canaan, tho' not by the way of this Wilderness. If this People that has made so great a Noise be all consum'd, and their mighty Pretensions come to nothing, but go out in a Snuff, 'twill be told with Pleasure in Gath, and published in the Streets of Ashkelon; and what Construction will they put upon it! 'Twill be impossible to make them understand it as an Act of God's Justice, and so redounding to God's Honour, *Brutish Men know not this*, *Psal. 92. 6*. But they will impute it to the failing of God's Power, and so turn it to his Reproach, v. 16. They will say, He slew them in the Wilderness, because he was not able to bring them to Canaan, His Arm being shortned, and his Stock of Miracles being spent. Now, Lord, Let not one Attribute be glorified at the Expence of another; rather let Mercy rejoice against Judgment, than that Almighty Power should be impeach'd. Note, The best Pleas in Prayer are those that are taken from God's Honour; for they agree with the first Petition of the Lord's Prayer, *Hallowed be thy Name*. Do not disgrace the Throne of thy Glory. God pleads it with himself, *Deut. 32. 27*. *I feared the wrath of the Enemy*; and we should use it as an Argument with our selves, to walk so in every thing as to give no occasion to the Enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, 1 Tim. 6. 1. 2. He pleads God's Proclamation of his Name at Horeb, v. 17, 18. *Let the Power of my Lord be great*; Power is here put for pardoning Mercy; 'tis his Power over his own Anger. If he should destroy them, God's Power would be question'd; If he should continue and Compleat their Salvation, notwithstanding the Difficulties that arose not only from the Strength of their Enemies, but from their own Provocations, this would greatly magnifie the Divine Power; what cannot he do who could make so weak a People Conquerors, and such an unworthy People Favourites. The more Danger there is of others reproaching God's Power, the more desirous we should be to see it glorified. To enforce this Petition, he

refers himself to the Word which God had spoken, *The Lord is long-suffering and of great Mercy*. God's Goodness had there been spoken of as his Glory; God had gloried in it, *Exod. 34. 6, 7*. Now here he prays, that upon this Occasion he would glorify it. Note, We must take our Encouragement in Prayer from the Word of God, upon which he hath caus'd us to hope, *Psal. 119. 49*. Lord, be and do according as thou hast spoken, for hast thou spoken and wilt thou not make it good; Three Things God had solemnly, made a Declaration of, which Moses here fastens upon, and improves for the enforcing of his Petition. 1. The Goodness of God's Nature in general; that he is long-suffering, or slow to Anger, and of great Mercy, not soon provok'd, but tender and compassionate towards Offenders. 2. His Readiness in particular to pardon Sin, *forgiving Iniquity and Transgression*, Sins of all sorts. 3. His Lothness to proceed to Extremity, even then when he doth punish. For in this Sense the following Words may be read, *That will by no means make quite desolate, in visiting the Iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children*. God had indeed said in the Second Commandment, that he would thus visit, but here he promises not to make a full End of Families, Churches and Nations at once; and so it was very applicable to this Occasion, for Moses cannot beg that God would not at all punish this Sin, 'twould be too great an Encouragement to Rebellion, if he should set no Mark of his Displeasure upon it; but that he would not kill all this People as one Man, v. 15. He doth not ask, that they may not be corrected, but that they may not be disinherited. And this Proclamation of God's Name was the more apposite to this Purpose, because it was made upon occasion of the pardoning of their Sin in making the Golden Calf. This Sin they were now fallen into was bad enough, but it was not Idolatry. 3. He pleads past Experience, v. 19. *As thou hast forgiven this People from Egypt*. This seem'd to make against him, why should they be forgiven any more, who after they had been so oft forgiven, revolted yet more and more, and seem'd harden'd and encourag'd in their Rebellion, by the Lenity and Patience of their God, and the frequent Pardons they had obtain'd; and among Men 'twould have been thought impolitically taken Notice of in a Request of this Nature, and improveable against the Petitioner: But as in other Things, so in pardoning Sin, God's Thoughts and Ways are infinitely above ours; *Isa. 55. 9*. Moses looks upon it as a good Plea; Lord, forgive us thou hast forgiven. 'Twill be no more a Reproach to thy Justice, nor no less the Praise of thy Mercy to forgive now than it has been formerly. Therefore the Sons of Jacob are not consum'd, because they have to do with a God that changeth not, *Mal. 3. 6*.

20 And the LORD said, I have pardoned, according to thy word. 21 But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD. 22 Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles which I did in Egypt, and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times and have not hearkned to my voice. 23 Surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it. 24 But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, (and hath followed me fully) him will I bring into the land, whereunto he went, and his seed shall possess it. 25 (Now the Amalekites, and the Canaanites dwelt in the valley). To morrow turn you, and get you into the wilderness, by the way of the Red-sea. 26 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, and unto Aaron, saying, 27 How long shall I bear with this evil Congregation which murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me. 28 Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the LORD, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: 29 Your carcases shall fall in this wilderness, and all that were numbred of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me. 30 Doubtless ye shall not come into the land concerning which I swear to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. 31 But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised. 32 But as for you, your carcases they shall fall in

in the wilderness. 33 And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcases be wasted in the wilderness. 34 After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days (each day for a year) shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise. 35 I the LORD have said, I will surely do it unto all this evil congregation, that are gathered together against me: in this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.

We have here God's Answer to the Prayer of *Moses*, which sings both of Mercy and Judgment. 'Tis given privately to *Moses*, v. 20, 25. And then directed to be made publick to the People, v. 26, 35. The frequent Repetitions of the same things in it speak these Resolves to be unalterable. Let us see the Particulars.

1. The Extremity of the Sentence is receded from, v. 20. *I have pardon'd*, so as not to cut them all off at once, and disinherit them. See the Power of Prayer, and the Delight God takes in putting an Honour upon it. He design'd a Pardon, but *Moses* shall have the Praise of obtaining it by Prayer; it shall be done according to thy Word; thus, as a Prince, he hath Power with God and prevails. See what Countenance and Encouragement God gives to our Intercessions for others, that we may be publickly spirited in Prayer. Here's a whole Nation rescued from Ruin by the effectual fervent Prayer of one righteous Man. See how ready God is to forgive Sin, and how easie to be intreated. *Pardon*, saith *Moses*, v. 19. *I have Pardon'd*, saith God, v. 20. *David* found him thus swift to shew Mercy, *Psal.* 32. 5. *He deals not with us after our sins.* 2. The Glorifying of God's Name is in the general resolv'd upon, v. 21. 'Tis said, 'tis sworn, *All the Earth shall be fill'd with the Glory of the Lord.* *Moses* in his Prayer had shew'd a great Concern for the Glory of God; Let me alone, saith God, to secure that effectually, and to advance it, by this Dispensation. All the World shall see how God hates Sin even in his own People, and will reckon for it, and yet how gracious and merciful he is, and how slow to anger. Thus when our Saviour pray'd; *Father glorify thy Name*, he was immediately answer'd, *I have glorified it, and will glorify it yet again*, *John* 12. 28. Note, Those that sincerely seek God's Glory may be sure of what they seek. God having turn'd this Prayer for the glorifying of himself into a Promise, we may turn it into Praise, in comfort with the Angels, *Ila.* 6. 4. *The Earth is full of his Glory.* 3. The Sin of this People which provoked God to proceed against them is here aggravated, v. 22, and 27. 'tis not made worse than really it was, but is shew'd to be exceeding sinful. 'Twas an Evil Congregation, each bad, but altogether in Congregation, very bad. 1. They tempted God, tempted his Power, whether he could help them in their Straits, his Goodness whether he would, and his Faithfulness whether his Promise would be perform'd. They tempted his Justice whether he would resent their Provocations and punish them or no. They dar'd him; and in effect challeng'd him, as God doth the Idols, (*Ila.* 41. 23.) *To do good or do evil.* 2. They murmur'd against him. This is much insisted on, v. 27. As they question'd what he would do, so they quarrel'd with him for every Thing he did or had done; continually fretting and finding fault. It doth not appear that they murmur'd at any of the Laws or Ordinances that God gave them; that prov'd a heavy Yoke, but they murmur'd at the Conduct they were under, and the Provision made for them. Note, it's much easier to bring ourselves to the External Services of Religion, and observe all the Formalities of Devotion, than to live a Life of Dependence upon and Submission to the Divine Providence in the Course of our Conversation. 3. They did this after they had seen God's Miracles in Egypt, and in the Wilderness, (v. 1.) They would not believe their own Eyes which were Witnesses for God, that he was in the midst of them of a Truth. 4. They had repeated the Provocations ten times, i. e. Very often; The Jewish Writers reckon this exactly the Tenth time that the Body of the Congregation had provoked God. First, at the Red-sea, *Exod.* 14. 11. In *Marah*, *Exod.* 15. 23. In the Wilderness of Sin, *Exod.* 16. 2. Twice about *Manna*, *Exod.* 16. 20, 27. At *Rephidim*, *Exod.* 17. 1. The golden Calf. Then at *Taberah*, Then at *Kibroth Hatta-vah*, *Num.* 11. And so this was the Tenth. Note, God keeps an Account how oft we repeat our Provocations, and will sooner or later set them in Order before us. 5. They had not hearken'd to his Voice, tho' he had again and again admonish'd them of their Sin. 4. The Sentence pass'd upon them for this Sin. 1. That they should not see the promis'd Land, v. 23. Nor come unto it, v. 30. *He swore in his Wrath that they should not enter into his Rest*, *Psal.* 95. ult. Note, Unbelief of the Promise is a Forfeiture of the Benefit of it. Those that despise the Pleasant Land shall be shut out of it. The Promise of

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God should be fulfill'd to their Posterity; but not to them. 2. That they should immediately turn back into the Wilderness, v. 25. Their next Remove should be a Retreat; they must face about, and instead of going forward to Canaan, on the very Borders of which they now were, they must withdraw towards the Red-sea again. *To Morrow turn ye.* That is, very shortly you shall be brought back to that vast howling Wilderness which you are so weary of. And it's time to shift for your own Safety, for the Amalekites lie in wait in the Valley ready to attack you, if you march forward; of them they had been distrustfully afraid, *Chap.* 13. 29. And now with them God justly frighten'd them. *The Fear of the Wicked shall come upon him.* 3. That all those who were grown up to Man's Estate should die in the Wilderness; not all at once, but by degrees. They wish'd they might die in the Wilderness, and God said Amen to their passionate Wish, and made their Sin their Ruin, snared them in the Words of their Mouth, and caused their own Tongue to fall upon them, took them at their Word, and determin'd that their Carcases should fall in the Wilderness, v. 28, 29. And again, v. 32, 35. See with what Contempt they are spoken of, now they had by their Sin made themselves Vile; the mighty Men of Valour were but Carcases, when the Spirit of the Lord was departed from them. They were all as dead Men. Their Fathers had such a Value for Canaan that they desired to have their dead Bodies carried thither to be buried, in Token of their Dependence upon God's Promise, that they should have that Land for a Possession; but these having despised that good Land, and disbelieved the Promise of it, shall not have the Honour to be buried in it, but shall have their Graves in the Wilderness. 4. That in pursuance of this Sentence they should wander to and fro in the Wilderness, like Travellers that have lost themselves for Forty Years; i. e. So long as to make it full Forty Years from their coming out of Egypt to their Entrance into Canaan, v. 33, 34. Thus long they were kept wandering, (1.) To answer the number of the Days in which the Spies were searching the Land; They were content to wait Forty Days for the Testimony of Men, because they could not take God's Word, and therefore justly are kept Forty Years waiting for the Performance of God's Promise. (2.) That hereby they might be brought to Repentance, and find Mercy with God in the other World, whatever became of them in this. Now they had time to be-think themselves, and to consider their Ways; and the Inconveniencies of the Wilderness would help to humble them and prove them, and shew them what was in their heart, *Deut.* 8. 2. Thus long they bore their Iniquities; feeling the Weight of God's Wrath in the Punishment. They were made to groan under the Burthen of their own Sin that brought it upon them, which was too heavy for them to bear. (3.) That they might sensibly feel what a dangerous thing it is for God's Covenant People to break with him. *Ye shall know my Breach of Promise*, both the Causes of it, that it's procur'd by your Sin, for God never leaves any till they first leave him, and the Consequences of it, that 'twill produce your Ruin; you are quite undone when you are thrown out of the Covenant. (4.) That a new Generation might in this time be rais'd up, which could not be done all of a sudden. And the Children being brought up under God's Displeasure against their Fathers, and so bearing their Whoredoms, i. e. The Punishment of their Sins, especially their Idolatry about the Golden Calf, which God now remember'd against them, might take Warning not to tread in the Steps of their Father's Disobedience. And their wandering so long in the Wilderness would make Canaan at last the more welcome to them. It should seem that upon Occasion of this Sentence, *Moses* pen'd the *ninetieth Psalm*, which is very apposite to the present State of Israel, and where they are taught to pray, that since this Sentence could not be revers'd it might be sanctified, and they might learn to apply their hearts unto Wisdom. 5. The Mercy that was mix'd with this severe Sentence. 1. Mercy to *Caleb* and *Joshua*; that tho' they should wander with the rest in the Wilderness, yet they, and they only of all that were now above Twenty Years old should survive the Years of Banishment, and live to enter Canaan. *Caleb* only is spoken of, v. 24. And a particular Mark of Honour put upon him, Both (1.) In the Character given of him, he had another Spirit, different from the rest of the Spies, an after Spirit, which furnished him with second Thoughts; and he follow'd the Lord fully, kept close to his Duty, and went thro' with it tho' deserted and threaten'd; And (2.) In the Recompence promis'd to him, *Him will I bring in due Time into the Land whereunto he went.* Note, 1. It ought to be the great Care and Endeavour of every one of us to follow the Lord fully. We must in a Course of Obedience to God's Will, and Service to his Honour, follow him universally without dividing, uprightly without dissembling, cheerfully without disputing, and constantly without declining; and this is following him fully. 2. Those that would follow God fully must have another Spirit, another from the Spirit of the World, and another from what their own Spirit has been. They must have the Spirit of *Caleb*. 3. They that follow God fully in times of general Apostacy, God will own them, and

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honour them by singular Preservations in times of general Calamity. The heavenly Canaan shall be the everlasting Inheritance of these that follow the Lord fully. When Caleb is again mention'd, v. 30. Joshua stands with him compass'd with the same Favours, and crown'd with the same Honours, having stood with him in the same Services. 2. Mercy to the Children even of these Rebels. They should have a Seed preserv'd, and Canaan secur'd to that Seed, v. 31. *Your little ones, now under Twenty Years old, which you, in your unbelief, said should be a prey, them will I bring in.* They had invidiously charg'd God with a Design to ruin their Children, v. 3. But God will let them know that he can put a Difference between the Guilty and the Innocent, and cut them off without touching their Children. Thus the Promise made to Abraham, though it seem'd to fail for a Time, was kept from failing for evermore; and though God chasten'd their Transgression with a Rod, yet his loving kindness he would not utterly take away.

36 And the men which Moses sent to search the land, who return'd, and made all the congregation to murmur against him by bringing up a slander upon the land. 37 Even those men that did bring up the evil report upon the land, died by the plague before the LORD. 38 But Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of the men that went to search the land, lived still. 39 And Moses told these sayings unto all the children of Israel, and the people mourned greatly. 40 And they rose up early in the morning, and gat them up into the top of the mountain, saying, Lo, we be here, and will go up unto the place which the LORD hath promised: for we have sinned. 41 And Moses said, Wherefore now do you transgress the commandment of the LORD? but it shall not prosper. 42 Go not up, for the LORD is not among you, that ye be not smitten before your Enemies. 43 For the Amalekites, and the Canaanites are there before you, and ye shall fall by the sword, because ye are turned away from the LORD, therefore the LORD will not be with you. 44 But they presumed to go up unto the hill-top: nevertheless, the ark of the covenant of the LORD and Moses departed not out of the camp. 45 Then the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites which dwelt in that hill, and smote them, and discomfited them, even unto Hormah.

Here's 1. The sudden Death of the Ten evil Spies. While the Sentence was in passing upon the People, before it was publish'd, they dyed of the Plague before the Lord, v. 36, 37. Now 1. God hereby shew'd his particular Displeasure against them, who sinn'd and made Israel to sin. (1.) They sinn'd themselves, in bringing up a Slander upon the Land of Promise. Note, Those greatly provoke God who misrepresent Religion, cast Reproach upon it, and raise Prejudices in Mens Minds against it, or give Occasion to those to do so who seek Occasion. Those that represent the Service of God as mean and despicable, melancholly and uncomfortable, hard and impracticable, needless and unprofitable, bring up an evil Report upon the good Land, pervert the right Ways of the Lord, and in effect give him the Lye. (2.) They made Israel to sin. They designedly made all the Congregation murmur against God. Note, Ring-leaders in Sin may expect to fall under particular Marks of God's Wrath, who will severely reckon for the Blood of Souls, which is thus spilt. 2. God hereby shew'd, what he could have done with the whole Congregation, and gave an Earnest of the Execution of the Sentence now pass'd upon them. He that thus cut off one of a Tribe, could have cut off their whole Tribes suddenly, and would do it gradually. Note, The remarkable Deaths of notorious Sinners are Earnests of the final Perdition of ungodly Men, 2 Pet. 2. 5, 6. Thus the Wrath of God is reveal'd, that Sinners may hear and fear. 2. The special Preservation of Caleb and Joshua, v. 38. they lived still. 'Tis likely all the twelve Spies stood together, for the Eyes of all Israel were now upon them, and therefore it is taken Notice of as very Remarkable, and which could not but be affecting to the whole Congregation, that when the ten evil Spies fell down dead of the Plague, a malignant infectious Distemper, yet these two that stood among them liv'd, and were well. God hereby confirm'd their Testimony, and put those to Confusion that spake of stoning them. He likewise gave them an Assurance of their continued Preservation in the Wilderness, when Thousands should fall on their Right hand and on their Left, Psal. 91. 7. Death never misseth his Mark, nor takes any by

Overlight that were design'd for Life, though in the midst of those that were to dye. 3. The Publication of the Sentence to all the People, v. 39. He told them all what the Decree was which was gone forth concerning them; and which could not be revers'd; that they must all dye in the Wilderness, and Canaan must be reserv'd for the next Generation. 'Twas a very great Disappointment, we may well think, to Moses himself, who long'd to be in Canaan, as well as to all the People; yet he acquiesc'd, but they wept and mourned greatly. The Assurance Moses had of God's being glorified by this Sentence, gave him Satisfaction, while the Conscience of their own Guilt, and their having procur'd it to themselves gave them the greatest Vexation. They wept for nothing, v. 1. and now they have Cause given them to weep; so justly are Murmurers made Mourners. If they had mourned for the Sin, when they were faithfully reprov'd for it, v. 9. the Sentence had been prevented; but now they mourned for the Judgment only, it came too late, and did them no Service. They found no Place for Repentance, though they sought it carefully with Tears, Heb. 12. 17. Such Mourning as this there is in Hell, but the Tears will not quench the Flames, no nor cool the Tongue. 4. The foolish fruitless Attempt of some of the Israelites to enter Canaan, notwithstanding the Sentence. 1. They were now earnest to go forward towards Canaan, v. 40. They were up early, muster'd all their Force, got together in a Body, and begg'd of Moses to lead them on against the Enemy, and now there's no more Talk among them of making a Captain to return into Egypt. They confess their Fault, we have sinned; they profess Reformation, Lo, we be here, and will go up. They now desire the Land which they had despis'd, and put a Confidence in the Promise which they had distrust'd. Thus when God judgeth he will overcome, and first or last will convince Sinners of the Evil of all their ungodly Deeds and hard Speeches, and force them to recal their own Words. But though God was glorified by this Recantation of theirs, they were not benefited by it, because it came too late. The Decree was gone forth, the Consumption was determin'd, they did not seek the Lord while he might be found, and now he would not be found. Oh! if Men would but be as Earnest for Heaven while their Day of Grace lasts, as they will be when 'tis over, would be as sollicitous to provide themselves with Oyl while the Bridegroom tarrys, as they will be when the Bridegroom cometh, how well were it for them! 2. Moses utterly disallows their Motion, and forbids the Expedition they were meditating, v. 41, 42, 43. Go not up, (1.) He gives them Warning of the Sin, 'tis transgressing the Commandment of the Lord, who had expressly order'd them when they did move, to move back towards the Red Sea. Note, That which has been Duty in its Season, when it comes to be mis-sim'd, may turn into Sin. 'Tis true, the Command he refers to was in the Nature of a Punishment, but he that has not obey'd the Law, is oblig'd to submit to the Penalty, for the Lord is our Judge, as well as Law-giver. (2.) He gives them Warning of the Danger, it shall not prosper, never expect it. Note, 'Tis folly to promise ourselves Success in that which we undertake contrary to the Mind of God. The Canaanites are before you to attack you, and the Lord is not among you, to protect you, and fight for you, and therefore look to yourselves that ye be not smitten before your Enemies. Those that are out of the way of their Duty, are from under God's Protection, and go at their Peril. 'Tis dangerous going there where we cannot expect God should go along with us. Nay, he plainly foresees and foretels their Defeat, ye shall fall by the sword, of the Amalekites and Canaanites, who were to have fallen by their sword, because ye are turned away from the Lord, from following the Conduct of his Precept and Promise, therefore the Lord will not be with you. Note, God will certainly leave those that leave him; and those that are left of him, lie expos'd to all Misery. 2. They venture notwithstanding. Never was People so perverse, and so desperately resolv'd in every Thing to walk contrary to God. God bid them go, and they would not; he forbid them, and they would. Thus is the carnal mind enemy to God, v. 44. They presum'd to go up to the Hill-top. Here, (1.) They struggled against the Sentence of Divine Justice, and would press on in Defiance of it. (2.) They flighted the Tokens of God's Presence, for they would go, though they left Moses and the Ark of the Covenant behind them. They had distrust'd God's Strength, and now they presume upon their own without his. 4. The Expedition speeds accordingly, v. 45. The Enemy had posted themselves upon the top of the Hill to make good that Pass against the Invaders, and being inform'd by their Scouts of their Approach, fall'd out upon them, and defeated them, and 'tis likely many of the Israelites were kill'd. Now the Sentence began to be executed that their Carcasses should fall in the Wilderness. Note, That Affair can never end well that begins with Sin. The Way to obtain Peace with our Friends, and Success against our Enemies, is to make God our Friend, and keep ourselves in his Love. The Jews, like these their Ancestors when they had reject'd Christ's Righteousness, attempt to establish their own, and it sped as this here.

CHAP. XV.

This Chapter which is mostly concerning Sacrifice and Offering, comes in between the Story of two Rebellions, one Chap. 14, the other Chap. 16. To signify that these legal Institutions were Typical of the Gifts which Christ was to receive even for the Rebellious, Psal. 68. 18. In the foregoing Chapter, upon Israel's Provocation, God had determin'd to destroy them, and in Token of his Wrath, had sentenc'd them to perish in the Wilderness: But upon Moses's Intercession, he said, I have pardoned, and in Token of that Mercy, in this Chapter he repeats and explains some of the Laws concerning Offerings, to shew that he was reconcil'd to them, notwithstanding the severe Dispensation they were under, and would not un-church them. Here's 1. The Law concerning the Meat-Offerings, and Drink-Offerings, v. 1-12, both for Israelites and for Strangers, v. 12-16. And a Law concerning the Heave-Offerings of the first of their Dough, v. 17-21. The Law concerning Sacrifices for Sins of Ignorance, v. 22-29. 3. The Punishment of Presumptuous Sins, v. 30-31. And an Instance given in the Sabbath-breaker, v. 32-36. 4. A Law concerning Fringes, for Memorandums, upon the Borders of their Garments, v. 37-41.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land of your habitations, which I give unto you. 3 And will make an offering by fire unto the LORD, a burnt-offering, or a sacrifice, in performing a vow, or in a free-will-offering, or in your solemn feasts, to make a sweet savour unto the LORD, of the herd or of the flock: 4 Then shall he that offereth his offering unto the LORD, bring a meat-offering of a tenth-deal of flour mingled with the fourth part of an hin of oyl. 5 And the fourth part of an hin of wine for a drink-offering shalt thou prepare, with the burnt-offering or sacrifice, for one lamb. 6 Or for a ram, thou shalt prepare for a meat-offering, two tenth-deals of flour mingled with the third part of an hin of oyl. 7 And for a drink-offering, thou shalt offer the third part of an hin of wine, for a sweet savour unto the LORD. 8 And when thou preparest a bullock for a burnt-offering, or for a sacrifice in performing a vow, or peace-offerings unto the LORD: 9 Then shall he bring with a bullock a meat-offering of three tenth-deals of flour mingled with half an hin of oyl. 10 And thou shalt bring for a drink-offering half an hin of wine, for an offering made by fire of a sweet savour unto the LORD. 11 Thus shall it be done for one bullock, or for one ram, or for a lamb, or a kid. 12 According to the number that ye shall prepare, so shall ye do to every one, according to their number. 13 All that are born of the country, shall do these things after this manner, in offering an offering made by fire of a sweet savour unto the LORD. 14 And if a stranger sojourn with you, or whosoever be among you in your generations, and will offer an offering made by fire of a sweet savour unto the LORD: as ye do, so he shall do. 15 One ordinance shall be both for you of the congregation, and also for the stranger that sojourneth with you, an ordinance for ever in your generations: as ye are, so shall the stranger be before the LORD. 16 One law, and one manner shall be for you, and for the stranger that sojourneth with you. 17 **A**ND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 18 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land whither I bring you, 19 Then it shall be, that when ye eat of the bread of the land, ye shall offer up an heave-offering unto the LORD. 20 Ye shall offer up a cake of the first of your dough, for an heave-offering: as ye do the heave-offering of the threshing-floor, so shall ye

heave it. 21 Of the first of your dough ye shall give unto the LORD, an heave-offering in your generations.

Here's 1. Full Instructions given concerning the Meat-Offerings and Drink-Offerings, which were Appendages to all the Sacrifices of Animals. The beginning of this Law is very encouraging, *When ye come into the land of your habitation, which I give unto you, then you shall do so and so, v. 2.* This was a plain Intimation, not only that God was reconcil'd to them, notwithstanding the Sentence he had past upon them, but that he would secure the promised Land to their Seed, notwithstanding their aptness to rebel against him. They might think some time or other they should be guilty of a Misdemeanor, that would be fatal to them, and would exclude them for ever, as the last had done for one Generation; but this intimates an Assurance, that they should be kept from provoking God to such a degree as would amount to a forfeiture; for this Statute takes it for granted, that there were some of them that should in due time come into Canaan. The Meat-Offerings were of two sorts; some were offer'd alone by themselves, and we have the Law concerning those, *Lev. 2. 1, &c.* Others were added to the Burnt-Offerings and Peace-Offerings, and constantly attended them, and about those Direction is here given. It was requisite, since the Sacrifices of Acknowledgment, (instanc'd in v. 3.) were intended as the Food of God's Table, there should be a constant Provision of Bread, Oyl, and Wine, whatever the Flesh-meat was. The Caterers or Purveyors of Solomon's Table, provided *fine Flour*, 1 Kin. 4. 22. And it was fit God should keep a good House, and that his Table should be furnished with Bread as well as Flesh, and his Cup should run over, *In my Father's House there is Bread enough.*

Now the Intent of this Law is to direct what Proportion the Meat-Offering and Drink-Offering should bear to the several Sacrifices to which they were annex'd. If the Sacrifice was a Lamb, or a Kid, then the Meat-Offering must be a tenth-deal of Flour, that is, an Omer, which contain'd about five Pints, this must be mingled with Oyl, the fourth part of a Hin, and a Hin contain'd about five Quarts; and the Drink-Offering must be the same Quantity of Wine, about a Quart and a half Pint, v. 3, 4, 5. If it was a Ram, the Meat-Offering was doubled, two tenth-deals of Flour, about five Quarts, and a third part of a Hin of Oyl, (which was to them as Butter is to us) mingled with it; and the same Quantity of Wine for a Drink-Offering, v. 6, 7. If the Sacrifice was a Bullock, the Meat-Offering was to be trebled, three Omers, with five Pints of Oyl, and the same Quantity of Wine for a Drink-Offering, v. 8, 9, 10. And thus for each Sacrifice, whether offer'd by a particular Person, or at the common Charge. *Note, Our Religious Services should be govern'd, as by other Rules, so by the Rule of Proportion.* 2. Natives and Strangers are here set upon a Level, in this as in other Matters, v. 13, 16. *One Law shall be for you and for the Stranger* that's profelyted to the Jewish Religion. Now, 1. This was an Invitation to the Gentiles to become Profelytes, and to embrace the Faith and Worship of the true God. In Civil Things there was a Difference between Strangers and true born Israelites, but not in the Things of God; *as ye are, so shall the Stranger be before the Lord*, for with him there is no Respect of Persons. See *Isa. 56. 3.* 2. This was an Obligation upon the Jews to be kind to Strangers, and not to oppress them, because they saw them accepted of God. Communion in Religion is a great Engagement to mutual Affection, and should slay all Enmities: 3. It was a Mortification to the Pride of the Jews, who were apt to be puff'd up with their Birth-right Privileges, we are Abraham's Seed; God let's them know that the Sons of the Stranger were as welcome to him as the Sons of Jacob; no Man's Birth or Parentage shall turn either to his Advantage or his Prejudice, in his Acceptance with God. This likewise intimated, that as believing Strangers should be accounted *Israelites*, so unbelieving *Israelites* should be accounted Strangers. 4. It was a happy Pre-fige of the calling of the Gentiles, and the Admission of them into the Church. If the Law made so little Difference between Jew and Gentile, much less would the Gospel make, which broke down the Partition Wall, and reconciled both to God in one Sacrifice, with the Observance of the legal Ceremonies. 3. A Law for the offering the first of their Dough unto the Lord: This, as the former, goes upon the comfortable Supposition of their being come into the promised Land, v. 18. Now they liv'd upon *Manna*, they needed not such express Acknowledgment of God's Title to their daily Bread, and their Dependance on him for it, the Thing spoke itself, but in Canaan, where they should eat the Fruit of their own Industry, God requir'd, that he should be own'd as their Landlord and their great Benefactor. They must not only offer him the First-fruits and Tithes of the Corn in their Fields, those had been already reserv'd; but when they had it in their Houses, in the kneading Troughs, when it was almost ready to be set upon their Tables, God must have a further Tribute of Acknowledgment, part of their Dough, (the Jews say a Fortieth part at least of the whole Lump) must be heaved or offer'd up to God, v. 20, 21. And the Priest must have it for the use of his Family. Thus they must own their Dependance

pendance upon God for their daily Bread, even when they had it in the House with them; they must then wait on God for the comfortable use of it, for we read of that which was brought home, and yet God did blow upon it, and it came to little, Hag. 1. 9. Christ hath taught us to pray, not give us this Year our yearly Harvest, but give us this Day, our daily Bread. God by this Law said to the People, as the Prophet long after said to the Widow of *Sarepta*, 1 Kin. 17. 13. *Only make me thereof a little Cake first.* This Offering was expressly kept up by the Laws of *Ezekiel's* Visionary Temple, and it is a Commandment with promise of Family Mercies, Ezek. 44. 30. *Ye shall give unto the Priest the first of your Dough, that he may cause the Blessing to rest in thine house,* for when God has had his Dues out of our Estates, we may expect the Comfort of what falls to our Share.

22 ¶ And if ye have erred, and not observed all these commandments which the LORD hath spoken unto Moses. 23 Even all that the LORD hath commanded you by the hand of Moses, from the day that the Lord commanded Moses, and hence forward among your generations: 24 Then it shall be, if ought be committed by ignorance without the knowledge of the congregation, that all the congregation shall offer one young bullock for a burnt-offering, for a sweet savour unto the LORD, with his meat-offering, and his drink-offering, according to the manner, and one kid of the goats for a sin-offering. 25 And the priest shall make an atonement for all the congregation of the children of Israel, and it shall be forgiven them, for it is ignorance: and they shall bring their offering, a sacrifice made by fire unto the LORD, and their sin-offering before the LORD, for their ignorance. 26 And it shall be forgiven all the congregation of the children of Israel, and the stranger that sojourneth among them, seeing all the people were in ignorance. 27 ¶ And if any soul sin through ignorance, then he shall bring a she-goat of the first year for a sin-offering. 28 And the priest shall make an atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly, when he sinneth by ignorance before the LORD, to make an atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him. 29 You shall have one law for him that sinneth through ignorance, both for him that is born amongst the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them.

We have here the Law concerning Sacrifices for Sins of Ignorance; the Jews understand it of Idolatry, or false Worship, through the Error of their Teachers; the Case here supposed is, that ye have not observ'd all these Commandments, v. 22, 23. If they had fail'd in the Offerings of their Acknowledgment, and had not brought them according to the Law, then they must bring an Offering of Atonement; yea, though the Omission had been through forgetfulness, or mistake. If they fail'd in one part of the Ceremony, they must make it up by the Observance of another part, which was in the Nature of a Remedial Law.

1. The Case is put of a National Sin, committed through Ignorance and become customary through a vulgar Error, v. 24. the Congregation, i. e. the Body of the People, for so it is explain'd, v. 25. *All the Congregation of the Children of Israel.* The ceremonial Observances were so numerous and so various, that it might easily be supposed, some of them, by degrees, would be forgotten and disus'd, as particularly that immediately before, concerning the Heave-Offering of their Dough: Now if in process of Time, upon consulting the Law, there appears to have been a general neglect of that or any other Appointment, then a Sacrifice must be offer'd for the whole Congregation, and the Oversight shall be forgiven, (v. 25, 26.) and not punish'd, as it deserv'd, with some national Judgment. The offering of the Sacrifice according to the manner, or Ordinance, plainly refers to a former Statute, which this is the Reputation of; and the same Bullock which is there call'd a *Sin-offering*, (Lev. 4. 13, 21.) is here call'd a *Burnt-offering*, v. 24. because it was wholly burnt, though not upon the Altar, yet without the Camp. And here is the Addition of a *Kid of the Goats* for a *Sin-offering*. According to this Law we find that *Ezekiah* made Atonement for the Errors of his Father's Reign, by *Seven Bulls, Seven Rams, Seven Lambs, and Seven He-Goats*, which he offer'd as a *Sin-offering* for the Kingdom, and for the Sanctuary, and for Judah, 2 Chr. 29. 21. and for all Israel, v. 24.

And we find the like done after the Return out of Captivity, Ezra 8. 35. 2. 'Tis likewise supposed to be the Case of a particular Person. If any Soul sin through Ignorance, v. 27. neglecting any Part of his Duty, he must bring his Offering, as was appointed, Lev. 4. 27, &c. Thus Atonement shall be made for the Soul that sins ignorantly, when he sins by Ignorance, v. 28.

Observe 1. Sins committed ignorantly need to have Atonement made for them; for tho' Ignorance will excuse, it will not justify those that might have known their Lord's Will and did not. *David* prays to be cleans'd from his secret Faults, i. e. those Sins which he himself was not aware of, the Errors he did not understand, Psal. 19. 12. 2. Sins committed ignorantly shall be forgiven through Christ the great Sacrifice, who when he offer'd up himself once for all upon the Cross, seem'd to explain the intention of his Offering, in that Prayer, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* And *Paul* seems to allude to this Law concerning Sins of Ignorance, 1 Tim. 1. 13. *I obtained Mercy because I did it ignorantly and in unbelief.* And it look'd favourably upon the Gentiles, that this Law of atoning for Sins of ignorance, is expressly made to extend to those who were Strangers to the Commonwealth of Israel, v. 29. But supposed to be *Professors of Righteousness*. Thus the Blessing of *Abraham* comes upon the Gentiles.

30 ¶ But the soul that doth ought presumptuously (whether he be born in the land, or a stranger) the same reproacheth the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people. 31 Because he hath despised the word of the LORD, and hath broken his commandment; that soul shall utterly be cut off: his iniquity shall be upon him. 32 ¶ And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath-day, 33 And they that found him gathering of sticks, brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation. 34 And they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done to him. 35 And the LORD said unto Moses, The man shall surely be put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp. 36 And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones; and he died; as the LORD commanded Moses.

Here's 1. The general Doom past upon presumptuous Sinners: 1. Those are to be reckon'd presumptuous Sinners that sin with a high hand, as the original Phrase is, v. 30. i. e. that avowedly confront God's Authority, and set up their own Lusts in competition with it. That Sin for sinning sake, in contradiction to the Precept of the Law, and in defiance of the Penalty; that fight against God, and dare him to do his worst, see Job 15. 25. 'Tis not only to sin against Knowledge, but to sin designedly against God's Will and Glory. 2. Sins thus committed are exceeding sinful. He that thus breaks the Commandment, (1.) He reproacheth the Lord, v. 30. He saith the worst he can of him, and most unjustly. The Language of presumptuous Sin, is, that eternal Truth is not fit to be believ'd, the Lord of all not fit to be obey'd, and Almighty Power, not fit to be either fear'd or trusted. It imputes Folly to infinite Wisdom, and Iniquity to the righteous Judge of Heaven and Earth; such is the Malignity of wilful Sin. (2.) He despiseth the word of the Lord, v. 31. There are those who in many Instances come short of fulfilling the Word, and yet have a great value for it, and count the Law honourable; but presumptuous Sinners despise it, thinking themselves too great and too good, and too wise to be rul'd by it. What is the Almighty that we should serve him? Whatever the Sin itself is, 'tis Contumacy that incurs the Anathema. 'Tis Rebellion added to the Sin, that is as Witchcraft, and Stubbornness as Idolatry. 3. The Sentence past on such is dreadful. There remains, no sacrifice for those Sins, the Law provided none, that Soul shall be cut off from among his People, v. 30. utterly cut off, v. 31. and that God may be for ever justified, and the Sinner for ever confounded, his Iniquity shall be upon him, and there needs no more to sink him to the lowest Hell. Thus the Jewish Doctors understand it, that the Iniquity shall cleave to the Soul, after it is cut off, and that Man shall give account of his Sin at the great Day of Judgment. Perhaps the kind of the Offence might be such as did not expose the Offender to the Censure of the civil Magistrate, but if it were done presumptuously, God himself would take the Punishment of it into his own Hands, and into them it is a fearful thing to fall. In the N. T. we find the like Sentence of Exclusion from all Benefit, by the great Sacrifice past upon the Blaphemy against the Holy Ghost, and a total Apostasy from Christianity. See Mat. 12.

32. and *Heb. 10. 26.* which refers to this here. 2. A particular Instance of Presumption in the Sin of Sabbath-breaking. 1. The Offence was *gathering Sticks on the Sabbath Day*, v. 32. which 'tis likely were design'd to make a Fire of, whereas they were commanded to bake and seeth what they had occasion for the Day before, *Exod. 16. 23.* This seem'd but a small Offence, but it was a Violation of the Law of the Sabbath, and so was an implicate Contempt of the Creator, to whose Honour the Sabbath was dedicated, and an Incurison upon the whole Law which the Sabbath was intended as a Hedge about. And it appears by the Context to have been done *presumptuously*, and in affront both to the Law and to the Law-maker. 2. The Offender was secur'd, v. 33, 34. They that found him *gathering Sticks*, in their Zeal for the Honour of the Sabbath brought him to Moses and Aaron, and to all the Congregation; which intimates that it being the Sabbath Day, the Congregation was at that time gathered to Moses and Aaron to receive Instruction from them, and to joyn with them in religious Worship. It seems even common *Israelites*, though there was much amiss among them, yet would not contentedly see the Sabbath profan'd, which was a good Sign that they had not quite forsaken God, nor were utterly forsaken of him. 3. God was consulted, *because it was not declar'd what should be done to him.* The Law had already made the Profanation of the Sabbath a capital Crime, *Exod. 31. 14. ch. 35. 2.* But they were in doubt, either concerning the Offence, whether this that he had done should be deem'd a Profanation of the Sabbath or no; or concerning the Punishment, what Death he should die. God was the Judge, and before him they brought this Cause. 4. Sentence was pass'd; The Prisoner was adjudg'd a Sabbath-breaker according to the intent of that Law, and as such he must be put to Death; and to shew how great the Crime was, and how displeasing to God, and that others might hear and fear, and not do in like manner presumptuously, that Death is appointed him which was look'd upon as most terrible, he must be *stoned with stones*, v. 35. Note, God is jealous for the Honour of his Sabbaths, and will not hold them guiltless whatever Men do, that profane them. 5. Execution was done pursuant to the Sentence, v. 35. He was *stoned to Death by the Congregation.* As many as could were employ'd in the Execution, that they at least might be afraid of breaking the Sabbath, who had thrown a Stone at this Sabbath breaker. This intimates, that the open Profanation of the Sabbath is a Sin which ought to be punish'd and restrain'd by the Civil Magistrate, who as far as overt Acts go, is Keeper of both Tables. See *Neb. 13. 17.* One would think there could be no great harm in gathering a few Sticks, on what Day soever it was, but God intended the exemplary Punishment of him that did so, for a standing warning to us all, to make Conscience of keeping holy the Sabbath.

37 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 38 Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments, throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a riband of blue. 39 And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them: and that ye seek not after your own heart, and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring: 40 That ye may remember, and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God. 41 I am the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the LORD your God.

Provision had been just now made by the Law for the Pardon of Sins of Ignorance and Infirmity, now here's an Expedient provided for the preventing of such Sins. They are order'd to make Fringes upon the Borders of their Garments, which were to be Memorandums to them of their Duty, that they might not sin through forgetfulness.

1. The Sign appointed is a Fringe of Silk, or Thread, or Worsted, or the Garment itself ravell'd at the bottom, and a blue Ribband bound on the top of it to keep it right, v. 38. The Jews being a peculiar People they were thus distinguished from their Neighbours in their Dress, as well as in their Diet, and taught by such little Instances of Singularity, not to be conform'd to the Way of the Heathen in greater Things. Thus likewise they proclaim'd themselves Jews wherever they were, as those that were not ashamed of God and his Law. Our Saviour being made under the Law wore these Fringes; hence we read of the Hem or Border of his Garment, *Mat. 9. 20.* These Borders the Pharisees enlarg'd that they might be thought more holy and devout than other People. Yet the *Phylacteries* were different Things, those were their own Invention, the Fringes were a Divine Institution

The Jews at this Day wear them, saying, when they put them on, *Blessed be he who has sanctified us unto himself, and commanded us to wear Fringes.* 2. The Intention of it, was to mind them that they were a peculiar People. They were not appointed for the trimming and adorning of their Cloaths, but to stir up their pure Minds by way of Remembrance, 2 *Pet. 3. 1.* That they might look upon the Fringe, and remember the Commandments. Many look upon their Ornaments to feed their Pride, but they must look upon these Ornaments to awaken their Consciences, to a Sense of their Duty, that their Religion might constantly beset them, and they might carry it about with them, as they did their Cloathes wherever they wear. If they were tempted to sin, the Fringe would be a Monitor to them, not to break God's Commandments: If a Duty were forgotten to be done in its Season, the Fringe would mind them of it. This Institution, though it be not an Imposition upon us, is an Instruction to us, always to remember the Commandments of the Lord our God, that we may do them. To treasure them up in our Memories, and to apply them to particular Cases as there is Occasion to use them. 'Twas intended particularly to be a Preservation from Idolatry, that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, in your religious Worship. Yet it may extend also to the whole Conversation, for nothing is more contrary to God's Honour and our own true Interest than to walk in the way of our heart, and in the sight of our eyes; for the Imagination of the Heart is evil, and so is the Lust of the Eyes.

After the Repetition of some Ceremonial Appointments, the Chapter closeth with the Repetition of that great and Fundamental Law of Religion. Be holy unto your God, purged from Sin, and sincerely devoted to his Service; and that great Reason for all the Commandments is again and again inculcated, I am the Lord your God. Did we more firmly believe, and more frequently and seriously consider that God is the Lord, and our God and Redeemer, we should see ourselves bound in Duty, Interest, and Gratitude to keep all his Commandments.

CHAP. XVI.

The Date of the History contain'd in this Chapter is altogether uncertain. Probably these Mutinies happen'd after their Remove back again from Kadesh-barnea, when they were fix'd (if I may so speak) for their wandering in the Wilderness, and began to look upon that as their Settlement. Presently after new Laws given, follows the Story of a new Rebellion, as if Sin took occasion from the Commandments to become more exceeding sinful. Here's 1. A daring and dangerous Rebellion rais'd against Moses and Aaron, by Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, v. 1, 15. 1. Korah and his Accomplies contend for the Priesthood against Aaron, v. 3. and Moses reasons with them, and appeals to God for a Decision of the Controversy, v. 4, 11. 2. Dathan and Abiram quarrel with Moses, and refuse to obey his Summons, which greatly grieves him, v. 12, 15. 3. A solemn Appearance of the Pretenders to the Priesthood before God, according to Order, and a publick Appearance of the Glory of the Lord, which had consum'd the whole Congregation, if Moses and Aaron had not interceded, v. 16, 22. 4. The deciding of the Controversy, and the crushing of the Rebellion, by the cutting off of the Rebels. 1. Those in their Tents were buried alive, v. 23, 34. 2. Those at the Door of the Tabernacle were consum'd by Fire, v. 35. And their Censers preserv'd for a Memorial, v. 37, 40. 4. A new Insurrection of the People, v. 41, 43. 1. God stay'd the Insurrection by a Plague, v. 45. 2. Aaron stay'd the Plague by offering Incense, v. 46, 50. The manner and method of recording this Story plainly speaks the Ferment very high.

NOW Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, on On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men. 2 And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown. 3 And they gathered themselves together against Moses, and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift you up your selves above the congregation of the LORD? 4 And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his face. 5 And he spake unto Korah, and unto all his company, saying, Even to morrow the LORD

LORD will shew who are his, and who is holy, and will cause him to come near unto him: even him whom he hath chosen, will he cause to come near unto him. 6 This do: take you censers, Korah and all his company: 7 And put fire therein, and put incense in them before the LORD to-morrow: and it shall be, that the man whom the LORD doth chuse, he shall be holy: ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi. 8 And Moses said unto Korah, Hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi. 9 Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself, to do the service of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them? 10 And he hath brought thee near to him, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee: and seek ye the priesthood also? 11 For which cause both thou and all thy company are gathered together against the LORD: and what is Aaron that ye murmur against him?

Here's 1. An account of the Rebels, who and what they were, not as formerly the mixt Multitude, and the dregs of the People, who are therefore never nam'd, but Men of Distinction and Quality, that made a Figure: Korah was the Ring-leader, he form'd and headed the Faction, therefore its call'd the Gain-saying of Korah. Jude 11. He was Cousin-German to Moses, they were Brother's Children, yet the nearness of the Relation could not restrain him from being insolent and rude to Moses. Think it not strange if a Man's Foes be they of his own house. With him join'd Dathan and Abiram, chief Men of the Tribe of Reuben, the eldest Son of Jacob. Probably Korah was disgusted both at the Preferment of Aaron to the Priesthood, and the constituting of Elizaphan to be Head of the Kobathites, Num. 3. 30. And perhaps the Reubenites were angry that the Tribe of Judah had the first Post of Honour in the Camp. On is mention'd, v. 1. as one of the Heads of the Faction, but never after in the whole Story; either because, as some think, he repented and left them, or, because he did not make himself so remarkable as Dathan and Abiram did. The Kobathites encamp'd on the same side of the Tabernacle that the Reubenites did, which perhaps gave Korah an Opportunity of drawing them in; whence the Jews say, *Wo to the wicked Man, and wo to his Neighbour*, who is in danger of being infected by him. And these being themselves topping Men, they seduc'd into the Conspiracy Two Hundred and Fifty Princes of the Assembly, v. 2. Probably they were first-born, or at least Heads of Families, who before the Elevation of Aaron had themselves ministred in Holy Things. Note, The Pride, Ambition, and Emulation of great Men, has always been the Occasion of a great deal of Mischief both in Churches and States. God by his Grace make great Men humble, and so give Peace in our Time, O Lord. *Famous Men*, and *Men of Renown*, as these here are describ'd to be, were the great Sinners of the old World, Gen. 6. 4. The Fame and Renown they had did not content them, they were high but would be higher, and thus the *Famous Men* became infamous. 2. The Rebel's Remonstrance, v. 3. That which they quarrel with is the Settlement of the Priesthood upon Aaron and his Family, which they think an Honour too great for Moses to give, and Aaron to accept, and so they are both charg'd with a Usurpation. *Ye take too much upon you*; or, *Let it suffice you to be upon a level with your Neighbours*, who are all holy, all as good as you, and therefore ought to be as great. Or, let it suffice you to have domineer'd thus long, and now think of resigning your Places to those that have as good a Title to them, and are as well able to manage them. 1. They proudly boast of the Holiness of the Congregation, and the Presence of God in it. They are holy, every one of them, and as fit to be employ'd in offering Sacrifice as Aaron is, and as Masters of Families formerly were: and the Lord is among them, to direct and own them. Small Reason they had to brag of the Peoples Purity, or of God's Favour, since the People had been so frequently and so lately polluted with Sin, and were now under the Marks of God's Displeasure, which should have made them thankful for Priests to mediate between them and God, but instead of that they envy them. 2. They unjustly charge Moses and Aaron with taking the Honour they had to themselves, whereas it was evident beyond Contradiction that they were call'd of God to it, Heb. 5. 4. So that either they would have no Priests at all, nor any Government, none to preside either in civil or sacred Things, none over the Congregation, none above it; or, they would not acquiesce in their Constitution of the Government which God had appointed.

See here, (1.) What Spirit Levellers are of, and those that despise Dominions, and resist the Powers that God has set over them; they are proud, envious, ambitious, turbulent, wicked and unreasonable men. (2.) What usage even the best and most useful Men may expect, even from those they have been serviceable to. If they be represented as Usurpers that have the best Titles, and they as Tyrants that govern best, let them know that Moses and Aaron were thus abus'd. 3. Moses's Remonstrance of this Remonstrance, when it was publish'd against him. How did he take it? 1. He fell on his Face, v. 4. as before, Chap. 14. 5. Thus he shewed how willing he would have been to yield to them, and how gladly he would have resign'd his Government, if it would have consisted with his Duty to God, and his Fidelity to the Trust reposed in him; Thus also he applied himself to God by Prayer for Direction, what to say and do upon this sad Occasion. He would not speak to them till he had thus humbled and compos'd his own Spirit, (which could not but begin to be heated) and had received Instructions from God. The Heart of the Wise in such a Case studies to answer, and asks Counsel at God's Mouth. 2. He agrees to refer the Case to God, and leave it to him to decide it, as one well assur'd of the Goodness of his Title, and yet well content to resign, if God saw fit to gratifie this discontented People with another Nomination. An honest Cause fears not a Trial, fears not a second Trial, fears not a speedy Trial: Even to-morrow, let it be brought on, v. 5, 6, 7. Let Korah and his Partisans bring their Censers, and offer incense before the Lord, and if he testifie his Acceptance of them, well and good; Moses is now as willing all the Lord's People should be Priests, if God so please, as before that they should all be Prophets, Chap. 11. 29. But if God upon an Appeal to him determine (as no doubt he would) for Aaron, they would find it highly dangerous to make the Experiment: And therefore he puts it off till to-morrow, to try whether when they had slept upon it they would desist, and let fall their Pretensions. 2. He argues the Case fairly with them, to still the Mutiny with fair reasoning, if possible, before the Appeal came to God's Tribunal, for then he knew it would end in the Confusion of the Complainants.

1. He calls them the Sons of Levi, v. 7. and again, v. 8. They were of his own Tribe, nay, they were God's Tribe, it was therefore the worse in them thus to mutiny both against God; and against him. 'Twas not long since the Sons of Levi had bravely appear'd on God's side in the matter of the Golden Calf, and got immortal Honour by it; and shall they that were then the only Innocents, now be the leading Criminals; and lose all the Honour they had won! Could there be such Chaff in God's Floor! Levites and yet Rebels! 2. He retorts their Charge upon themselves; they had unjustly charg'd Moses and Aaron, with taking too much upon them, though they had no more but what God put upon them; nay, saith Moses, you take too much upon you, ye Sons of Levi. Note, They that take upon them to controul and contradict God's Appointment take too much upon them. 'Tis enough for us to submit, 'tis too much to prescribe. 3. He shews them the Privilege they had as Levites, which was sufficient for them, they needed not to aspire to the Honour of the Priesthood, v. 9, 10. He minds them, (1.) How great the Honour was to which they were preferr'd, as Levites. 1. They were separated from the Congregation of Israel, distinguish'd from them, dignified above them; instead of complaining that Aaron's Family was advanc'd above theirs; they ought to be thankful that their Tribe was advanc'd above the rest of the Tribes, tho' they had been in all respects upon the level with them. Note, It will help to keep us from envying those that are above us, duly to consider how many there are, above whom we are placed. Instead of fretting that any are preferr'd before us in Honour, Power, Estate or Interest, in Gifts, Graces, or Usefulness, we have Reason to bless God if we, who are less than the least, are not put hindmost. Many perhaps who deserve better are not preferr'd so well. 2. They were separated to very great and valuable Honours. (1.) To draw near to God, nearer than common Israelites, though they also were a People near unto him; the nearer any are to God the greater is their Honour. (2.) To do the Service of the Tabernacle. 'Tis Honour enough to bear the Vessels of the Sanctuary, and to be employ'd in any Part of the Service of the Tabernacle. God's Service is not only perfect Freedom, but high Preferment. (3.) To stand before the Congregation to minister unto them. Note, Those are truly Great that serve the Publick, and it is the Honour of God's Ministers to be the Churches Ministers, nay, which adds to the Dignity put upon them. 3. It was the God of Israel himself that separated them. It was his Act and Deed to put them in their Place, and therefore they ought not to be discontented with that; and he it was likewise that put Aaron into his Place; and therefore they ought not to envy that. 4. He convicts them of the Sin of undervaluing these Privileges, seemeth it a small thing unto you? g. d. It ill becomes you of all Men to grudge Aaron the Priesthood, when at the same time that he was advanc'd to that Honour, you were design'd for another Honour dependant upon it, and shine with Rays borrowed from him. Note, 1. The Privilege

Privilege of drawing near to the God of *Israel*, is not a small thing in itself, and therefore must not seem small to us. To those who neglect Opportunities of drawing near to God, who are careless and formal in it, to whom it is a Task, and not a Pleasure, we may properly put this Question; *seemeth it a small thing to you, that God has made may you a People near unto him.* 2. Those who aspire and usurp the Honours forbidden them, put a great Contempt upon Honours allowed them. We have each of us as good a share of Reputation as God sees fit for us, and much better than we deserve, and we ought to rest satisfied with it, and not as these here, *Exercise ourselves in things too high for us; Seek ye the Priesthood also?* They would not own that they sought it, but *Moses* saw that in their Eye; the Law had provided very well for those that served at the Altar, and therefore they would put in for the Office. 5. He interprets their Mutiny to be a Rebellion against God, *v. 11.* while they pretended to assert the Holiness and Liberty of the *Israel* of God, they really took up Arms against the God of *Israel*, *ye are gathered together against the Lord.* Note, Those that strive against God's Ordinances and Providences, whatever they pretend, and whether they are aware of it or no, do indeed strive with their Maker. Those resist the Prince, who resist those that are commission'd by him: For alas, saith *Moses*, *what is Aaron that ye murmur against him!* If Murmurers and Complainers would consider, that the Instruments they quarrel with are but Instruments whom God employs, and that they are but what he makes them, and neither more nor less, better nor worse, they would not be so bold and free in their Censures and Reproaches as they are. They that found the Priesthood as it was settled, a Blessing, must give all the Praise to God, but if any thought it a Burthen, they must not therefore quarrel with *Aaron*, who is but what he is made, and doth as he is bidden. Thus he interested God in the Cause, and so might be sure of speeding well in his Appeal.

12 ¶ And *Moses* sent to call *Dathan* and *Abiram* the sons of *Eliab*: which said, We will not come up. 13 Is it a small thing, that thou hast brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thy self altogether a prince over us? 14 Moreover, thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey, or given us inheritance of fields and vineyards: wilt thou put out the eyes of these men? we will not come up. 15 And *Moses* was very wroth, and said unto the LORD, Respect not thou their offering: I have not taken one ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them. 16 And *Moses* said unto *Korah*, Be thou and all thy company before the LORD, thou, and they, and *Aaron* to morrow. 17 And take every man his censer, and put incense in them, and bring ye before the LORD every man his censer, two hundred and fifty censers, thou also and *Aaron*, each of you his censer. 18 And they took every man his censer, and put fire in them, and laid incense thereon, and stood in the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, with *Moses* and *Aaron*. 19 And *Korah* gathered all the congregation against them, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the congregation. 20 And the LORD spake unto *Moses*, and unto *Aaron*, saying, 21 Separate your selves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment. 22 And they fell upon their faces and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation?

Here's 1. The Insolence of *Dathan* and *Abiram* and their Treasonable Remonstrance. *Moses* had heard what *Korah* had to say, and had answer'd it: now he summons *Dathan* and *Abiram* to bring in their Complaints, *v. 12.* But they would not obey his Summons; either because they could not for shame say that to his Face, which they were resolv'd to say, and then 'tis an Instance of some Remains of Modesty in them; or rather because they would not so far own his Authority, and then 'tis an Instance of the highest Degree of Impudence. They spoke the Language of *Pharaoh* himself, who set *Moses* at defiance, but they forgot how dear he paid for it. Had not their Heads been wretchedly heated, and their

Hearts hardned, they might have consider'd that if they regarded not these Messengers, *Moses* could soon in God's Name send Messengers of Death for them. But thus the God of this World blinds the Minds of them that believe not. But by the same Messengers they send their Articles of Impeachment against *Moses*. And the Charge runs very high. 1. They charge him with having done them a great deal of wrong in bringing them out of *Egypt*, invidiously calling that a Land flowing with Milk and Honey, *v. 13.* Onions, and Garlick, and Fish, they had indeed plenty of in *Egypt*, but it never pretended to Milk and Honey; only they would thus banter the Promise of *Canaan*. Ungrateful Wretches, to represent that as an Injury to them, which was really the greatest Favour that ever was bestow'd upon any People! 2. They charge him with a Design upon their Lives, that he intended to kill them in this Wilderness, though they were so well provided for. And if they were sentenc'd to die in the Wilderness, they must thank themselves. *Moses* would have heal'd them, and they would not be heal'd. 3. They charge him with a Design upon their Liberties, that he meant to enslave them, by making himself a Prince over them. A Prince over them! Was he not a tender Father to them, nay, their humble Servant for the Lord's sake? Had they not their Properties secur'd, their Order preserv'd; Justice impartially administred, did they not live in Ease and Honour, and yet they complain as if *Moses*'s Yoke were heavier than *Pharaoh*'s. And did *Moses* make himself a Prince? Far from it, How gladly would he have declin'd the Office at first, how gladly would he have resign'd it many a Time since! And yet is thus put under the blackest Characters of a Tyrant and a Usurper. 4. They charge him with cheating them, raising their Expectations of a good Land, and then defeating them, *v. 14.* Thou hast not brought us, as thou promis'dst us, into a Land that floweth with Milk and Honey; and pray, whose Fault was that? He had brought them to the Borders of it, and was just ready under God to put them in Possession of it, but they thrust it away from them, and shut the Door against themselves; so that it was purely their own Fault that they were not now in *Canaan*, and yet *Moses* must bear the blame. Thus when the Foolishness of Man perverteth his way, his heart fretteth against the Lord, *Prov. 19. 3.* 5. They charge him in the general with unfair dealing, that put out the Eyes of these Men, and then meant to lead them blindfold as he pleas'd. The Design of all he did for them was to open their Eyes, and yet they insinuate that he intended to put out their Eyes, that they might not see themselves impos'd upon. Note, The wisest and best cannot please every Body, nor gain the good Word of all. Those often fall under the highest Censures, who have merited the highest Applause. Many a good Work *Moses* had shew'd them from the Father, and for which of these do they reproach him? 3. *Moses*'s just Resentment of their Insolence, *v. 15.* *Moses*, though the meekest Man, yet finding God reproach'd in him, was very wroth; he could not bear to see a People ruining themselves, for whose Salvation he had done so much. In this Discomposure, (1.) He appeals to God concerning his own Integrity; whereas they basely reflected upon him as ambitious, covetous and oppressive, in making himself a Prince over them; God was his Witness, (1.) That he never got any thing by them, I have not taken one Ass from them, not only not by way of Bribery and Extortion, but not by way of Recompence or Gratuity for all the good Offices he had done them, he never took the Pay of a General, or Salary of a Judge, much less the Tribute of a Prince. He got more in his Estate when he kept *Jethro*'s Flock, than since he came to be King in *Jeshurun*. (2.) That they never lost any thing by him, neither have I hurt any one of them, no not the least, no not the worst, no not those that had been most peevish and provoking to him: He never abus'd his Power to the Support of Wrong. Note, Those that have never blemish'd themselves need not fear being blemish'd: When Men condemn us we may be easie, if our own Hearts condemn us not. (2.) He begs of God to plead his Cause and clear him, by shewing his Displeasure at the Incense which *Korah* and his Company were to offer, with whom *Dathan* and *Abiram* were in Confederacy. Lord, saith he, Respect not thou their Offering. Wherein he seems to refer to the History of *Cain*, lately written by his own Hand, of whom it is said, that to him and his Offering God had not respect, *Gen. 4. 4.* These that follow'd the gain-saying of *Korah*, walk'd in the way of *Cain*, (they are put together, *Jude 11.*) and therefore he prays they might be frown'd upon as *Cain* was, and put to the same Confusion. 3. Issue join'd between *Moses* and his Accusers. 1. *Moses* challenges them to appeal with *Aaron*, next Morning, at the time of offering up the Morning Incense, and refer themselves to God's Judgment, *v. 16, 17.* Since he could not convince them by his calm and affectionate Reasoning, he is ready to enter into Bonds to stand God's Award, not doubting but that God would appear to decide the Controversy. This Reference he had agreed to before, *v. 6, 7.* and here adds only one Clause, which speaks his great Condescension to the Plaintiffs, that *Aaron*, against whose Advancement they expected, though now advanced by the Divine Institution to the

Honour of burning incense within the Tabernacle, yet upon this Trial he should put himself into the place of a Probationer, and stand upon the level with Korah, at the Door of the Tabernacle; nay, and Moses would himself stand with them, so that the Complainant shall have all the fair Dealing he can desire; and thus every Mouth shall be stopped. 2. Korah accepts the Challenge, and makes his Appearance with Moses and Aaron at the Door of the Tabernacle, to make good his Pretensions, v. 18, 19. If he had not had a very great stock of Impudence, he could not have carried on the Matter thus far. Had not he lately seen Nadab and Abihu, the consecrated Priests, struck dead, for daring to offer Incense with unhalloved Fire, and could he and his Accomplices expect to fare any better in offering Incense with unhalloved Hands? Yet to confront Moses and Aaron in the height of his Pride, he thus bids Defiance to Heaven, pretends to demand the Divine Acceptance without a Divine Warrant, thus wretchedly is the Heart hardened through the Deceitfulness of Sin. They took every Man his Censer. Perhaps these were some of the Censers which these Heads of Families had made use of at their Family Altars, before this part of Religious Service was confin'd to the Priesthood, and the Altar in the Tabernacle; and they would bring them into Use and Reputation again; or, they might be common Chafing-dishes, which were for their ordinary use. Now to attend the solemn Trial, and to be Witnesses of the Issue, one would have thought Moses should have gather'd the Congregation against the Rebels, but it seems Korah gather'd them against Moses, v. 19. which intimates that a great part of the Congregation sided with Korah, were at his beck, and wish'd him Success: And that Korah's Hopes were very high of carrying the Point against Aaron; for had he suspected the goodness of his Cause he would not have coveted to make the Trial thus publick; but little did he think that he was now calling the Congregation together to be the Witnesses of his own Confusion: Note, Proud and ambitious Men, while they are projecting their own Advancement, oft prove to have been preparing for their own more shameful Fall. 4. The Judgment set, and the Judge taking the Tribunal, and threatening to give Sentence against the whole Congregation. (1.) The Glory of the Lord appear'd, v. 19. The same Glory that appear'd to install Aaron in his Office at first, Lev. 9. 23. now appear'd to confirm him in it, and to confound those that oppose him, and set up themselves in competition with him. The Shechinah, or Divine Majesty, the Glory of the Eternal Word, which ordinarily dwelt between the Cherubims, within the Veil, now was publicly seen over the Door of the Tabernacle, to the Terror of the whole Congregation, for though they saw no manner of Similitude, yet probably the Appearances of the Light and Fire were such as plainly shew'd God to be angry with them, as when he appear'd, Num. 14. 10. Nothing is more terrible to those who are conscious of Guilt than the Appearances of Divine Glory; for such a glorious Being must needs be a formidable Enemy. (2.) God threaten'd to consume them all in a moment, and in order to that bid Moses and Aaron stand from among them, v. 21. God thus shew'd what their Sin deserv'd, and how very provoking it was to him. See what a dangerous thing it is to have Fellowship with Sinners, and in the least to partake with them. Many of the Congregation 'tis likely came only for Company, following the Crowd, or for Curiosity to see the Issue, yet now coming as they ought to have done, to bear their Testimony against the Rebels, and openly to declare for God and Moses, they had like to have been all consum'd in a Moment. If we follow the Herd into which the Devil is enter'd, it is at our Peril. 5. The humble Intercession of Moses and Aaron, for the Congregation, v. 22. (1.) Their Posture was importuning; they fell on their Faces, prostrating themselves before God, as Supplicants in good Earnest, that they might prevail for sparing Mercy. Tho the People had treacherously deserted them, and struck in with those that were in Arms against them, yet they approv'd themselves faithful to the Trust reposed in them, as Shepherds of Israel, which was to stand in the breach, when they saw the Flock in danger. Note, If others fail in their Duty to us, that doth not discharge us from our Duty to them; nor take off the Obligations we lye under to seek their Welfare. (2.) Their Prayer was a pleading Prayer, and it prov'd a prevailing one: Now, God had destroy'd them, if Moses had not turn'd away his Wrath, Psalm 106. 23. yet far be it from us to imagine, that Moses was more considerate, or more compassionate than God, in such a Case as this; but God saw fit to shew his just Displeasure against the Sin of Sinners by the Sentence, and at the same Time to shew his gracious Condescension to the Prayers of Saints, by the Revocation of the Sentence at the Intercession of Moses. Observe in the Prayer. 1. The Title they give to God. The God of the Spirits of all Flesh. See what Man is; He is a Spirit in Flesh, a Soul embodied; a Creature wonderfully compounded of Heaven and Earth. See what God is; He is the God of the Spirits of all Mankind. He Forms the Spirit, Zech. 12. 1. He Fathers it, Heb. 12. 9. He has an Ability to fashion it, Psalm 33. 15. and Authority to dispose of it, for he hath said, All Souls are

mine, Ezek. 18. 4. They insinuate hereby, that tho' as the God of the Spirits of all Flesh, he might in Sovereignty consume this Congregation in a moment, yet 'twas to be hoped, he would in Mercy spare them, not only because they were the Work of his own Hands, and he had a Propriety in them, but because being the God of Spirits he knew their frame, and could distinguish between the Leaders and the Led; between those that sinn'd maliciously, and those who were drawn in by their Wiles, and would make a Difference accordingly in his Judgments. 2. The Argument they insist on, 'tis much the same with that which Abraham urg'd in his Intercession for Sodom, Gen. 18. 23. Wilt thou destroy the righteous with the Wicked? Such is the Plea here, Shall one Man Sin, and wilt thou be wrath with all the Congregation? Not but that it was the Sin of them all to join in this Matter, but the great Transgression was his that first hatch'd the Treason, Note, Whatever God may do in Sovereignty and strict Justice, we have reason to hope, that he will not destroy a Congregation for the Sin of one, but that Righteousness and Peace having kiss'd each other in the undertaking of the Redeemer, Mercy shall rejoice against Judgment. Moses knew that all the Congregation must perish in the Wilderness by degrees, yet he is thus earnest in Prayer, that they might not be consum'd at once, and would reckon it a Favour, to obtain a Reprieve. Lord, let it alone this Year.

23 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 24 Speak unto the congregation, saying, Get you up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. 25 And Moses rose up, and went unto Dathan and Abiram: and the elders of Israel followed him. 26 And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins. 27 So they gat up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan and Abiram on every side: and Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood in the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little children. 28 And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the LORD hath sent me to do all these works: for I have not done them of mine own mind. 29 If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men, then the LORD hath not sent me: 30 But if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit: then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD. 31 ¶ And it came to pass as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder, that was under them: 32 And the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah and all their goods. 33 They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation. 34 And all Israel that were round about them, fled at the cry of them: for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up also.

We have here the determining of the Controversy with Dathan and Abiram, that rebell'd against Moses, as in the next Paragraph, the like desiding of the Controversy with Korah and his Company that would be Rivals with Aaron. It should seem that Dathan and Abiram had set up a spacious Tabernacle in the midst of the Tents of their Families where they kept Court, met in consult, and hung out their Flag of Defiance against Moses; 'tis here call'd the Tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, v. 24, 27. There, as in the Place of Rendezvous, Dathan and Abiram stay'd, when Korah and his Friends went up to the Tabernacle of the Lord, waiting the Issue of their Trial; but here we are told how they had their Business done, before that Trial was over. For God will take what Method he pleases in his Judgments. 1. Publick Warning is given to the Congregation to withdraw immediately from the Tents of the Rebels. (1.) God bids Moses speak to this purpose, v. 24. This was in answer to Moses's Prayer; he had begg'd that God would not destroy the whole Congregation: Well, saith God, I will not, provided they be so wise as to shift for their own Safety, and get out of the way of Danger. If they will quit the Rebels, well and good, they shall not perish with them, otherwise let them

them take what follows. *Note*, We cannot expect to reap benefit by the Prayers of our Friends for our Salvation, unless we ourselves be diligent and faithful in making use of the Means of Salvation. For God never promis'd to save by Miracles those that would not save themselves by Means. *Moses* that had pray'd for them must preach this to them, and warn them to flee from this Wrath to come. (2.) *Moses* accordingly repairs to the Head-Quarters of the Rebels, leaving *Aaron* at the Door of the Tabernacle, v. 25. *Dathan* and *Abiram* had contumaciously refus'd to come up to him, v. 12. Yet he humbly condescends to go down to them, to try if he could yet convince and reclaim them. Ministers must thus with Meekness instruct those that oppose themselves; and not think it below them to stoop to those that are most stubborn for their Good. Christ himself stretches out his Hand to a rebellious and gainsaying People, The Seventy Elders of Israel attend *Moses* as his Guard, to secure him from the Influences of the Rabble; and by their Presence to put an Honour upon him, and if possible, to strike an Awe upon the Rebels. 'Tis our Duty to contribute all we can to the Countenance and Support of injur'd Innocency and Honour. (3.) Proclamation is made, that all manner of Persons, as they tender'd their own Safety, should forthwith Depart from the Tents of these Wicked Men, v. 26. And thus should signify that they deserted their Cause and Interest; detested their Crimes and Counsels; and dreaded the Punishment coming upon them. *Note*, Those that would not perish with Sinners, must come out from among them, and be separate. In vain do we pray, Gather not our Souls with Sinners, if we save not our selves from the untoward generation. God's People are call'd out of *Babylon*, lest they share both in her Sins, and in her Plagues, Rev. 18. 4. 2. The Congregation takes the warning, but the Rebels themselves continue obstinate. v. 27. 1. God in Mercy inclin'd the People to forsake the Rebels. They gat up from the Tabernacle of *Korah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*. Both those whose Lot it was to pitch near them, who doubtless with themselves remov'd their Families, and all their Effects; and those also who were come from all Parts of the Camp to see the Issue. 'Twas in answer to the Prayer of *Moses*, that God thus stir'd up the Hearts of the Congregation to shift for their own Preservation. *Note*, To those whom God will save he gives Repentance, that they may recover themselves out of the Snare of the Devil. Grace to separate from Evil-doers is one of the things that accompany Salvation. 2. God in Justice left the Rebels to the Obstinacy and Hardness of their own Hearts. Tho' they saw themselves abandon'd by all their Neighbours, and set up as a Mark to the Arrows of God's Justice: Yet instead of falling down and humbling themselves before God and *Moses*, owning their Crime, and begging Pardon, instead of fleeing, and dispersing themselves to seek for Shelter in the Crowd; they impudently stood in the Door of their Tents, as if they would out-face God himself, and dare him to do his worst. Thus were their Hearts harden'd to their own Destruction, and they were fearless when their Case was most fearful. But what Pity was it that their little Children who were not capable of Guilt or Fear, should, by the Presumption of their Parents, be put in this audacious Posture! Happy they who are taught betimes to bow before God, and not as those unhappy little ones to stand it out against him! 3. Sentence is solemnly pronounc'd upon them by *Moses* in the Name of the Lord, and the Decision of the Controversie is put upon the Execution of that Sentence by the Almighty Power of God. *Moses* by divine Instinct and Direction, when the Eyes of all Israel were fastned upon him, waiting the Event, mov'd with a just and holy Indignation at the Impudence of the Rebels, boldly puts the whole Matter to a surprising Issue, v. 28, 29, 30. (1.) If the Rebels die a common Death, he will be content to be call'd and counted an Impostor, not only if they die a natural Death, but if they die by any sort of Judgment that has formerly been executed on other Malefactors, if they die by the Plague, or by Fire from Heaven, or by the Sword, then say, God has disown'd me; but (2.) If the Earth open and swallow them up (a Punishment without Precedent) then let all the House of Israel know assuredly that I am God's Servant, sent by him, and employ'd for him, and those that fight against me, fight against him. The Judgment itself would have been Proof enough of God's Displeasure against the Rebels, and would have given all Men to understand that they had provoked the Lord; but when it was thus solemnly foretold, and appeal'd to by *Moses*, before-hand, when there was not the least previous Indication of it from without, the convincing Evidence of it was much the stronger, and it was put beyond Dispute that he was not only a Servant but a Favourite of Heaven who was intimately acquainted with the Divine Counsels, and could obtain such extraordinary Appearances of the Divine Power in his Vindication. 4. Execution is immediately done. It appear'd that God and his Servant *Moses* understood one another very well, for as soon as ever *Moses* had spoken the Word, God did the Work, the Earth clave asunder, v. 31. Opened her mouth and swallowed them all up, them and theirs, v. 32. And then clos'd upon them, v. 33. This Judgment was (1.) Unparallel'd. God in it created a new Thing, did what he never did before, for he has many Arrows in his

Quiver; and there are diversities of Operations in Wrath as well as Mercy. *Dathan* and *Abiram* thought themselves safe because they were at a Distance from the Shechinah, whence the Fire of the Lord had sometimes issued, *qui procul à Jove* (they say) *procul à Fulmine*; but God made them know that he was not ty'd up to one way of Punishing, the Earth when he pleaseth shall serve his Justice as effectually as the Fire. (2.) It was very terrible to the Sinners themselves, to go down alive into their own Graves; dead and buried in an Instant; to go down thus to the Bars of the Pit, when they were in their full Strength, wholly at ease and quiet. (3.) It was severe upon their poor Children, who for the greater Terror of the Judgment, and fuller Indication of the Divine Wrath, perished as parts of their Parents; in which tho' we cannot particularly tell either how bad they might be to deserve it, or how good God might be otherwise to them to compensate it, yet this we are sure, in the general, that Infinite Justice did them no Wrong, Far be it from God, that he should do Iniquity. 4. It was altogether miraculous. The cleaving of the Earth was wonderful, and as much above the Power of Nature, as the cleaving of the Sea; and the closing of the Earth again, more so than the closing of the Waters. God has all the Creatures at his Command, and can make any of them, when he pleaseth, Instruments of his Justice; nor will any of them be our Friends, if he be our Enemy. God now confirm'd to Israel, what *Moses* had lately taught them in that Prayer of his, Psalm 90. 11. Who knows the Power of thine Anger? He hath, when he pleaseth, strange Punishments for the Workers of Iniquity, Job 31. 3. Let us therefore conclude, Who is able to stand before this Holy Lord God? 5. It was very significant. They set their Mouths against the Heavens, and their Throat was an open Sepulchre, justly therefore doth the Earth open her Mouth upon them, and swallow them up. They made a Rent in the Congregation, justly therefore is the Earth rent under them. Presumptuous Sinners that hate to be reform'd are a Burthen to the Earth, the whole Creation groans under them, which here was signified by this, that the Earth sunk under these Rebels, as weary of bearing them, and being under them. And considering, how the Earth is still in like manner loaded with the Weight of Iniquity, we have Reason to wonder, that this was the only Time it ever sunk under its Load. Lastly, It was Typical of the Eternal Ruin of Sinners, that die impenitent, who perhaps, in Allusion to this, are said to sink down into the Pit, Psalm 9. 15. and to go down quick into Hell, Psalm 55. 15. But *David* even when he sinks in deep Mire, yet prays in Faith, Let not the Pit shut her Mouth upon me, as it doth on the damned, between whom and Life there is a Gulf fixed, Psalm 69. 2. 15. His Case was bad, but not like this, desperate. 5. All Israel is alarm'd at the Judgment, v. 34. They fled at the cry of them. They cry'd for Help when it was too late; their doleful Shrieks, instead of fetching their Neighbours in to their Relief, drove them so much the further off; for knowing their own Guilt, and the one another's, they hasten'd one another, saying, Lest the Earth swallow us up also. *Note*, Others Ruins should be our Warnings. Could we by Faith hear the Outcries of those that are gone down to the Bottomless-pit, we would give more Diligence than we do to escape for our Lives, lest we also come into that Condemnation.

35 And there came out a fire from the LORD, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense. 36 And the LORD spake unto *Moses*, saying, 37 Speak unto Eleazar the son of *Aaron* the priest, that he take up the censers out of the burning, and scatter thou the fire yonder; for they are hallowed. 38 The censers of these sinners against their own Souls, let them make them broad plates for a covering of the altar; for they offered them before the LORD, therefore they are hallowed: and they shall be a sign unto the children of Israel. 39 And Eleazar the priest took the brasen censers wherewith they that were burnt had offered, and they were made broad plates for a covering of the altar: 40 To be a memorial unto the children of Israel, that no stranger, which is not of the seed of *Aaron*, come near to offer incense before the LORD; that ye be not as *Korah*, and as his company: as the LORD said to him by the hand of *Moses*.

We must now look back to the Door of the Tabernacle, where we left the Pretenders to the Priesthood with their Censers in their Hands ready to offer Incense; and here we find, 1. Vengeance taken on them, v. 35. 'Tis probable at the same Time, that the Earth open'd in the Camp to swallow up *Dathan* and *Abiram*, a Fire went out from the Lord, and consumed the

Two hundred and Fifty Men that offer'd Incense, and Aaron that stood with them was preserved alive. This Punishment was not indeed so new a thing as the former, for Nadab and Abihu thus died, but it was no less strange or dreadful, and in it it appear'd (1.) That our God is a consuming Fire. Is Thunder a sensible Indication of the Terror of his Voice? Lightning is so of the Power of his Hand. We must see in this his fiery Indignation which devours the Adversaries, and infer from it what a fearful thing it is to fall into the Hands of the living God, Heb. 10. 27-31. (2.) That it is at our Peril, if we meddle with that which doth not belong to us. God is jealous of the Honour of his own Institutions, and will not have them invaded. 'Tis most probable, Korah himself was consum'd with those Two Hundred and Fifty that Pretended to offer Incense, for the Priesthood was the thing that he aim'd at, and therefore we have Reason to think he would not quit his Post at the Door of the Tabernacle. But behold they are made Sacrifices to the Justice of God, who flatter'd themselves with the Hopes of being Priests. Had they been content with their Office as Levites, which was sacred, and honourable, and better than they deserv'd, they might have liv'd and died with Joy and Reputation: But like the Angels that sinn'd, leaving their first Estate; and aiming at the Honours that were not appointed them, they were thrust down to Hades, their Censers struck out of their Hands, and their Breath out of their Bodies by a Burning, which typified the Vengeance of Eternal Fire. 2. Care is taken to preserve and perpetuate the Remembrance of this Vengeance. No mention is made of the taking up of their Carcases, the Scripture leaves them as Dung upon the Face of the Earth; but Orders are given about their Censers. 1. That they be secur'd, because they are hallowed; Eleazar is charg'd with this, v. 37. Those Invaders of the Priesthood had proceeded so far by the Divine Patience and Permission, as to kindle their Incense with Fire from off the Altar, which they were suffer'd to use for Experiment sake; but as soon as they had kindled the Fire, God kindled another which put a fatal final Period to their Pretensions; now Eleazar is order'd to scatter the Fire, with the Incense that was kindled with it in some unclean Place; without the Camp, to signify God's Abhorrence of their Offering as a polluted thing; The Sacrifice of the Wicked is Abomination to the Lord: But he is to gather up the Censers out of the mingled Burning, God's Fire, and theirs; because they are hallowed. Having been once put to a holy Use, and that by God's own Order (tho' only for Trial) they must not return to common Service; so some understand it; Rather, they are devoted; they are an Anathema, and therefore as all devoted things they must be made some way or other serviceable to the Glory of God. 2. That they be us'd in the Service of the Sanctuary, not in Censers, that would rather have put Honour upon the Usurpers, whose Disgrace was intended; nor was there occasion for brazen Censers, the golden Altar was serv'd with golden ones; but they must be beaten into broad Plates for a covering of the Brazen Altar, v. 38, 39, 40. These Pretenders thought to have ruin'd the Altar, by laying the Priesthood in common again, but to shew that Aaron's Office was so far from being shaken by their impotent Malice, that it was rather confirm'd by it, their Censers which offer'd to rival his were us'd both for the adorning and for the preserving of the Altar at which he ministr'd. Yet this was not all; this covering of the Altar must be a Memorial to the Children of Israel, throughout their Generations of this great Event. Tho' there was so much in it astonishing, and tho' Moses was to record it in his History, yet there was danger of its being forgotten in process of Time; Impressions that seem deep are not always durable; therefore it was necessary to appoint this Record of the Judgment; that the Levites who attended this Altar, and had their inferior Services appointed them, might learn to keep within their Bounds, and be afraid of transgressing them, lest they should be made like Korah and his Company, who were Levites, and would have been Priests. These Censers were preserv'd interrorem, that others might hear and fear, and do no more presumptuously. Thus has God provided that his wonderful Works, both in Mercy and Judgment, should be had in everlasting Remembrance, that the End of them may be answer'd, and they may serve for Instruction and Admonition, to those on whom the Ends of the World are come.

41 ¶ But on the morrow, all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the LORD. 42 And it came to pass, when the congregation was gathered against Moses and against Aaron, that they looked toward the tabernacle of the congregation: and behold, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the LORD appeared. 43 And Moses and Aaron came before the tabernacle of the congregation. 44 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 45 Get you up from

among this congregation, that I may consume them, as in a moment: and they fell upon their faces. 46 ¶ And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar: and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them: for there is wrath gone out from the LORD, the plague is begun. 47 And Aaron took as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation: and behold, the plague was begun among the people: and he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people. 48 And he stood between the dead and the living: and the plague was stayed. 49 Now they that died in the plague was fourteen thousand and seven hundred, beside them that died about the matter of Korah. 50 And Aaron returned unto Moses unto the door of the congregation: and the plague was stayed.

Here's 1. A new Rebellion rais'd, the very next Day, against Moses and Aaron. Be astonish'd, O Heavens, at this, and wonder, O Earth! Was there ever such an Instance of the incurable Corruption of Sinners, v. 41. On the Morrow the Body of the People mutinied; (1.) Tho' they were but newly terrified by the sight of the punishment of the Rebels; the Shrieks of those sinking Sinners, those Sinners against their own Souls were yet sounding in their Ears, the smell of the Fire yet remain'd and the gaping Earth was scarce thoroughly clos'd, and yet the same Sins are re-acted, and all these Warnings slighted. (2.) Tho' they were but newly sav'd from sharing in the same Punishment, and the Survivors were as Brands pluck'd out of the Burning, yet they fly in the Face of Moses and Aaron, to whose Intercession they ow'd their Preservation. Their Charge runs very high, ye have killed the People of the Lord. Could any thing have been said more unjustly and maliciously? They canonize the Rebels, calling them the People of the Lord, who died in Arms against him; they stigmatize Divine Justice itself; 'twas plain enough Moses and Aaron had no Hand in their Death, they did what they could to save them; so that in charging them with Murder, they did in effect charge God himself with it. The continued Obstinance of this People, notwithstanding the Terrors of God's Law, as it was given at Mount Sinai, and the Terrors of his judgments, as they were here executed on the Disobedient, shews how necessary the Grace of God is to the effectual Change of Mens Hearts and Lives, without which the most likely Means will never attain the End. Love will do what Fear could not. 2. God's speedy appearing against the Rebels. When they were gathered against Moses and Aaron, perhaps with Design to depose or murder them they look'd towards the Tabernacle, as if their misgiving Consciences, expected some Frowns from thence, and behold, the Glory of the Lord appear'd, v. 42. for the Protection of his Servants, and Confusion of his and their Accusers and Adversaries. Moses and Aaron thereupon came before the Tabernacle, partly, for their own Safety, there they took Sanctuary from the Strife of Tongues, Psalm 27. 5.——31. 20. and partly for Advice, to know what was the Mind of God upon this Occasion, v. 43. Justice hereupon declares, they deserve to be consum'd in a Moment, v. 45. Why should they live another Day, who hate to be reform'd, and whose Rebellions are their daily Practices! Let just Vengeance take place, and do its Work, and the Trouble with them will soon be over; only Moses and Aaron must first be secur'd. 3. The Intercession which Moses and Aaron made for them. Tho' they had as much Reason one would think, as Elias had to make Intercession against Israel, Rom. 11. 7. Yet they forgive and forget the Indignities offer'd them, and are the best Friends their Enemies have. (1.) They both fell on their Faces, humbly to intercede with God for Mercy, knowing how great their Provocation was. This they had done several times before, upon the like Occasion; and tho' the People had basely requited them for it, yet God having graciously accepted them, they still have recourse to the same Method. This is praying always. (2.) Moses perceiving that the Plague was begun in the congregation of the Rebels, i. e. that Body of them which was gather'd together against Moses, sends Aaron by an Act of his Priestly Office to make Atonement for them, v. 46. and Aaron readily went, burnt Incense between the Living and the Dead, not to purify the infected Air, but to pacify an offended God, and so stay'd the Progress of the Judgment, v. 47.

By this it appear'd, 1. That Aaron was a very good Man, and a Man that had a true Love for the Children of his People, tho' they hated and envied him. Tho' God was now avenging his Quarrel, and pleading the Cause of his Priesthood, yet he interposeth to turn away God's Wrath. Nay, forgetting his Age and Gravity, he ran into the midst of the Congregation to help them. He did not say, Let them smart a while, and then

then when I come I shall be the more welcome, but as one tender of the Life of every *Israelite*, he makes all possible speed into the Gap at which Death was entering. *Moses* and *Aaron* had been charg'd with killing the People of the Lord, with which they might justly have upbraided them now; could they expect those to be their Saviours, whom they had so invidiously call'd their Murderers? But those good Men have taught us here by their Example, not to be sullen towards those that are peevish with us, nor to take the Advantage which Men give us by their provoking Language, to deny them any real Kindness, which it is in the Power of our Hands to do them. We must render Good for Evil. 2. That *Aaron* was a very bold Man; Bold, to venture into the midst of an enraged Rabble, that were gather'd together against him, and who for ought he knew, might be the more exasperated by the Plague that was begun: Bold, to venture into the midst of the Infection where the Arrows of Death flew thickest, and hundreds, nay thousands were falling on his right and left Hand. To save their Lives he put his own into his Hand, not counting it dear to him, so he might but fulfil his Ministry. 3. That *Aaron* was a Man of God, and ordained for Man in things pertaining to God. His Call to the Priesthood was hereby abundantly confirm'd, and set above all Contradiction; God had not only sav'd his Life, when the Intruders were cut off, but now made him an Instrument of saving *Israel*. Compare the Censer of *Aaron* here, with the Censers of those Sinners against their own Souls. Those provok'd God's Anger, this pacified it; those destroy'd Mens Lives, this sav'd them; no room therefore is left to doubt of *Aaron's* Call to the Priesthood. Note, Those make out the best Title to publick Honours, that lay out themselves most for the publick Good, and obtain Mercy of the Lord to be faithful and useful. If any Man will be great, let him make himself the Servant of all. 4. That *Aaron* was a Type of Christ, who came into the World to make Atonement for Sin, and to turn away the Wrath of God from us, and who by his Mediation and Intercession stands between the Living and the Dead, to secure his chosen *Israel* to himself, and save them out of the midst of a World infected with Sin and the Curse. 4. The Result and Issue of the whole Matter. 1. God's Justice was glorified in the Death of some. Great Execution the Sword of the Lord did in a very little Time. Tho' *Aaron* made all the haste he could, yet before he could reach his Post of Service, there were Fourteen Thousand Seven Hundred Men laid dead upon the Spot, v. 49. There were but a few comparatively that died about the Matter of *Korah*, the Ringleaders only were made Examples, but the People not being led to Repentance by the Patience and Forbearance of God with them, Justice is not now so sparing of the Blood of *Israelites*. They cried out of the Death of a few Hundreds as an unmerciful Slaughter made among the People of the Lord, but here God silenceth that Complaint by the Slaughter of many Thousands. Note, Those that quarrel with lesser Judgments, prepare greater for themselves; for when God judgeth he will overcome. 2. His Mercy was glorified in the Preservation of the rest; God shew'd them what he could do by his Power, and what he might do in Justice, but then shew'd them what he would do in his Love and Pity, he would preserve them a People to himself for all this, in and by a Mediator. The Cloud of *Aaron's* Incense coming from his Hand staid the Plague. Note, It is much for the Glory of God's Goodness, that many a time, even in Wrath, he remembers Mercy; and even when Judgments have been begun, Prayer has put a stop to them; so ready is he to forgive, and so little pleasure doth he take in the Death of Sinners.

C H A P. XVII.

Enough had been done in the Chapter before to quash all the Pretensions of the Families of the Tribe of *Levi*, that would set up in Competition with *Aaron*, and to make it appear that *Aaron* was the Head of that Tribe; but it seems when that Matter was settled, the Princes of the rest of the Tribes began to murmur; if the Head of a Tribe must be Priest, why not the Head of some other Tribe than that of *Levi*; be that searcheth the Heart knew this Thought to be in the Breast of some of them, and before it broke out into any overt Act graciously anticipated it, to prevent Blood-shed, and 'tis done by Miracle in this Chapter, not a Miracle of Wrath, as before, but of Grace. 1. The Matter is put upon Trial by the bringing of Twelve Rods, one for each Prince, before the Lord, v. 1-7. 2. Upon Trial the Matter is determin'd by the miraculous blossoming of *Aaron's* Rod, v. 8, 9. 3. The Decision of the Controversy is registr'd by the Preservation of the Rod, v. 10, 11. 4. The People acquiesce in it with some reluctance, v. 12, 13.

AND the LORD spake unto *Moses*, saying, 2 Speak unto the children of *Israel*, and take of every one of them a rod, according to the

house of their fathers, of all their princes according to the house of their fathers, twelve rods: write thou every mans name upon his rod. 3 And thou shalt write *Aaron's* name upon the rod of *Levi*: for one rod shall be for the head of the house of their fathers. 4 And thou shalt lay them up in the tabernacle of the congregation, before the testimony, where I will meet with you. 5 And it shall come to pass, that the mans rod whom I shall choose shall blossom: and I will make to cease from me the murmurings of the children of *Israel*, whereby they murmur against you. 6 ¶ And *Moses* spake unto the children of *Israel*, and every one of their princes gave him a rod a-piece, for each prince one, according to their fathers houses, even twelve rods: and the rod of *Aaron* was among their rods. 7 And *Moses* laid up the rods before the LORD in the tabernacle of witness.

Here's 1. Orders given for the bringing in of a Rod for every Tribe: (which was significant enough, for the Word here us'd for a Rod sometimes signifies a Tribe, as particularly *Numb.* 34. 13.) That God by a Miracle wrought on purpose, might make it known on whom he had confer'd the Honour of the Priesthood. (1.) It seems then the Priesthood was a Preferment worth seeking and striving for, even by the Princes of the Tribes. 'Tis an Honour to the greatest of Men to be employ'd in the Service of God. Yet perhaps these contended for it, rather for the sake of the Profit and Power that attended the Office, than for the sake of that in it which was Divine and Sacred. (2.) It seems likewise, after all that had been done to settle this Matter, there were those who would be ready upon any Occasion to contest it. They would not acquiesce in the Divine Appointment, but would make an Interest in Opposition to it. They strive with God for the Dominion, and the Question is, whose Will shall stand, God will rule, but *Israel* will not be rul'd, and that's the Quarrel. (3.) It is an Instance of the Grace of God, that having wrought divers Miracles to punish Sin, he would work one more on purpose to prevent it. God has effectually provided that the Obstinate shall be left inexcusable, and every Mouth shall be stopped. *Israel* was very prone to murmur both against God, and against their Governors; now, saith God, I will make to cease from me the Murmurings of the Children of *Israel*, v. 5. If any thing will convince them, they shall be convinced; and if this will not convince them, nothing will. This was to be to them, as Christ saith, the Sign of the Prophet *Jonas*, that is, his own Resurrection should be to the Men of that Generation, the highest Proof of his Mission that should be given to them.

The Directions are (1.) That Twelve Rods or Staves should be brought in; 'tis probable they were not now fresh cut out of a Tree, for then the Miracle had not been so great; But that they were the Staves which the Princes ordinarily us'd as Ensigns of their Authority; of which we read *Chap.* 21. 18. old dry Staves, that had no Sap in them, and 'tis very possible they might all be made of the Almond-tree. It should seem they were but Twelve in all, with *Aaron's*, for when *Levi* comes into the Count, *Ephraim* and *Manasseh* make but one, under the Name of *Joseph*. (2.) That the Name of each Prince should be written upon his Rod, that every Man might know his own, and to prevent Contests. Writing is oft a good Preservative against Strife, for what is written may be appeal'd to. (3.) That they should be laid up in the Tabernacle, for one Night, before the Testimony, i. e. before the Ark, which with its Mercy-Seat was a Symbol, Token or Testimony of God's Preference with them. (4.) They were to expect, being told it before, that the Tribe or Prince whom God chose to the Priesthood his Rod should bud and blossom, v. 5. 'Twas requisite they should be told of it, that it might appear not to be casual, but according to the Counsel and Will of God. 2. The preparing of the Rods accordingly. The Princes brought them in, some of them perhaps fondly expecting that the Choice would fall upon them, and all of them thinking it Honour enough to be Competitors with *Aaron*, and to stand Candidates, even for the Priesthood, v. 7. And *Moses* laid them up before the Lord. He did not object, that the Matter was sufficiently settled already, and enough done to convince those that were not invincibly harden'd in their Prejudices. He did not undertake to determine the Controversy himself, tho' it might easily have been done, nor did he suggest that it would be to no purpose to offer Satisfaction to a People that were willingly blind, but since God will have it so, he did his Part, and lodg'd the Case before the Lord, to whom the Appeal was made by Consent, and left it with him.

8 And it came to pass, that on the morrow *Moses* went into the tabernacle of witness, and behold

behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds. 9 And Moses brought out all the rods from before the LORD, unto all the children of Israel: and they looked, and took every man his rod. 10 And the LORD said unto Moses, Bring Aarons rod again before the testimony, to be kept for a token against the rebels, and thou shalt quite take away their murmurings from me, that they die not. 11 And Moses did so: as the LORD commanded him, so did he. 12 And the children of Israel spake unto Moses, saying, Behold, we die, we perish, we all perish. 13 Whosoever cometh any thing near unto the tabernacle of the LORD, shall die: shall we be consumed with dying?

Here's 1. The final Determination of the Controversy concerning the Priesthood by a Miracle, v. 8, 9. The Rods, or Staves, were brought out from the most Holy Place where they were laid up and publicly produc'd before the People; and while all the rest of the Rods remain'd as they were, Aaron's Rod only of a dry Stick, became a living Branch, budded, and bloom'd, and yielded Almonds. In some Places there were Buds, in others Blossoms, in others Fruit, at the same time; this was Miraculous, and took away all Suspicion of a Fraud, as if in the Night Moses had taken away Aaron's Rod, and put a living Branch of an Almond-Tree in the room of it; for no ordinary Branch would have Buds, Blossoms and Fruits upon it all at once. Now, 1. This was a plain Indication to the People that Aaron was chosen to the Priesthood, and not any other of the Princes of the Tribes. Thus he was distinguished from them, and manifested to be under the special Blessing of Heaven, which sometimes *yieldeth increase*, where there is neither planting nor watering by the Hand of Man. Bishop Hall here observes, that Fruitfulness is the best Evidence of a divine Call, and that the Plants of God's setting, and the Boughs cut off from them will flourish. See Psalm 92. 12, 13, 14. The Trees of the Lord, tho' they seem dry Trees, are full of Sap. 2. It was a very proper Sign to represent the Priesthood itself, which was hereby confirm'd to Aaron. (1.) That it should be fruitful, useful and serviceable to the Church of God. It produc'd not only Blossoms, but Almonds, for the Priesthood was design'd, not only for an Honour to Aaron, but for a Blessing to Israel. Thus Christ ordain'd his Apostles and Ministers, that they should go and bring forth Fruit, and that their Fruit should remain, Joh. 15. 16. (2.) That there should be Succession of Priests; here were not only Almonds for the present, but Buds and Blossoms promising more hereafter. Thus hath Christ provided in his Church, that a Seed should serve him, from Generation to Generation. (3.) That yet this Priesthood should not be perpetual, but in process of Time like the Branches and Blossoms of the Tree, should fall and wither. The flourishing of the Almond-tree is mention'd as one of the Signs of Old Age, Eccles. 12. 15. This Character was betimes put upon that Priesthood, which soon became old and ready to vanish away, Heb. 8. 13. 3. It was a Type and Figure of Christ and his Priesthood: For he is the Man, the Branch, Zech. 6. 12. That is to be a Priest upon his Throne, as it follows there; and was to grow up before God, as this before the Ark, like a tender Plant, and a Root out of a dry Ground, Isa. 53. 2. 2. The Record of this Determination, by the preserving of the Rod before the Testimony, in *perpetuam rei memoriam*, v. 10, 11. 'Tis probable the Buds and Blossoms and Fruit continued fresh, the same Divine Power that produc'd them in a Night, preserv'd them for Ages, at least so long as it was necessary for a Token against the Rebels. So it was a standing Miracle, and the continuance of it was an undeniable Proof of the Truth of it. Even the Leaf of God's Tree shall not wither, Psal. 1. 3. This Rod was preserv'd as the Censers were, to take away their murmurings, that they die not. Note, 1. The Design of God in all his Providences, both Mercies and Judgments, and in the Memorials of them is to take away Sin, and to prevent that. These things are done, these things written that we sin not, 1 Joh. 2. 1. Christ was manifested to take away sin. 2. What God doth for the taking away of Sin, is done in real Kindness to us, that we die not. All the bitter Portions he gives, and all the sharp Methods he uses with us, are for the Cure of a Disease which otherwise would certainly be fatal. Bishop Hall observes here, that the Tables of the Law, the Pot of Manna, and Aaron's Rod, were preserv'd together in or about the Ark (the Apostle takes Notice of them all three together, Heb. 9. 4.) To shew to after Ages how the ancient Church was taught, and fed, and rul'd; and infs how precious the Doctrine, Sacraments, and Government of the Church is to him, and should be to us. The Rod of Moses

was us'd in working many Miracles, yet we do not find that that was preserv'd, for the keeping of that would only gratify Mens Curiosity; but the Rod of Aaron, which carried its Miracle along with it, was carefully preserv'd, because that would be of standing use to convince Mens Consciences, to silence all Disputes about the Priesthood, and to confirm the Faith of God's Israel in his Institutions. Such is the Difference between the Sacraments Christ has appointed for Edification, and the Relicks Men have devis'd for Superstition. 3. The Outcry of the People hereupon, v. 12, 13. Behold we die, we perish, we all perish, Shall we be consumed with dying? This may be consider'd as the Language either (1.) Of a Repining People, quarrelling with the Judgments of God, which, by their own Pride and Obstinacy, they had brought upon themselves. They seem to speak disparagingly, as if God were a hard Master, that sought Advantage against them, and took all Occasions to pick Quarrels with them, so that if they erod never so little awry, if they slept never so little beyond their Bounds, they must die, they must perish, they must all perish, basely insinuating, that God would never be satisfied with their Blood and Ruin, till he had made an End of them all, and they were consumed with dying. Thus they seem to be like a wild Bull in a net, full of the fury of the Lord, If. 51. 20. Fretting that God was too hard for them, and they were forc'd to truckle only because they could not help it. Note, It is a very wicked thing to fret against God when we are in Affliction, and in our distress thus to trespass yet more. If we die, if we perish, 'tis long of ourselves, and the Blame will lye upon our own Heads. Or 2. Of a Repenting People; many Interpreters take it as speaking their Submission. Now we see it is the Will of God we should keep our Distance, and it is at our Peril if we draw nearer than is appointed, and we submit to the Divine Will in this Appointment, we will not contend any more, lest we all perish: And they engage Moses to intercede for them, that they might not be all consumed with dying. Thus the Point was gain'd, and in this Matter God quite took away their Murmurings, and from henceforward they acquiesced. Note, When God judgeth he will overcome, and one way or other will oblige the most obstinate Gain-sayers to confess their Folly sooner or later; and that wherein they dealt proudly he was above 'em. Vicefili Galilae.

C H A P. XVIII.

Aaron being now fully establish'd in the Priesthood, abundantly to his own Satisfaction, and to the Satisfaction of the People, (which was the Good God brought out of the evil Opposition made to him) in this Chapter God gives him full Instructions concerning his Office; or rather repeats those he had before given him. He tells him, 1. What must be his Work, and the Care and Charge committed to him; and what Assistance he should have from the Levites in that Work, v. 1-7. 2. What should be his Wages, and the Levites, for this Work. 1. The Perquisites or Fees peculiar to the Priests, v. 8, 19. 2. The settled Maintenance of the Levites, v. 20, 24. 3. The Portion which must be paid to the Priests out of the Levites Maintenance, v. 25-32. Thus every one knew what he had to do, and what he had to live upon.

AND the LORD said unto Aaron, Thou and thy sons, and thy fathers house with thee, shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary: and thou and thy sons with thee shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood. 2 And thy brethren also of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring thou with thee, that they may be joined unto thee, and minister unto thee: but thou and thy sons with thee shall minister before the tabernacle of witness. 3 And they shall keep thy charge, and the charge of all the tabernacle: only they shall not come nigh the vessels of the sanctuary, and the altar, that neither they, nor you also die. 4 And they shall be joined unto thee, and keep the charge of the tabernacle of the congregation, for all the service of the tabernacle: and a stranger shall not come nigh unto you. 5 And ye shall keep the charge of the sanctuary, and the charge of the altar, that there be no wrath any more upon the children of Israel. 6 And I, behold, I have taken your brethren the Levites from among the children of Israel: to you they are given as a gift for the LORD, to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation. 7 Therefore thou and thy sons with thee shall keep your priests office for

For every thing of the altar, and within the vail, and ye shall serve: I have given your priests office unto you, as a service of gift: and the stranger that cometh nigh, shall be put to death.

The Coherence of this Chapter with that foregoing, is very observable. 1. The People in the close of that Chapter had complain'd of the Difficulty and Peril that there was in drawing near to God, which put them under some dreadful Apprehensions, that the Tabernacle in the midst of them, which they hop'd would have been their Joy and Glory, would rather be their Terror and Ruin; now in Answer to this Complaint, God here gives them to understand by Aaron, that the Priests should come near for them, as their Representatives; so that tho' the People were oblig'd to keep their Distance, yet that should not at all redound to their Disgrace or Prejudice, but their comfortable Communion with God should be kept up by the interposal of the Priests. 2. A great deal of Honour God had now newly put upon Aaron, his Rod had budded and blossom'd, when the Rods of the rest of the Princes remain'd dry, and destitute either of Fruit or Ornament; now left Aaron should be puff'd up with the abundance of the Favours that were done him, and the Miracles that were wrought for the Support of him in his high Station, God comes to him to mind him of the Burthen that was laid upon him, and the Duty requir'd from him as a Priest. He would see Reason not to be proud of his Preferment, but to receive the Honours of his Office with Reverence and Holy Trembling, when he consider'd, how great the Care and Charge was that was committed to him, and how hard it would be for him to give a good Account of the Discharge of it. *Be not high-minded, but fear.* 1. God tells him of the Danger that attended his Dignity, v. 1. (1.) That both the Priests and Levites, (both thou, and thy Sons, and thy Father's House) should bear the Iniquity of the Sanctuary, i. e. If the Sanctuary were profan'd by the Intrusion of Strangers, or Persons in their Uncleaness, the Blame should lye upon the Levites and Priests, who ought to have kept them off. Tho' the Sinner that thrust in presumptuously should dye in his Iniquity, yet his Blood should be requir'd at the Hands of the Watchmen. Or, it may be taken more generally, if any of the Duties or Offices of the Sanctuary be neglected, if any Service be not done in its Season, or not according to the Law, if any thing be lost or misplac'd in the remove of the Sanctuary, you shall be accountable for it, and Answer it at your Peril. (2.) That the Priests should themselves bear the Iniquity of the Priesthood, i. e. If they either neglected any part of their Work, or permitted any other Persons to invade their Office, and take their Work out of their Hands, they should bear the Blame of it. *Note,* The greater the Trust is of Work and Power that is committed to us, the greater is our Danger of contracting Guilt by falsifying and betraying that Trust. This is a good Reason, why we should neither be envious at others Honours, nor ambitious ourselves of high Places, because great Dignity exposeth us to great Iniquity. Those that are intrusted with the Charge of the Sanctuary will have a great deal to answer for. Who will cover the Care of Souls, who considers the Account that must be given of that Care? 2. He tells him of the Duty that attended his Dignity. 1. That he and his Sons must Minister before the Tabernacle of Witness, v. 2. i. e. as Bishop Patrick explains it, before the most Holy Place in which the Ark was; on the outside of the Vail of that Tabernacle, but within the Door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation; they were to attend the golden Altar, the Table and Candlestick, which no Levite might approach to. *Ye shall serve,* v. 7. not, ye shall rule; 'twas never intended they should lord it over God's Heritage, but ye shall serve God and the Congregation. *Note,* The Priesthood is a Service. If any desire the Office of a Bishop, he desires a good Work. Ministers must remember that they are Ministers, that is, Servants; of whom it is required, that they be humble, diligent, and faithful. 2. That the Levites must assist him and his Sons, and Minister to them in all the Service of the Tabernacle, (v. 2, 3, 4.) tho' they must by no means come nigh the Vessels of the Sanctuary, nor at the Altar meddle with the great Services of burning the Fat and sprinkling the Blood. Aaron's Family was very small, and as they increas'd, the rest of the Families of Israel would increase likewise, so that their Hands neither were now, nor were like to be sufficient for all the Service of the Tabernacle, therefore (saith God) the Levites shall be joyned to thee, v. 2, again v. 4. where there seems to be an Allusion to the Name of Levi, which signifies joyned. Many of the Levites had of late set themselves against Aaron, but from henceforward God promiseth that they should be heartily joyned to him in Interest and Affection, and should no more contest with him. 'Twas a good Sign to Aaron that God own'd him, when he inclin'd the Hearts of those concern'd to own him too. The Levites are said to be given as a Gift to the Priests, v. 6. *Note,* We are to value it as a great Gift of the Divine Bounty to have those joyned to us, that will be helpful and serviceable to us in the Service of God. 3. That both Priests

and Levites must carefully watch against the Profanation of Sacred Things. The Levites must keep the charge of the Tabernacle, that no Stranger (i. e. none who upon any Account was forbidden to come) might come nigh, v. 4. and that upon pain of Death, v. 7. And the Priests must keep the Charge of the Sanctuary, v. 5. must instruct the People, and admonish them concerning the due Distance they were to keep, and not suffer them to break the Bounds set them, as Korah's Company had done, that there be no Wrath any more upon the Children of Israel. *Note,* The preventing of Sin, is the preventing of Wrath; and the Mischeif Sin has done, should be Warning to us, for the future, to watch against it both in ourselves, and others.

8 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Aaron, Behold, I also have given thee the charge of mine heave-offerings, of all the hallowed things of the children of Israel, unto thee have I given them by reason of the anointing, and to thy sons by an ordinance for ever. 9 This shall be thine of the most holy things, reserved from the fire: every oblation of theirs, every meat-offering of theirs, and every sin-offering of theirs, and every trespass-offering of theirs, which they shall render unto me; shall be most holy for thee and for thy sons. 10 In the most holy place shalt thou eat it, every male shall eat it: it shall be holy unto thee. 11 And this is thine: the heave-offering of their gift, with all the wave-offerings of the children of Israel: I have given them unto thee, and to thy sons, and to thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever: every one that is clean in thy house shall eat of it. 12 All the best of the oil, and all the best of the wine, and of the wheat, the first fruits of them which they shall offer unto the LORD, them have I given thee. 13 And whatsoever is first ripe in the land, which they shall bring unto the LORD, shall be thine: every one that is clean in thine house shall eat of it. 14 Every thing devoted in Israel, shall be thine. 15 Every thing that openeth the matrix in all flesh, which they bring unto the LORD, whether it be of men or beasts, shall be thine: nevertheless, the first-born of man shalt thou surely redeem: and the firstling of unclean beasts shalt thou redeem. 16 And those that are to be redeemed, from a month old shalt thou redeem, according to thine estimation, for the money of five shekels after the shekel of the sanctuary, which is twenty gerahs. 17 But the firstling of a cow, or the firstling of a sheep, or the firstling of a goat; thou shalt not redeem, they are holy: thou shalt sprinkle their blood upon the altar, and shalt burn their fat for an offering made by fire, for a sweet savour unto the LORD. 18 And the flesh of them shall be thine: as the wave-bread, and as the right shoulder are thine. 19 All the heave-offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel offer unto the LORD, have I given thee; and thy sons, and thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever: it is a covenant of salt for ever before the LORD, unto thee, and to thy seed with thee.

The Priests Service is call'd a Warfare, and who goes a Warfare at his own Charges? As they were well employ'd, so they were well provided for, and well paid. None shall serve God for nought. All Believers are Spiritual Priests, and God has promised to take Care of them; they shall dwell in the Land, and verily they shall be fed, and shall not want any good Thing. *Godliness has the Promise of the Life that now is.* And from this plentiful Provision here made for the Priests, the Apostle infers, that it is the Duty of Christian Churches to maintain their Ministers; they that serv'd at the Altar, liv'd upon the Altar. So they that preach the Gospel, should live upon the Gospel, and live comfortably, 1 Cor. 9. 13, 14. Scandalous Maintenance makes scandalous Ministers. Now observe, 1. That much of the Provision that was made for them arose out of the Sacrifices, which they themselves were employ'd to offer. They had the Skins of almost all the Sacrifices, which they might sell, and they had a considerable Share out

of the Meat-offerings, Sin-offerings, &c. They that had the Charge of the Offerings, had the Benefit of them, v. 8. *Note*, God's Work is its own Wages, and his Service carries its Remuneration along with it. Even in keeping of God's Commandments there is great Reward. The present Pleasures of Religion are part of its Pay. 2. That they had not only a good Table kept for them, but Money likewise in their Pockets for the Redemption of the First-born, and those Firstlings of Cattle which might not be offer'd in Sacrifice. Thus their Maintenance was such, as left them altogether *disintangled from the Affairs of this Life*; they had no Grounds to occupy, no Land to till, no Vineyards to dress, no Cattle to tend, no visible Estate to take Care of, and yet had a more plentiful Income than any other Families whatsoever. Thus God order'd it, (1.) That they might be the more entirely addicted to their Ministry, and not diverted from it, or disturb'd in it, by any worldly Care or Business. The Ministry requires a whole Man. (2.) That they might be Examples of living by Faith, not only in God's Providence, but in his Ordinance. They liv'd from Hand to Mouth, that they might learn to take no Thought for to Morrow; sufficient for the Day would be the Provision thereof; and they had no Estates to leave their Children, that they might by Faith leave them to the Care of that God, who had fed them all their Lives long. 3. Of the Provision that was made for their Tables, some is said to be *most Holy*, v. 9, 10, which was to be eaten by the Priests themselves, and in the Court of the Tabernacle only; but other Perquisites were less Holy, of which their Families might eat at their own Houses, provided they were *clean*, v. 11, 12, 13. See Lev. 22. 10, &c. 4. 'Tis commanded, that the *best of the Oyl*, and the *best of the Wine and Wheat* should be offer'd, for the *first Fruits unto the Lord*, which the Priest was to have, v. 12. *Note*, We must always serve and honour God with the best we have, for he is the best, and best deserves it; He is the first, and therefore must have the first-ripe. Those that think to save Charges, by putting God off with the Refuse, do but deceive themselves, for *God is not mocked*. 5. All this is given to the Priests, *by reason of the anointing*, v. 8. It was not for the sake of their personal Merits above other Israelites, that they had these Tributes paid them; be it known unto them, but purely for the sake of the Office to which they were anointed. Thus all the Comforts that are given to the Lord's People are given them by reason of the anointing, which they have received. 6. 'Tis said to be given them by an Ordinance for ever, v. 8. and it is a *Covenant of Salt for ever*, v. 19. As long as the Priesthood should continue this should continue to be the Maintenance of it, that this Lamp might not go out for want of Oyl to keep it burning. Thus Provision is made, that a Gospel Ministry should continue till Christ comes, by an Ordinance for ever. *Lo, I am with you*, (that's their Maintenance and Support) *always even to the end of the World*. Thanks be to the Redeemer, 'tis the Word which he has commanded to a thousand Generations.

20 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I am thy part, and thine inheritance among the children of Israel. 21 And behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel, for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, *even* the service of the tabernacle of the congregation. 22 Neither must the children of Israel henceforth come nigh the tabernacle of the congregation, lest they bear sin and die. 23 But the Levites shall do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they shall bear their iniquity: *it shall be* a statute for ever throughout your generations, that among the children of Israel they have no inheritance. 24 But the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer as an heave-offering unto the LORD, I have given to the Levites to inherit: therefore I have said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance. 25 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 26 Thus speak unto the Levites, and say unto them, When ye take of the children of Israel the tithes, which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up an heave-offering of it for the LORD, *even* a tenth part of the tithe. 27 And *this* your heave-offering shall be reckoned unto you, as though it were the corn of the threshing-floor, and as a fulness of the wine-press. 28 Thus you also shall offer an heave-offering unto the LORD

of all your tithes, which ye receive of the children of Israel, and ye shall give thereof the LORD's heave-offering to Aaron the priest. 29 Out of all your gifts ye shall offer every heave-offering of the LORD of all the best thereof, *even* the hallowed part thereof out of it. 30 Therefore thou shalt say unto them, When ye have heaved the best thereof from it, then it shall be counted unto the Levites, as the increase of the threshing-floor, and as the increase of the wine-press. 31 And ye shall eat it in every place, ye and your households: for it is your reward for your service in the tabernacle of the congregation. 32 And ye shall bear no sin by reason of it, when ye have heaved from it the best of it: neither shall ye pollute the holy things of the children of Israel, lest ye die.

Here's a further Account of the Provision that was made both for the Levites and for the Priests, out of the Country; 1. They must have no Inheritance in the Land; only Cities to dwell in were afterwards allowed them, but no Ground to occupy; *thou shalt not have any Part among them*, v. 20. 'Tis repeated again, v. 23. and again, v. 24. *Among the Children of Israel they shall have no Inheritance*, either by Purchase or Descent. God would have them comfortably provided for, but would not have their Families over-rich, lest they should think themselves above their Work, which therefore their Wages, suppos'd and oblig'd them constantly to attend upon. As Israel was a peculiar People, and not to be number'd among the Nations: So Levi was a peculiar Tribe, and not to be settled as the rest of the Tribes, but in all respects distinguish'd from them. A good Reason is given, why they must have no Inheritance in the Land, for, saith God, *I am thy Part and thine Inheritance*. *Note*, Those that have God for their Inheritance and their Portion for ever, ought to look with a Holy Contempt and Indifference upon the Inheritances of this World, and not covet their Portion in it. *The Lord is my Portion, therefore will I hope in him*, and not depend upon any thing I have on this Earth, Lam. 3. 24. The Levites shall have no Inheritance, and yet they shall live very comfortable and plentifully, to reach us that Providence has various ways of supporting those that live in a Dependence upon it; the Fowls reap not, and yet are fed, the Lillies spin not, and yet are cloth'd; the Levites have no Inheritance in Israel, and yet live better than any other Tribe. The Repetition of that Caution, that no Israelite should approach the Tabernacle, comes in somewhat abruptly, v. 22. it seems set in Opposition to that Order concerning the Priests and Levites, that they should have no Inheritance in Israel, to shew how God dispenseth his Favours variously. The Levites have the Honour of attending the Tabernacle, which is denied the Israelites; but then the Israelites have the Honour of Inheritances in Canaan which is denied the Levites: Thus each is kept from either envying or despising the other, and both have Reason to rejoice in their Lot. The Israelites must not come nigh the Tabernacle, but then the Levites must have no Inheritance in the Land; if Ministers expect that People should keep in their Sphere, and not intermeddle with sacred Offices, let them keep in theirs, and not entangle themselves in secular Affairs. 2. But they both must have Tithes off the Land. Besides the First-fruits which were appropriated to the Priests, which the Jews say were to be a fiftieth Part, or at least a sixtieth, the Tithe also was appropriated. 1. The Levites had the Tithes of the Peoples increase, v. 21. *I have given* (whose the whole is) *all the Tenths in Israel* of all the Products of the Land, to the Children of Levi, to be divided among them in just Proportions, for their Service which they serve. The Levites were the smallest Tribe of the twelve, and yet besides all other Advantages, they had a Tenth Part of the Yearly Profits, without the Trouble and Expence of Plowing and Sowing; such Care did God take of those that were devoted to his Service, not only that they might be well maintain'd, but that they might be honour'd with a National Acknowledgement of the good Services they did to the Publick; and own'd as God's Agents and Receivers, for what was a Heave-offering, or an Offering lifted Heaven-ward, unto the Lord, was by him consign'd unto the Levites. 2. The Priests had the Tenth of the Levites Tithes settled upon them. The Order for this, Moses is directed to give to the Levites, whom God would have to pay it with Cheerfulness, rather than the Priests to demand it with Authority. *Speak to the Levites*, that it be offer'd by them, rather than levied upon them. Now observe, 1. The Levites were to give God his Dues out of their Tithes, as well as the Israelites out of their Increase. They were God's Tenants, and Rent was expected from them, nor were they exempted by their Office. Thus now Ministers must be charitable out of what they receive; and the more freely they have received the more freely they must give, and be Examples of Liberality.

v. 26. *Ye shall offer a Heave-Offering to the Lord.* Those that are employ'd to assist the Devotions of others, must be sure to pay their own, as a Heave-Offering to the Lord. Prayers and Praises lifted up to God, or rather, the Heart lifted up in them are now our Heave-Offerings. This (saith God) shall be reckon'd to you, *as tho' it were the Corn of the Threshing Floor,* i. e. Tho' it was not the Fruit of their own Ground, nor of their own Labour, as the Tithes of other Israelites were, yet being of such as they had it should be accepted, to the sanctifying of all the rest. 2. This was to be given to Aaron the Priest, v. 28. and to his Successors the High Priests, to be divided and dispos'd of in such Proportions as they should think fit, among the inferiour Priests. Most of the Profits of the Priests Office, which were appointed in the former Part of the Chapter, arising from the Sacrifices, those Priests had the Benefit of them who constantly attended at the Altar; but so far as there were many Priests employ'd in the Country, to teach and rule, those Tithes taken of the Levites, 'tis probable, were directed by the High Priest for their Maintenance. 'Tis the probable Conjecture of the learned Bishop Patrick, that the Tenth of this last Tenth was reserv'd for the High Priest himself, to support his State and Dignity, for otherwise we read not of any peculiar Provision made for him. 3. When the Levites had thus paid the Tenth of their Income, as a Heave-Offering to the Lord, they had themselves the comfortable Enjoyment of the other Nine Parts, v. 30. when ye have thus *beaved the best from it* (for still God's Part must be the best) then ye shall eat the rest, not as a Holy Thing, but with the same Freedom that the other Israelites eat their Part, in every Place, ye and your Households, v. 31. See here what is the Way to have the Comfort of all our Worldly Possessions, so as to bear no Sin by reason of them, as it follows, v. 32. 1. We must be sure that what we have be got honestly, and in the Service of God. 'Tis your Reward for your Service: That Meat is best eaten that is first earn'd; but if any will not work neither shall he eat, 2 Thes. 3. 10. And that seems to be spoken of as having a particular Comfort and Satisfaction in it, which is the Reward of faithful Service done in the Tabernacle of the Congregation. 2. We must be sure that God hath his Dues out of it. Then we have the Comfort of our Substance, when we have honour'd the Lord with it. Then ye shall bear no Sin by reason of it, when ye have beaved the best from it. This intimates, that we must never feed ourselves without fear, lest our Table become a Snare, and we bear the Sin by reason of it; and that therefore we are concern'd to give alms for such things as we have, that all may be clean and comfortable to us.

C H A P. XIX.

This Chapter is only concerning the preparing and using of the Ashes which were to impregnate the Water of Purification. The People had complain'd of the Strictness of the Law, which forbid their near Approach to the Tabernacle, Chap. 17. 13. In answer to which Complaint, they are here directed to purify themselves, so as that they might come as far as they had occasion without fear. Here's 1. The Method of preparing these Ashes, by the burning of a Red Heifer, with a great deal of Ceremony, v. 1-10. 2. The way of using them. 1. They were design'd to purify Persons from the Pollution contracted by a dead Body, v. 11-16. 2. They were to be put into running Water, (a small quantity of them) with which the Person to be cleans'd must be purified, v. 17-22. And that this ceremonial Purification was a Type and Figure of the cleansing of the Consciences of Believers from the Pollutions of Sin, appears by the Apostle's Discourse, Heb. 9. 13, 14. where he compares the Efficacy of the Blood of Christ, with the sanctifying Virtue that was in the Ashes of a Heifer sprinkling the unclean.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, and unto Aaron, saying, 2. This is the ordinance of the law which the LORD hath commanded, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring thee a red heifer without spot, wherein is no blemish, and upon which never came yoke. 3. And ye shall give her unto Eleazar the priest that he may bring her forth without the camp, and one shall slay her before his face. 4. And Eleazar the priest shall take of her blood with his finger, and sprinkle of her blood directly before the tabernacle of the congregation seven times. 5. And one shall burn the heifer in his sight: her skin, and her flesh, and her blood, with her dung, shall he burn. 6. And the priest shall take cedar wood, and hyssop, and scarlet, and cast it into the midst of the burning of the heifer. 7. Then the priest shall wash his clothes, and he shall bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the

camp, and the priest shall be unclean till the even. 8. And he that burneth her, shall wash his clothes in water, and bathe his flesh in water, and shall be unclean until the even. 9. And a man that is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and lay them up without the camp in a clean place, and it shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel, for a water of separation: it is a purification for sin. 10. And he that gathereth the ashes of the heifer, shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even: and it shall be unto the children of Israel, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among them, for a statute for ever.

We have here the divine Appointment concerning the solemn burning of a Red Heifer to Ashes, and the preserving of the Ashes, that of them might be made not a Beautifying, but a Purifying Water, for that was the utmost the Law reach'd to: it offer'd not to adorn as the Gospel doth, but to cleanse only. This burning of the Heifer, though it was not properly a Sacrifice of Expiation, being not perform'd at the Altar, yet was Typical of the Death and Sufferings of Christ; by which he intended not only to satisfy God's Justice, but to purify and pacify our Consciences, that we may have not only Peace with God, but Peace in our own Bosoms: To prepare for which Christ dy'd not only like the Bulls and Goats at the Altar, but like the Heifer without the Camp.

1. There was a great deal of Curiosity in the Choice of the Heifer that was to be burn'd, much more than in the Choice of any other Offering, v. 29. It must not only be without Blemish, typifying the spotless Purity, and sinless Perfection of the Lord Jesus, but it must be a Red Heifer, because of the Rarity of the Colour, that it might be the more remarkable. The Jews say, if but two Hairs were black or white, it was unlawful. Christ as Man, was the Son of Adam, Red Earth, and we find him Red in his Apparel; Red with his own Blood, and Red with the Blood of his Enemies. And it must be one on which never came Yoke, which was not insisted on in other Sacrifices; but thus typified the Freedom of the Lord Jesus, when he said, Lo, I come. He was bound, and held with no other Cords but those of his own Love. This Heifer was to be provided at the Expence of the Congregation, because they were all to have a joint Interest in it, and so all Believers have in Christ. 2. There was to be a great deal of Ceremony in the burning of it. The Care of doing it was committed to Eleazar, not to Aaron himself, because it was not fit he should do any thing to render himself ceremonially unclean, no not so much as till the even, v. 8. Yet it being an Affair of great Concern, especially in the Significance of it, it was to be perform'd by him that was next to Aaron in Dignity. The Chief Priests of that Time had the principal Hand in the Death of Christ. Now, 1. The Heifer was to be slain without the Camp, as an impure thing, which speaks the Insufficiency of the Methods prescribed by the Ceremonial Law to take away Sin: so far were they from cleansing effectually, that they were themselves unclean; as if the Pollution that was laid upon them continued to cleave to them. Yet to answer this Type, our Lord Jesus being made Sin and a Curse for us, suffer'd without the Gate, Heb. 13. 11. 2. Eleazar was to sprinkle the Blood directly before the Door of the Tabernacle, and looking stedfastly towards it, v. 4. This made it in some sort an Expiation; for the sprinkling of the Blood before the Lord was the chief Solemnity in all the Sacrifices of Atonement; therefore tho' this was not done at the Altar, yet being done towards the Sanctuary, 'twas intimated that the Virtue and Validity of it depended upon the Sanctuary, and was derived from it. This signified that the Satisfaction that was made to God by the Death of Christ our great High Priest, who by the eternal Spirit, (and the Spirit is call'd the Finger of God, as Ainsworth observes, Luke 11. 20.) offer'd himself without Spot unto God; he did as it were sprinkle his own Blood directly before the Sanctuary, when he said, Father, Into thy hands I commit my Spirit. And this also signifies how necessary it was to the purifying of our Hearts, that Satisfaction should be made to Divine Justice. This sprinkling of the Blood put Virtue into the Ashes. The Heifer was to be wholly burnt, v. 5. This typified the extreme Sufferings of our Lord Jesus both in Soul and Body, as a Sacrifice made by Fire. The Priest was to cast into the Fire while it was burning, Cedar-wood, Hyssop and Scarlet, which were used in the cleansing of Lepers, Lev. 14. 6, 7. that the Ashes of these might be mingled with the Ashes of the Heifer, because they were design'd for Purification. 4. The Ashes of the Heifer (separated as well as they could from the Ashes of the Wood wherewith it was burnt) were to be carefully gathered up by the Hand of a clean Person, (and as the Jews say) pounded and sifted, and so laid up for the use of the Congregation as there was Occasion, (v. 9.) not only for that Generation, but for Posterity; for the Ashes of this one Heifer were sufficient to season as many

Vessels of Water as the People of *Israel* would need for many Ages. The *Jews* say, this one serv'd till the Captivity, near a Thousand Years, and that there was never another Heifer burnt till *Ezra's* Time, after their Return; to which Tradition of theirs grounded (I suppose) only upon the Silence of their own Records, I see no Reason we have to give Credit, since in the latter Times of their Church, which they had more full Records of, they find eight burnt between *Ezra's* Time and the Destruction of the second Temple, which was but about Five Hundred Years. These Ashes are said to be laid up here as a Purification for Sin, because tho' they were intended only to purify from Ceremonial Uncleanness, yet they were a Type of that Purification for Sin which our Lord Jesus made by his Death. Ashes mix'd with Water are us'd in scouring, but these had their Virtue purely from the Divine Institution, and their Accomplishment and Perfection in Christ, who is the End of this Law for Righteousness. Now observe, (1.) That the Water of Purification was made so by the Ashes of a Heifer, whose Blood was sprinkled before the Sanctuary; so that which cleanseth our Consciences is the remaining Virtue or the Death of Christ; 'tis his Blood that cleanseth from all Sin, 1 Joh. 1. 7. (2.) That the Ashes were sufficient for all the People: there needed not to be a fresh Heifer slain for every Person or Family that had occasion to be purified, but this one was enough for all, even for the Strangers that sojourn'd among them, v. 10. So there is Virtue enough in the Blood of Christ for all that repent, and believe the Gospel, for every *Israelite*, and not for their Sins only, but for the Sins of the whole World, 1 Joh. 2. 2. (3.) That these Ashes were capable of being preserv'd without waste to many Ages. No Bodily Substance is so incorruptible as Ashes are, which (saith Bishop Patrick) made these a very fit Emblem of the everlasting Efficacy of the Sacrifice of Christ. He is able to save, and in order to that, able to cleanse to the uttermost both of Persons and Times. (4.) These Ashes were laid up as a Stock or Treasure, for the constant Purification of *Israel* from their Pollutions, so the Blood of Christ is laid up for us in the Word and Sacraments as an inexhaustible Fountain of Merit, to which, by Faith, we may have Recourse daily, for the purging of our Consciences. See Zech. 13. 1. 5. All those that were employ'd in this Service were made Ceremonially Unclean by it. Even *Eleazer* himself, tho' he did but sprinkle the Blood, v. 7. He that burnt the Heifer was unclean, v. 8. and he that gather'd up the Ashes, v. 10. So all that had a Hand in putting Christ to death, contracted Guilt by it; his Betrayer, his Prosecutors, his Judge, his Executioner, all did what they did with wicked Hands, though 'twas by the determinate Counsel and Fore-knowledge of God, Act. 2. 23. Yet some of them were, and all might have been cleansed by the Virtue of that same Blood which they had brought themselves under the Guilt of. Some make this to signify the Imperfection of the legal Services, and their Insufficiency to take away Sin; in as much as those who prepar'd for the purifying of others, were themselves polluted by the Preparation. The *Jews* say, this is a Mystery which *Solomon* himself did not understand, that the same thing should pollute those that were clean, and yet purify those that were unclean. But (saith Bishop Patrick) it is not strange to those who consider that all the Sacrifices which were offer'd for Sin, were therefore look'd upon as impure, because the Sins of Men were laid upon them, as all our Sins were upon Christ, who therefore is said to be made Sin for us, 2 Cor. 5. 21.

11 ¶ He that toucheth the dead body of any man, shall be unclean seven days. 12 He shall purifie himself with it on the third day, and on the seventh day he shall be clean: but if he purifie not himself the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean. 13 Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of the LORD, and that soul shall be cut off from *Israel*: because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him: he shall be unclean, his uncleanness is yet upon him. 14 This is the law, when a man dieth in a tent, all that come into the tent, and all that is in the tent, shall be unclean seven days. 15 And every open vessel, which hath no covering bound upon it, is unclean. 16 And whosoever toucheth one that is slain with a sword in the open fields, or a dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days. 17 And for an unclean person they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for sin, and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel: 18 And a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it upon the tent, and upon all the ves-

sels, and upon the persons that were there, and upon him that touched a bone, or one slain, or one dead, or a grave: 19 And the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day, and on the seventh day he shall purifie himself, and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at even. 20 But the man that shall be unclean, and shall not purifie himself, that soul shall be cut off from among the congregation: because he hath defiled the sanctuary of the LORD, the water of separation hath not been sprinkled upon him, he is unclean. 21 And it shall be a perpetual statute unto them, that he that sprinkleth the water of separation, shall wash his clothes: and he that toucheth the water of separation, shall be unclean until even. 22 And whatsoever the unclean person toucheth, shall be unclean: and the soul that toucheth it, shall be unclean until even.

Directions are here given concerning the Use and Application of the Ashes which were prepar'd for Purification. They were laid up to be laid out; and therefore tho' now one Place would serve to keep them in, while all *Israel* lay so closely encamp'd, yet 'tis probable afterwards, when they came to *Canaan*, some of these Ashes were kept in every Town, for there would be daily use of them.

Observe 1. In what Cases there needed a Purification with these Ashes. No other is mention'd here but the Ceremonial Uncleanness that was contracted by the Touch of a Dead Body, or of the Bone, or Grave of a dead Man, or being in the Tent or House where a dead Body lay, v. 11, 15, 16. This I look upon to be one of the greatest Burthens of the Ceremonial Law, and one of the most unaccountable. He that touch'd the Carcass of an unclean Beast, or any living Man under the greatest Ceremonial Uncleanness, was made unclean by it, only till the even, and needed only common Water to purify himself with; but he that came near the dead Body of Man, Woman or Child, must bear the Reproach of his Uncleanness seven Days, must twice be purified with the Water of Separation, which he could not obtain without Trouble and Charge, and till he is purified must not come near the Sanctuary upon pain of Death. This was strange, considering, (1.) That whenever any Body dy'd (and we are in Deaths oft) several Persons must unavoidably contract this Pollution; the Body must be strip'd, wash'd, wound up, carried out and buried, and this could not be done without many Hands, and yet all defiled; which signifies, that in our corrupt and fallen State, there is none that lives and sins not; we cannot avoid being polluted by the defiling World we pass through, and we offend daily, yet the Impossibility of our being sinless, doth not make Sin the less polluting. (2.) That taking Care of the Dead to see them decently buried, is not only necessary, but a very good Office, and an Act of Kindness, both to the Honour of the Dead, and the Comfort of the Living, and yet Uncleanness was contracted by it, which intimates, that the Pollutions of Sin mix with and cleave to our best Services. There is not a just Man upon Earth that doth good and sinneth not; we are apt some way or other to miss it, even in our doing good. (3.) That this Pollution was contracted by what was done privately in their own Houses, which intimates (as Bishop Patrick observes) that God sees what is done in secret, and nothing can be conceal'd from the Divine Majesty. (4.) This Pollution might be contracted, and yet a Man might never know it, as by the touch of a Grave which appear'd not, of which our Saviour saith, They that walk over it are not aware of it, Luk. 11. 44. which intimates the Defilement of the Conscience by Sins of Ignorance, and the Cause we have to cry out, who can understand his Errors; and to pray, cleanse us from secret Faults, Faults which we ourselves do not see ourselves guilty of.

But why did the Law make a dead Corpse such a defiling Thing? 1. Because Death is the Wages of Sin, entred into the World by it, and reigns by the Power of it. Death to Mankind is another thing from what it is to other Creatures, 'tis a Curse, 'tis the Execution of the Law, and therefore the Defilement of Death signifies, the Defilement of Sin. 2. Because the Law could not conquer Death, nor abolish it, and alter the Property of it, as the Gospel doth by bringing Life and Immortality to Light, and so introducing a better Hope. Since our Redeemer was dead and buried, Death is no more destroying to the *Israel* of God, and therefore dead Bodies are no more defiling; but while the Church was under the Law, to shew that it made not the Corners thereunto perfect, the Pollution contracted by dead Bodies could not but form in their Minds melancholly and uncomfortable Notions concerning Death, whilst Believers now through Christ can triumph over it. O Grave where is thy Victory! Where is thy Pollution!

1. How the Ashes were to be us'd, and applied in these Cases. 1. A small quantity of the Ashes must be put into a Cup of Spring Water, and mix'd with the Water, which thereby was made, as it is here call'd, a Water of Separation, because it was to be sprinkled on those who were separated or removed from the Sanctuary by their Uncleanness. As the Ashes of the Heifer signified the Merit of Christ, so the running Water signified the Power and Grace of the blessed Spirit, who is compar'd to Rivers of Living Water, and it is by his Operation that the Righteousness of Christ is applied to us for our cleansing. Hence we are said to be washed, that is, *sanctified and justified*, not only in the Name of the Lord Jesus, but by the Spirit of our God, 1 Cor. 6. 11. 1 Pet. 1. 2. Those that promise themselves Benefit by the Righteousness of Christ, while they submit not to the Grace and Influence of the Spirit, do but deceive themselves, for we cannot put asunder what God has join'd, nor be purified by the Ashes otherwise than in the running Water. 2. This Water must be applied by a Bunch of Hyssop dipp'd in it, with which the Person or Thing to be cleansed must be sprinkled, v. 18. In allusion to which David prays, *Purge me with Hyssop*. Faith is as the Bunch of Hyssop, wherewith the Conscience is sprinkled, and the Heart purified. Many might be sprinkled at once, and the Water with which the Ashes were mingled might serve for many sprinklings, till it was all spent; and a very little lighting upon a Man serv'd to purify him, if done with that Intention. In allusion to this Application of the Water of Separation by sprinkling, the Blood of Christ is said to be the *Blood of sprinkling*, Heb. 12. 24. and with it we are said to be *sprinkled from an evil Conscience*, Heb. 10. 22. i. e. we are freed from the Uncleaness that ariseth from a Sense of our Guilt. And 'tis foretold, that Christ by his Baptism shall *sprinkle many Nations*, Isa. 52. 15. 3. The unclean Person must be sprinkled with this Water on the third Day after his Pollution, and on the seventh Day, v. 12, 19. The Days were reckon'd (we may suppose) from the last Time of his touching or coming near the dead Body; for he would not begin the Days of his Cleansing, while he was still under a necessity of repeating the Pollution, but when the dead Body was buried, so that there was no further Occasion of meddling with it, then he began to reckon his Days. Then and then only we may with Comfort apply Christ's Merit to our Souls, when we have forsaken Sin, and cease all Fellowship with the unfruitful Works of Death and Darkness. The Repetition of the Sprinkling, teacheth us often to renew the Actings of Repentance and Faith: wash as Naaman, seven times; we have need to do that often, which 'tis so necessary should be well done. 4. Though the Pollution contracted was only Ceremonial, yet the Neglect of the Purification prescribed, would turn into a Moral Guilt; *He that shall be unclean, and shall not purify himself, that Soul shall be cut off*, v. 20. Note, It is a dangerous thing to condemn Divine Institutions, though they may seem minute. A light Wound, if neglected, may prove fatal; a Sin we call little, if not repented of, will be our Ruin, when great Sinners that repent shall find Mercy. Our Uncleanness separates us from God, but it is our being unclean and not purifying ourselves that will separate us for ever from him; 'tis not the Wound that is fatal, so much as the Contempt of the Remedy. 5. Even he that sprinkled the Water of Separation, or touch'd it, or touch'd the unclean Person, must be unclean till the Even, i. e. must not come near the Sanctuary that Day, v. 21, 22. Thus God would shew them the Imperfection of those Services, and their Insufficiency to purify the Conscience, that they might look for the Messiah, who, in the fulness of Time should by the eternal Spirit, offer himself without Spot unto God, and so purge our Consciences from dead Works, (i. e. from Sin, which defiles like a dead Body, and is therefore call'd, a Body of Death) that we may have liberty of Access to the Sanctuary, to serve the living God, with living Sacrifices.

CHAP. XX.

At this Chapter begins the History of the fortieth Year (which was the last) of the Israelites wandering in the Wilderness. And since the beginning of their second Year, when they were sentenc'd to make their Quarantine in the Desert, there to wear away the tedious Revolutions of Forty Years, there is little recorded concerning them till this last Year, which brought them to the Borders of Canaan, and the History of this Year is almost as large as the History of the first Year. This Chapter is, 1. Concerning the Death of Miriam, v. 1. 2. The fetching of Water out of the Rock. In which observe, (1.) The Distress Israel was in for want of Water, v. 2. (2.) Their Discontent and Murmuring in that Distress, v. 3, 4, 5. (3.) God's Pity and Power engag'd for their Supply, with Water out of the Rock, v. 6, 7, 8, 9, 11. (4.) The Infirmary of Moses and Aaron upon this Occasion, v. 11. (5.) God's Displeasure against them, v. 12, 13. 3. The Treaty with the Edomites. Israel's Request, v. 14, 17. and the Repulse the Edomites gave them, v. 18, 21. 4. The Death of Aaron the

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High Priest upon Mount Hor, the Infalment of Eleazar, in his room, and the Peoples mourning for him, v. 22, 29.

Then came the children of Israel, even the whole congregation, into the desert of Zin, in the first month: and the people abode in Kadish; and Miriam died there, and was buried there. 2 And there was no water for the congregation: and they gathered themselves together against Moses, and against Aaron. 3 And the people chode with Moses, and spake, saying, Would God that we had died when our brethren died before the LORD, 4 And why have ye brought up the congregation of the LORD into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there? 5 And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us in unto this evil place? it is no place of seed, or of figs, or vines, or of pomegranates, neither is there any water to drink. 6 And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they fell upon their faces: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto them. 7 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 8 Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes, and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth unto them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink. 9 And Moses took the rod from before the LORD, as he commanded him, 10 And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels, must we fetch you water out of this rock? 11 And Moses lift up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank and their beasts also. 12 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believe me not, to sanctifie me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them. 13 This is the water of Maribah, because the children of Israel strove with the LORD, and he was sanctified in them.

After Eight and thirty Years tedious Marches, or rather tedious Rests in the Wilderness, backwards towards the Red Sea, the Armies of Israel now at length set their Faces towards Canaan again, and are come not far off from the Place where they were, when by the righteous Sentence of Divine Justice, they were made to begin their Wandrings. Hitherto they had been led about as in a Maze or Labyrinth, while Execution was in doing upon the Rebels that were sentenc'd; but they were now brought into the right Way again; they abode in Kadish, v. 1. not Kadesh-barnea, which was near the Borders of Canaan, but another Kadesh on the Confines of Edom, further off from the Land of Promise, yet in the Way to it from the Red Sea, to which they had been hurried back.

Now, 1. Here Miriam dies; the Sister of Moses and Aaron, and as it should seem, elder than either of them. She must be so, if she was that Sister that was set to watch Moses, when he was put into the Ark of Bulrushes, Exod. 2. 4. v. 1. Miriam died there. She was a Prophetess, had been an Instrument of much Good to Israel, Mic. 6. 4. When Moses and Aaron with their Rod went before them to work Wonders for them, Miriam with her Timbrel went before them in praising God for his wondrous Works, (Exod. 15. 20.) And therein did them real Service, yet she had once been a Murmuror, Numb. 12. 1. And must not enter Canaan. 2. Here there is another Meribah; one Place we met with before of that Name, in the beginning of their March thro' the Wilderness, which was so call'd because of the chiding of the Children of Israel, Exod. 17. 7. And now we have another Place at the latter end of their March, which bears the same Name, and for the same Reason; this is the Water of Meribah, v. 13. What was there done, is here re-acted. 1. There was no Water for the Congregation, v. 2. The Water out of the Rock of Rephidim had followed them

Bbb 2

while

while there was need of it, but 'tis probable that for some time they had been in a Country where they were supply'd in an ordinary Way, and when common Providence supply'd them, 'twas fit the Miracle should cease; but in this Place it fell out, that there was no Water, or not sufficient for the Congregation. *Note*, We live in a wandering World, and where-ever we are, must expect to meet with some Inconvenience or other. It is a great Mercy to have Plenty of Water, a Mercy which if we found the Want of, we should own the Worth of. 2. Here-upon they murmur'd; mutiny'd, v. 2. *Gather'd themselves together*, and took up Arms against Moses and Aaron. They chid with them, v. 3. Spoke the same absurd and brutish Language that their Fathers had done before them; (1.) They wili'd they had dyed as Malefactors by the Hands of Divine Justice, rather than thus seem for a while neglected by the Divine Mercy. *Would God we had died, when our Brethren died before the Lord*. Instead of giving God thanks, as they ought to have done, for sparing them, they not only despise the Mercy of their Reprieve, but quarrel with it, as if God had done them a great deal of Wrong, in giving them their Lives for a Prey, and snatching them as Brands out of the Burnings. But they need not wish they had died with their Brethren, they are here taking the ready Way to die like their Brethren in a little while. *Wo unto them that desire the day of the Lord*, Amos 5. 18. (2.) They are angry that they were brought out of Egypt, and led thro' this Wilderness, v. 4, 5. They quarrel with Moses for that which they knew was the Lord's doing; they represent that as an Injury, which was the greatest Favour that ever was done to any People. They prefer Slavery before Liberty; the House of Bondage before the Land of Promise; and tho' the present Want was of Water only, yet now they are dispos'd to find Fault, it shall be look'd upon as an insufferable Hardship put upon them, that they have not Vines and Figs. 'Twas an Aggravation of their Crime, (1.) That they had smarted so long for the Discontents and Distresses of their Fathers. They had born their Whoredoms, now almost Forty Years in the Wilderness, Chap. 14. 33. And yet they venture in the same Steps, and as is charg'd upon Beshazzar, *bumble not their Hearts tho' they knew all this*, Dan. 5. 22. (2.) That they had had such long and constant Experience of God's Goodness to them; and of the Tenderness and Faithfulness of Moses and Aaron; (3.) That Miriam was now newly dead; and having lost one of their Leaders, they ought to have been more Respectful to those that were left, but as if they were resolv'd to provoke God to leave them as Sheep without any Shepherd, they grow outrageous against them. Instead of condoling with Moses and Aaron for the Death of their Sister, they add Affliction to their Grief. 3. Moses and Aaron made them no Reply, but retir'd to the Door of the Tabernacle to know God's Mind in this Case, v. 6. There they fell on their Faces as formerly on the like Occasion, to deprecate the Wrath of God, and to intreat Direction from him. Here's no mention of any thing they said, they knew God heard the Murmurings of the People, and before him they humbly prostrate themselves, making Intercession with Groanings that cannot be utter'd. There they lay, waiting for Orders. *Speak Lord, for thy Servants hear*. 4. God appear'd to determine the Matter; not on his Tribunal of Justice to sentence the Rebels according to their Deserts, no, he will not return to destroy Ephraim, will not always chide, (See Gen. 8. 21.) but he appear'd (1.) On his Throne of Glory, to silence their unjust Murmurings, v. 6. The Glory of the Lord appear'd, to still the Tumult of the People, by striking an Awe upon them. *Note*, A believing Sight of the Glory of the Lord would be an effectual Check to our Lusts and Passions, and would keep our Mouths as with a Bridle. (2.) On his Throne of Grace to satisfy their just Desires. 'Twas requisite they should have Water, and therefore, tho' the manner of petitioning for it was irregular and disorderly, yet God did not take that Advantage against them to deny it them, but gave immediate Orders for their Supply, v. 8. Moses must a second time in God's Name command Water out of a Rock for them, to shew that God is as able as ever to supply his People with good Things, even in their greatest Straits, and the utmost failure of second Causes. Almighty Power can bring Water out of a Rock, has done it, and can again, for his Arm is not shorten'd. Left it should be thought that there was something peculiar in the former Rock itself, some secret Spring which Nature hid before in it, God here bids him broach another, and doth not, as then, direct him which he must apply to, but let him make use of which he pleas'd, or the first he came to; all alike to Omnipotence. (1.) God bids him take the Rod, that famous Rod with which he had summon'd the Plagues of Egypt, and divided the Sea, that having that in his Hand, both he and the People might be minded of the great Things God had formerly done for them, and might be encourag'd to trust in him now. This Rod, it seems, was kept in the Tabernacle, (v. 9.) for it was the Rod of God; the Rod of his Strength, as the Gospel is call'd, (Psal. 110. 2.) perhaps in allusion to it. (2.) God bids him gather the Assembly, not the Elders only, but the People, to be Witnesses of what was done, that by their own Eyes they might be convinc'd and made a-

ham'd of their Unbelief. There's no Fallacy in God's Works of Wonder, and therefore they shun not the Light, nor the Inspection and Enquiry of many Witnesses. (3.) He bids him speak to the Rock, which would do as it was bidden; to shame the People who had been so often spoken to, and would not hear, or obey. Their Hearts were harder than this Rock, not so tender, nor so yielding, nor so obedient. (4.) He promiseth that the Rock should give forth Water, v. 8; and it did so, v. 11. *The Water came out abundantly*. This is an Instance not only of the Power of God, that he could thus fetch Honey out of the Rock, and Oyl out of the Flinty Rock, but of his Mercy and Grace that he would do it for such a provoking People. This was upon the Matter a new Generation, most of the old Stock were by this time worn off, yet they were as bad as those that went before them; Murmuring run in their Blood, yet the Entail of the Divine Favour was not cut off; but in this Instance of it, the Divine Patience shines as bright as the Divine Power. He is God, and not Man, in sparing and pardoning; nay, he not only here gave them the Drink which they drank off in common with their Beasts, v. 8, 11; but in it he made them to drink spiritual Drink, which typified spiritual Blessings, for that Rock was Christ. 5. Moses and Aaron mist'd it in the Management of this Matter, and mist'd it so much, that God in Displeasure told them immediately they should not have the Honour of bringing Israel into Canaan, v. 10, 11, 12. This is a strange Passage of Story, yet very instructive. 1. It is certain that God was greatly offended, and justly, for he is never angry without Cause. Tho' they were his Servants, and had obtain'd Mercy to be faithful, tho' they were his Favourites, and such as he had highly honour'd, yet for something they thought, or said, or did upon this Occasion, he put them under the Disgrace and Mortification of dying, as other unbelieving Israelites did, short of Canaan. And no doubt the Crime deserv'd the Punishment. 2. Yet it is uncertain what it was in this Management that was so provoking to God, the Fault was complicated. 1. They did not punctually observe their Orders, but in some things varied from their Commission; God bid them speak to the Rock, and they spake to the People, and smote the Rock, which at this Time they were not order'd to do, but they thought speaking would not do. When in distrust of the Power of the Word, we have recourse to the Secular Power in Matters of pure Conscience, we do as Moses here, smite the Rock we should only speak to. 2. They assum'd too much of the Glory of this Work of Wonder to themselves; *must we fetch Water?* As if it were done by some Power or Worthiness of theirs. Therefore 'tis charg'd upon them, v. 12. that they did not sanctify God, i. e. they did not give him that Glory of this Miracle which was due unto his Name. 3. Unbelief was the great Transgression, v. 12. *Ye believed me not*; nay, it is call'd *rebellious against God's Commandment*, Numb. 27. 14. The Command was to bring Water out of the Rock, but they rebelled against this Command by distrusting it, and doubting whether it would take effect or no. They speak doubtfully, *must we fetch Water?* And probably they did some other Ways discover an uncertainty in their own Minds, whether Water would come or no, for such a rebellious Generation as this was. And perhaps they the rather question'd it, tho' God had promis'd it, because the Glory of the Lord did not appear before them upon this Rock, as it had done upon the Rock in Rephidim, Exod. 17. 6. They would not take God's Word without a Sign. Dr. Lightfoot's Notion of their Unbelief, is, that they doubted whether now at last when the Forty Years were expir'd they should enter Canaan, and whether they must not for the Murmurings of the People be condemn'd to another like Fatigue, because a new Rock was now open'd for their Supply, which they took for an Indication of their longer Stay. And if so, justly were they kept out of Canaan themselves, while the People enter'd at the Time appointed. 4. They said and did all in Heat and Passion; this is the Account given of the Sin, Psal. 106. 33. *They provoked his Spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his Lips*. 'Twas in his Passion that he call'd them Rebels; 'tis true they were so, God had call'd them so, and Moses afterwards in the way of a just Reproof, (Deut. 9. 24.) calls them so without Offence, but now it came from a provoked Spirit, and was spoken unadvisedly; 'twas too like *Raca*, and then *Fool*. His smiting of the Rock twice, (it should seem not waiting at all for the Eruption of the Water upon the first Stroke) speaks him in a heat. The same thing said and done with Meekness may be justifiable, which when said and done in Anger may be highly culpable. See Jam. 1. 20. 5. That which aggravated all the rest, and made it the more provoking, was, that it was publick, before the Eyes of the Children of Israel, to whom they should have been Examples of Faith, and Hope, and Meekness. We find Moses guilty of a sinful Distrust, Num. 11. 22, 23. That was private between God and him, and therefore was only check'd, but this was publick, it dishonour'd God before Israel, as if he grudg'd them his Favours, and discourag'd the Peoples Hope in God, and therefore this was severely punish'd, and the more because of the Dignity and Eminency of them that offended.

From the whole we may learn, 1. That the best of Men have their Failings, even in those Graces that they are most eminent for. *The Man Moses was very meek*, and yet here he sinn'd in Passion; wherefore let him that thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall. 2. That God judgeth not as Man judgeth concerning Sins; we would think there was not much amiss in what *Moses* said and did, yet God saw Cause to animadvert severely upon it. He knows the Frame of Mens Spirits, what Temper they are of, and what Temper they are in, upon particular Occasions; and from what Thoughts and Intentions, Words and Actions do proceed; and we are sure that therefore his Judgment is according to Truth, when it agrees not with ours. 3. That God not only takes Notice of, and is displeas'd with the Sins of his People, but the nearer any are to him, the more offensive are their Sins. *Amos 3. 2.* It should seem the Psalmist refers to this Sin of *Moses* and *Aaron*, *Psal. 99. 8.* *Thou wast a God that forgavest them, tho' thou took'st Vengeance on their Inventions.* As many are spar'd in this Life, and punish'd in t'other, so many are punish'd in this Life, and sav'd in t'other. 4. That when our Heart is hot within us, we are concern'd to take heed that we offend not with our Tongue. Yet, 5. It is an Evidence of the Sincerity of *Moses*, and his Impartiality in writing, that he himself left this upon Record concerning himself, and drew not a Veil over his own Infirmary; by which it appear'd, that in what he wrote, as well as in what he did, he sought God's Glory more than his own.

Lastly, The Place is hereupon call'd *Meribah*, *v. 12.* 'Tis call'd *Meribah-Kadesh*, *Deut. 32. 51.* to distinguish it from the other *Meribah*. 'Tis the *Water of Strife*; to perpetuate the Remembrance of the Peoples Sin, and *Moses's*, and yet of God's Mercy, who supply'd them with Water, and own'd and honour'd *Moses* notwithstanding. Thus he was sanctified in them, as the *Holy One of Israel*, so he is call'd when his Mercy rejoiceth against Judgment, *Hos. 11. 9.* *Moses* and *Aaron* did not sanctify God as they ought in the Eyes of *Israel*, *v. 12.* but God was sanctified in them; for he will not be a loser in his Honour by any Man. If he be not glorified by us, he will be glorified upon us.

14 ¶ And *Moses* sent Messengers from *Kadesh*, unto the king of *Edom*, Thus saith thy brother *Israel*, Thou knowest all the travel that hath befallen us: 15 How our fathers went down into *Egypt*, and we have dwelt in *Egypt* a long time: and the *Egyptians* vexed us and our fathers. 16 And when we cried unto the LORD, he heard our voice, and sent an angel, and hath brought us forth out of *Egypt*: and behold we are in *Kadesh*, a city in the uttermost of thy border. 17 Let us pass, I pray thee, through thy country: we will not pass through the fields, or through the vineyards, neither will we drink of the water of the wells: we will go by the kings high way, we will not turn to the right hand nor the left, until we have pass'd thy borders. 18 And *Edom* said unto him, Thou shalt not pass by me, lest I come out against thee with the sword. 19 And the children of *Israel* said unto him, We will go by the high way: and if I and my cattle drink of the water, then I will pay for it: I will only (without doing any thing else) go through on my feet. 20 And he said, Thou shalt not go through. And *Edom* came out against him with much people, and with a strong hand. 21 Thus *Edom* refused to give *Israel* passage through his border: wherefore *Israel* turned away from him.

We have here the Treaty between *Israel* and the *Edomites*; the next way to *Canaan* from the Place where *Israel* now lay encamp'd, was thro' the Country of *Edom*. Now, 1. *Moses* sends Ambassadors to treat with the King of *Edom* for leave to pass thro' his Country, and gives them Instructions what to say, *v. 14, 15, 16, 17.* (1.) They are to claim kindred with the *Edomites*. Thus saith thy Brother *Israel*. Both Nations descended from *Abraham* and *Isaac*, their common Ancestors, *Esau* and *Jacob*, the two Fathers of their several Nations, were Twin-Brothers; and therefore for Relation-ſake they might reasonably expect this Kindness from them; nor needed the *Edomites* to fear that their Brother *Israel* had any ill Design upon them, or would take any Advantages against them. (2.) They are to give a short Account of the History and present State of *Israel*, which they take it for granted the *Edomites* were no Strangers to. And in this there was a double Plea. 1. *Israel* had been abus'd by the *Egyptians*, and therefore ought to be pitied and succour'd by their Relations; the *Egyptians*

vexed us and our Fathers, but we may hope our Brethren the *Edomites* will not be so Vexatious. 2. *Israel* had been wonderfully saved by the Lord, and therefore ought to be countenanced and favoured. *v. 16.* We cried unto the Lord, and he sent an Angel, the Angel of his Presence, the Angel of the Covenant, the Eternal Word, who has brought us forth out of *Egypt*, and led us hither. 'Twas therefore the Interest of the *Edomites* to ingratiate themselves with a People that had so great an Interest in Heaven, and we so much its Favourites, and it was at their Peril if they offer'd them any Injury. 'Tis our Wisdom and Duty to be kind to those whom God is pleas'd to own, and to take his People for our People. Come in thou blessed of the Lord. (3.) They are humbly to beg a Passage thro' their Country. Tho' God himself in the Pillar of Cloud and Fire was *Israel's* Guide, in following which they might have justified their passing thro' any Man's Ground against all the World; yet God would have this Respect paid to the *Edomites*, to show, that no Man's Property ought to be invaded under Colour of Religion. Dominion is founded in Providence, not in Grace. Thus when *Christ* was to pass thro' a Village of the *Samaritans*, to whom his coming was likely to be Offensive, he sent Messengers before his Face to ask leave, *Luk. 9. 52.* Those that would receive Kindness, must not disdain to request it. (4.) They are to give Security for the good Behaviour of the *Israelites*, in this March. That they would keep in the King's High Road, that they would commit no Trespas upon any Man's Property, either in Ground or Water, that they would not so much as make use of a Well but they would pay for it, and that they would make all convenient speed, as fast as they could well go on their Feet, *v. 17, 19.* Nothing could be offer'd more fair and neighbourly. 2. The Ambassadors return with a Denial, *v. 18.* *Edom*, that is the King of *Edom*, as Protector of his Country, said, Thou shalt not pass by me; and when the Ambassadors urg'd it further, he repeated the Denial, *v. 20.* and threaten'd, if they offer'd to enter his Country, it should be at their Peril; he rais'd his Train'd-bands to oppose them. Thus *Edom* refus'd to give *Israel* Passage. This was owing, 1. To their Jealousy of the *Israelites*, they fear'd they should receive Damage by them, and would not trust their Promises. And truly had this numerous Army been under any other Discipline and Command but that of the righteous God himself, who would no more suffer them to do wrong, than to take wrong, there might have been cause for this Jealousy, but what could they fear from a Nation that had Statutes and Judgments so righteous? 2. 'Twas owing to the old Enmity which *Esau* bore to *Israel*: If they had no reason to fear Damage by them, yet they were not willing to shew so much kindness to them. *Esau* hated *Jacob* because of the Blessing, and now the Hatred reviv'd, when the Blessing was ready to be inherited. God would hereby discover the ill Nature of the *Edomites*, to their Shame; and try the good Nature of the *Israelites* to their Honour, they turned away from him, and did not take this Occasion to quarrel with him. Note, We must not think it strange if the most reasonable Requests be denied by unreasonable Men; and if those be affronted by Men, whom God favours. I as a deaf Man heard not. After this Indignity which the *Edomites* did to *Israel*, God gave them a particular Caution, not to abhor an *Edomite*, (*Deut. 23. 7.*) tho' the *Edomites* had shew'd such an Abhorrence in them, to teach us in such Cases not to meditate Revenge.

22 ¶ And the children of *Israel*, even the whole congregation, journeyed from *Kadesh*, and came unto mount *Hor*. 23 And the LORD spake unto *Moses* and *Aaron* in mount *Hor*, by the coast of the land of *Edom*, saying, 24 *Aaron* shall be gathered unto his people: for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of *Israel*, because ye rebelled against my word at the water of *Meribah*. 25 Take *Aaron* and *Eleazar* his son, and bring them up unto mount *Hor*: 26 And strip *Aaron* of his garments, and put them upon *Eleazar* his son: and *Aaron* shall be gathered unto his people, and shall die there. 27 And *Moses* did as the LORD commanded: and they went up into mount *Hor*, in the sight of all the congregation. 28 And *Moses* stripped *Aaron* of his garments, and put them upon *Eleazar* his son, and *Aaron* died there in the top of the mount: and *Moses* and *Eleazar* came down from the mount. 29 And when all the congregation saw that *Aaron* was dead, they mourned for *Aaron* thirty days, even all the house of *Israel*.

The Chapter began with the Funeral of *Miriam*, and it ends with the Funeral of her Brother *Aaron*: When Death comes

Comes into a Family it often strikes double. *Israel* had not improv'd the former Affliction they were under by the Death of the Prophetess, and therefore soon after God took away their Priest, to try if they would lay that to Heart. This happen'd at the very next Stage, when they remov'd to Mount *Hor*, fetching a Compass about the *Edomites* Country, leaving it on their left Hand. Wherever we go Death attends us, and the Graves are ready for us.

1. God bids *Aaron* die, v. 24. God takes *Moses* and *Aaron* aside, and tells them *Aaron* shall be gathered to his People; these two dear Brothers are told that they must part; *Aaron* the elder must die first, but *Moses* is not likely to be long after him; so that it is but for a while, a little while that they are parted. (1.) There is something of Displeasure in these Orders; *Aaron* must not enter *Canaan*, because he had fail'd in his Duty at the *Waters of Strife*. The mention of this no doubt went to the Heart of *Moses*, who knew himself perhaps at that time more guilty of the two. (2.) There is much of Mercy in them. *Aaron*, though he die for his Transgression, is not put to Death as a Malefactor, by a Plague, or Fire from Heaven, but dies with Ease, and in Honour. He is not cut off from his People, as the Expression usually is concerning those that die by the Hand of Divine Justice, but he is gather'd to his People, as one that died in the Arms of Divine Grace. (3.) There is much of Type, and significancy in them. *Aaron* must not enter *Canaan*, to shew that the *Levitical Priesthood* could make nothing perfect, that must be done by the bringing in of a better Hope. Those Priests could not continue by reason of Sin, and Death, but the Priesthood of Christ being undefiled is unchangeable, and to this which abideth for ever *Aaron* must resign all his Honour, *Heb.* 7. 23, 24, 25. 2. *Aaron* submits and dies, in the Method and Manner appointed, and for ought appears with as much cheerfulness as if he had been going to Bed. (1.) He puts on his Holy Garments, to take his leave of them, and goes up with his Brother and Son to the top of Mount *Hor*, and probably some of the Elders of *Israel* with him, v. 27. They went up in the sight of all the Congregation, who 'tis likely were told on what Errand they went up; by this solemn Procession *Aaron* lets *Israel* know that he is neither afraid or ashamed to die, but when the Bridegroom comes, can trim his Lamps, and go forth to meet him. His going up the Hill to die, signified, that the Death of Saints (and *Aaron* is call'd the Saint of the Lord) is their Ascension; they rather go up than go down to Death. (2.) *Moses* whose Hands had first cloth'd *Aaron* with his Priestly Garments, now strips him of them; for in Reverence to the Priesthood, it was not fit he should die in them. Note, Death will strip us: Naked we came into the World, and naked we must go out. We shall see little reason to be proud of our Clothes, our Ornaments, or Marks of Honour, if we consider how soon Death will strip us of our Glory, divest us of all our Offices and Honours, and take the Crown off from our head. (3.) *Moses* immediately puts the Priestly Garments upon *Eleazar* his Son, clothes him with his Fathers Robe, and strengthens him with his Girdle, *Isa.* 22. 21. Now, 1. This was a great Comfort to *Moses*, by whose Hand the Law of the Priesthood was given, to see that it should be kept up in a Succession, and that a Lamp was ordain'd for the anointed, which should not be extinguish'd by Death itself. This was a happy Earnest and Indication to the Church of the Care God would take, that as one Generation of Ministers and Christians (spiritual Priests) passeth away, another Generation shall come up instead of it. 2. 'Twas a great Satisfaction to *Aaron*, to see his Son who was dear to him, thus prefer'd, and his Office which was dearer, thus preserv'd and secur'd; and especially to see in this a Figure of Christ's Everlasting Priesthood, in which alone his would be perpetuated: Now, Lord, might *Aaron* say, Let thy Servant depart in Peace, for mine Eyes have seen thy Salvation. 3. 'Twas a great kindness to the People. The installing of *Eleazar* before *Aaron* was dead, would prevent those who bore ill-will to *Aaron's* Family from attempting to set up another, upon his Death, in Competition with his Son; What could they do when the Matter was already settled? It would likewise encourage those among them that fear'd God, and be a token for Good to them, that he would not leave them, nor suffer his Faithfulness to fail. (4.) *Aaron* died there. Presently after he was strip'd of his Priestly Garments, he laid him down and died contentedly; for a good Man would desire, if it were the Will of God, not to out-live his Usefulness. Why should we covet to continue any longer in this World, than while we may do God and our Generation some Service in it? (5.) *Moses* and *Eleazar* with those that attend'd them, buried *Aaron* there where he died, as appears by *Deut.* 10. 6. and then came down from the Mount. And now when they came down, and had left *Aaron* behind, it might be proper for them to think, that he was rather gone up to the better World, and had left them behind. (6.) All the Congregation mourned for *Aaron* Thirty Days, v. 29. Tho' the Loss was well made up in *Eleazar*, who being in the Prime of his Time was fitter for publick Service, than *Aaron* would have been if he had liv'd, yet 'twas a Debt owing to their deceased High-Priest to mourn for him. While he liv'd they were mur-

muring at him upon all Occasions, but now he was dead they mourned for him. Thus many are taught to lament the Loss of those Mercies, which they would not learn to be thankful for the Enjoyment of. Many good Men have had more Honour done to their Memories, than ever they had to their Persons; witness those that were persecuted while they liv'd, but when they were dead had their Sepulchres garnished.

CHAP. XXI.

The Armies of *Israel* now begin to emerge out of the Wilderness, and to come into a Land inhabited; to enter upon action, and take Possession of the Frontiers of the Land of Promise. A Glorious Campaign this Chapter gives us the History of, especially in the latter part of it. Here's 1. The Defeat of *Arad* the *Canaanite*, v. 1-3. 2. The Chastisement of the People with fiery Serpents for their murmurings, and the relief granted them upon their submission by a brazen Serpent, v. 4-9. 3. Several Marches forward, and some Occurrences by the way, v. 10-20. 4. The celebrated Conquest of *Sihon* King of the *Amorites*, v. 21-32. And of *Og* King of *Bashan*, v. 33-35. And Possession taken of their Land.

AND when king *Arad* the *Canaanite*, which dwelt in the South, heard tell that *Israel* came by the way of the spies, then he fought against *Israel*, and took some of them prisoners, 2 And *Israel* vowed a vow unto the LORD and said, If thou wilt indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities. 3 And the LORD hearkened to the voice of *Israel*, and delivered up the *Canaanites*: and they utterly destroyed them, and their cities, and he called the name of the place *Hormah*.

Here's 1. The Descent which *Arad* the *Canaanite* made upon the Camp of *Israel*, hearing that they came by the way of the spies; for tho' the Spies *Moses* had sent Thirty Eight Years before, then pass'd and repass'd unobserv'd, yet their coming, and their Errand 'tis likely was afterwards known to the *Canaanites*, gave them an Alarm, and oblig'd them to keep an Eye upon *Israel*, and get Intelligence of all their Motions. Now when they understood they were facing about towards *Canaan*, this *Arad* thinking it Policy to keep the War at a Distance made an Onset upon them, and fought with them. But it prov'd that he meddled to his own hurt; had he listen'd still his People might have been last destroy'd, of all the *Canaanites*, but now they were the first. Thus they that are overmuch Wicked die before their time, *Eccl.* 7. 17. 2. His Success at first in this Attempt. His advance Guards pick'd up some straggling *Israelites*, and took them Prisoners, v. 1. This no doubt puff'd him up, and he began to think he should have the Honour of crushing this formidable Body, and saving his Country from the Ruin it threaten'd them. It was likewise a Trial to the Faith of the *Israelites*, and a Check to them for their Distrusts and Discontents. 3. *Israel's* humble Address to God upon this Occasion, v. 2. It was a Temptation to them to murmur as their Fathers did, and to despair of getting Possession of *Canaan*, but God who thus tried them by his Providence, enabled them by his Grace to quit themselves well in the Trial, and to trust in God for Relief against this fierce and powerful Assailant. They by their Elders in Prayer for success vowed a vow. Note, When we are desiring and expecting Mercy from God, we should bind our Souls with a Bond that we will faithfully do our Duty to him, particularly that we will Honour him with the Mercy we are in the pursuit of. Thus *Israel* here promis'd to destroy the Cities of these *Canaanites*, as devoted to God, and not to take the Spoil of them to their own Use. If God would give them Victory he should have all the Praise, and they would not make a Gain of it to themselves. When we are in this Frame we are prepar'd to receive Mercy. 4. The Victory which the *Israelites* obtain'd over the *Canaanites*, v. 3. A strong Party was sent out probably under the command of *Joshua*, which not only drove back these *Canaanites* but follow'd them to their Cities, which probably lay on the Edge of the Wilderness, and utterly destroyed them, and so returned to the Camp. *Vincitur in praelio, sed non in Bello*. What is said of the Tribe of *Gad* is true of all God's *Israel*, a Troop may overcome them, but they shall overcome at the last. The Place was call'd *Hormah*, as a Memorial of the Desolation, for the Terror of the *Canaanites*, and probably for warning to Posterity not to attempt the Rebuilding of these Cities, which were destroy'd as devoted to God, and Sacrifices to Divine Justice. And it appears by the Instance of *Jericho*, that the Law concerning such Cities

was;

was, that they should never be rebuilt. There seems to be an Allusion to this Name in the Prophecy of the Fall of the New Testament *Babylon*. Rev. 15. 16. Where its Forces are said to be gather'd together to a Place call'd *Arma geddon*; the Destruction of a Troop.

4 ¶ And they journied from mount Hor, by the way of the Red-sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. 5 And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt, to die in the Wilderness? for *there is no bread, neither is there any water, and our soul loatheth this light bread.* 6 And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, and much people of Israel died. 7 ¶ Therefore the People came to Moses and said, We have sinned: for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee: pray unto the LORD that he take away the serpents from us: and Moses prayed for the people. 8 And the LORD said unto Moses, make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. 9 And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.

Here's 1. The Fatigue of Israel by a long March round the Land of Edom, because they could not obtain Passage through it the next way, v. 4. *The Soul of the People was much discouraged because of the way.* Perhaps the Way was rough and uneven, or foul and dirty; or, it fretted them to go so far about, and that they were not permitted to force their Passage through the Edomites Country. Those that are of a fretful discontented Spirit will always find something, or other to make them uneasy. 2. Their unbelief and murmuring upon this Occasion, v. 5. Tho' they had just now obtain'd a Glorious Victory over the Canaanites, and were going on conquering, and to conquer, yet they speak very discontentedly of what God had done for them, and distrustfully of what he would do, vex'd that they were brought out of Egypt, that they had not Bread and Water as other People had, by their own Care and Industry, but by Miracle, they know not how. They have bread enough and to spare: And yet they complain, *there is no bread, because tho' they eat Angels Food, yet they are weary of it.* Manna itself is loth'd, and call'd light Bread, fit for Children, not for Men and Soldiers. What will they be pleas'd with, whom Manna will not please? They that are dispos'd to quarrel will find fault, where there is no Fault to be found. Thus those who have long enjoy'd the means of Grace are apt to surfeit even on the Heavenly Manna, and to call it light Bread. But let not the Contempt which some cast upon the Word of God make us to value it the less? 'Tis the Bread of Life, substantial Bread, and will nourish those who by Faith feed upon it to Life Eternal, whoever calls it light Bread. 3. The righteous Judgment God brought upon them for their murmuring, v. 6. He sent fiery Serpents among them, which bit or stung many of them to Death. The Wilderness through which they had pass'd was all along infested with these fiery Serpents, as appears Deut. 8. 15. But hitherto God had wonderfully preserv'd his People from receiving Hurt by them; till now that they murmur'd; to chastise them for which these Animals which hitherto had shun'd their Camp now invade it. Justly are those made to feel God's Judgments that are not thankful for his Mercies. These Serpents are call'd fiery, either from their Colour, or from their Rage, or from the Effects of their bitings; enflaming the Body, putting it presently into a High Fever, scorching it with an insatiable Thirst. They had unjustly complain'd for want of Water, v. 5. To chastise them for which, God sends upon them this Thirst which no Water would quench. They that cry without cause have justly cause given them to cry out. They distrustfully concluded that they must die in the Wilderness, and God took them at their Word, chose their Delusions, and brought their unbelieving Fears upon them, many of them did die. They had impudently flown in the Face of God himself, and the poison of Asps was under their Lips, and now these fiery Serpents, which it should seem were flying Serpents (Isa. 14. 29.) flew in their Faces, and poison'd them. They in their pride had lifted up themselves against God and Moses, and now God humbled and mortified them by making these despicable Animals a Plague to them. That Artillery

is now turn'd against them, which had formerly been made use of in their Defence against the Egyptians: He that brought Quails to feast them, let them know he could bring Serpents to bite them; the whole Creation is at War with those that are in Arms against God. 4. Their Repentance, and Supplication to God under this Judgment, v. 7. They confess their Fault, *we have sinned*, they are particular in the Confession, *we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee*; 'tis to be fear'd, they had not own'd the Sin, if they had not felt the Smart; but they relent under the Rod; *when he flew them then they sought him.* They beg the Prayers of Moses for them, as conscious to themselves of their own unworthiness to be heard, and convinc'd of the great Interest Moses had in Heaven. How soon is their Tune alter'd! They who but just before had quarrell'd with him, as their worst Enemy, now make their Court to him as their best Friend, and chuse him for their Advocate with God. Afflictions often change Mens Sentiments concerning God's People, and teach them to value those Prayers which when Time was they had scorn'd. Moses, to shew that he had heartily forgiven them, blesses them who had curs'd him, and prays for them who had spitefully us'd him. Herein he was a Type of Christ who interceded for his Persecutors, and a Pattern to us to go and do likewise, and thus to shew that we love our Enemies. 5. The wonderful Provision God made for their Relief. He did not employ Moses in summoning the Judgment, but that he might recommend him to the good Affection of the People, he made him instrumental in their Relief, v. 8, 9. God order'd Moses to make the Representation of a fiery Serpent, which he did in Brass, and set it up on a very long Pole, so as that it might be seen from all Parts of the Camp, and every one that was stung with a fiery Serpent, was heal'd by looking up to that Serpent of Brass. The People pray'd, that God would take away the Serpents from them, v. 6. but God saw fit not to do that; for he gives effectual Relief in the best way, tho' not in our way. Thus those who did not die for their murmuring, yet were made to smart for it, that they might the more feelingly repent and humble themselves for it; they were likewise made to receive their Cure from God by the Hand of Moses, that they might be taught, if possible, never again to speak against God and Moses.

This Method of Cure was altogether miraculous, and the more wonderful if it be true which Naturalists say, that looking upon bright and burnish'd Brass, is hurtful to those that are stung with fiery Serpents. God can bring about his Purposes by contrary Means. The Jews themselves say, it was not the Sight of the Brazen Serpent that cur'd them, but in looking up to it, they looked up to God: as the Lord that healed them. But there was much of Gospel in this Appointment. Our Saviour has told us so, John 3. 14, 15. *That as Moses lifted up the Serpent in the Wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish.* Observe then a Resemblance, (1.) Between their Disease and ours. The Devil is the Old Serpent, a fiery Serpent, hence he appears, Rev. 12. 3. as a great red Dragon. Sin is the biting of this fiery Serpent, 'tis painful to the startled Conscience, and poisonous to the scared Conscience. Satan's Temptations are call'd his fiery Darts, Eph. 6. 16. Lust and Passion enflame the Soul, so do the Terrors of the Almighty when they set themselves in array. At the last, Sin bites like a Serpent, and stings like an Adder; and even its sweets are turned into the Gall of Asps. (2.) Between their Remedy and ours. (1.) 'Twas God himself that devised and prescribed this Antidote against the Poison of the fiery Serpents: so our Salvation by Christ was the Contrivance of Infinite Wisdom; God himself hath found the Ransom. (2.) 'Twas a very unlikely Method of Cure; so our Salvation by the Death of Christ is to the Jews a stumbling Block, and to the Greeks foolishness. 'Twas Moses that lifted up the Serpent in the Wilderness, so the Law is a School-master to bring us to Christ, and Moses wrote of him, John 5. 46. Christ was lifted up by the Rulers of the Jews, who were the Successors of Moses. (4.) That which cur'd was shaped in the likeness of that which wounded. So Christ, tho' perfectly free from Sin himself, yet was made in the likeness of sinful Flesh, Rom. 8. 3. So like, that it was taken for granted this Man was a Sinner, John 9. 24. (5.) The brazen Serpent was lifted up; so was Christ. He was lifted up upon the Cross; John 12. 33, 34. for he was made a Spectacle to the World, He was lifted up by the preaching of the Gospel. The word here us'd for a Pole, signifies a Banner or Ensign, for Christ crucified stands for an Ensign of the People, Isa. 11. 10. Some make the lifting up of the Serpent, to be a Figure of Christ's triumphing over Satan, the old Serpent, whose Head he bruise'd, and in his Cross made an open shew of the Principalities and Powers he had spoil'd and destroy'd, Col. 2. 15. (3.) Between the Application of their Remedy and ours. They look'd and liv'd, and we, if we believe, shall not perish; 'tis by Faith that we look unto Jesus, Heb. 12. 2. *Look unto me and be ye saved,* Isa. 45. 22. We must be sensible of our Wound, and of our Danger by it, receive the Record God has given concerning his Son, and rely upon the Assurance

he has given us, that we shall be heal'd and sav'd by him, if we resign ourselves to his Conduct. The Brazen Serpents being lifted up would not Cure, if it were not look'd upon. If any por'd on their Wound, and would not look up to the Brazen Serpent, they died for certain. If they slighted this Method of Cure, and had recourse to natural Medicines and trusted to them, they justly perish'd; So, if Sinners either despise Christ's Righteousness, or despair of Benefit by it, their Wound will without doubt be fatal; but who ever look'd up to this healing Sign, tho' from the utmost part of the Camp, tho' with a weak and weeping Eye, was certainly heal'd; so whoe'er believes in Christ tho' as yet but *weak in Faith*, shall not perish. There are weak Brethren, for whom Christ died. Perhaps for some time after the Serpent was set up, the Camp of Israel was molested by the *fiery Serpents*; and 'tis the probable Conjecture of some, that they carried this Brazen Serpent along with them through the rest of their Journeys, and set it up wherever they encamp'd, and when they settled in *Canaan*, fix'd it somewhere within the Borders of their Land, for it is not likely, that the Children of Israel went so far off as this was into the Wilderness to burn Incense to it, as we find they did, 2 Kings 18. 4. Even those that are deliver'd from the Eternal Death which is the Wages of Sin, yet must expect to feel the pain and smart of it, as long as they are here in this World, but if it be not our own Fault, we may have the Brazen Serpent to accompany us, to be still look'd up to upon all Occasions, by bearing about with us continually the dying of the Lord Jesus.

10 ¶ And the children of Israel set forward, and pitched in Oboth. 11 And they journeyed from Oboth, and pitched at Ije-Abarim, in the wilderness which is before Moab, toward the sun-rising. 12 ¶ From thence they removed, and pitched in the valley of Zared. 13 From thence they removed, and pitched on the other side of Arnon, which is in the wilderness that cometh out of the coasts of the Amorites: for Arnon is the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites. 14 Wherefore it is said in the book of the wars of the LORD, what he did in the Red-sea, and in the brooks of Arnon. 15 And at the stream of the brooks that goeth down to the dwelling of Ar, and lieth upon the border of Moab. 16 And from thence they went to Beer, that is the well whereof the LORD spake unto Moses, Gather the people together, and I will give them water. 17 ¶ Then Israel sang this song, Spring up, O well, sing ye unto it: 18 The princes digged the well, the nobles of the people digged it, by the direction of the law-giver, with their staves. And from the wilderness they went to Mattanah: 19 And from Mattanah to Nahaliel, and from Nahaliel to Bamoth: 20 And from Bamoth in the valley, that is in the country of Moab, to the top of Pisgah, which looketh toward Jeshimon.

We have here an Account of the several Stages and Removes of the Children of Israel, till they came into the Plains of Moab, out of which at length they passed over Jordan into Canaan, in the beginning of Joshua. Natural Motions the nearer they come to their Centre, the quicker they are. Israel was now drawing near to the promis'd Rest, and now they set forward, as the Expression is, v. 10. It were well, if we would do thus in our Way to Heaven, rid Ground in the latter end of our Journey, and the nearer we come to Heaven, be so much the more active and abundant in the Work of the Lord. Two Things especially are observable in the brief Account here given of these Removes.

1. The wonderful Success which God bless'd his People with near the Brooks of Arnon, v. 13, 14. 15. They had now compass'd the Land of Edom, which they were not to invade, nor so much as to infest, Deut. 2. 4, 5. and were come to the Border of Moab. It's well there are more Ways than one to Canaan. The Enemies of Gods People may retard their Passage, but cannot prevent their Entrance into the promis'd Rest. Care is taken to let us know that the Israelites in their March religiously observ'd the Orders God gave them to use no Hostility against the Moabites, Deut. 2. 9. because they were the Posterity of righteous Lot; therefore they pitch'd on the other side of Arnon, v. 13. That side which was now in the Possession of the Amorites, one of the devoted Nations, though formerly it had belong'd to Moab, as appears here, v. 26, 27. This Care of theirs not to offer Violence to the Moabites is pleaded by Jephthah long after; in his Remonstrance against the

Ammonites, Judg. 11. 15, &c. and turned to them for a Testimony. What their Achievements were now they pitch'd on the Banks of the River Arnon, we are not particularly told, but are refer'd to the Book of the Wars of the Lord; perhaps that Book which was begun with the History of the War with the Amalekites, Exod. 17. 14. Write it (saith God) for a Memorial in a Book; to which were added all the other Battles of the Lord, what he did in the Red-Sea, when he brought Israel out of Egypt, and what he did in the Brooks of Arnon, just before he brought them into Canaan. Note, In celebrating the Memorials of God's Favours to us, it is good to observe the Series of them, and how Divine Goodness and Mercy hath constantly follow'd us, even from the Red-Sea to the Brooks of Arnon. In every Stage of our Lives, nay in every Step, we should take Notice of what God has wrought for us, what he did at such a Time, and what in such a Place, ought to be distinctly remembred. 2. The wonderful Supply which God bless'd his People with at Beer, (v. 16.) which signifies the Well, or Fountain. It is said, v. 10. They pitched in Oboth, which signifies Bottles, so call'd perhaps because there they fill'd their Bottles with Water, which would last them for some Time; but by this Time we may suppose it was with them as it was with Hagar, Gen. 21. 15. The Water was spent in the Bottle; yet we do not find that they murmur'd, and therefore God in Compassion to them, brought them to a Well of Water, to encourage them to wait on him in humble Silence and Expectation, and to believe that he would graciously take Cognizance of their Wants, tho' they did not complain of them. In this World we do at the best but pitch in Oboth, where our Comforts lye in close and scanty Vessels, when we come to Heaven we shall remove to Beer, the Well of Life, and Fountain of Living Waters. Hitherto we have found when they were supplied with Water, they ask'd it in unjust Discontent, and God gave it in just Displeasure: But here we find, 1. That God gave it in Love, v. 16. Gather the People together, to be Witnesses of the Wonder, and joint Shaters in the Favour, and I will give them Water. Before they pray'd, God granted, and prevented them with the Blessings of Goodness. 2. That they receiv'd it with Joy and Thankfulness, which made the Mercy doubly sweet to them; v. 17. Then they sang this Song, to the Glory of God, and the Encouragement of one another, Spring up, O Well; Thus they pray it may spring up, for promis'd Mercies must be fetch'd in by Prayer; they triumph that it doth spring up, and meet it with their joyful Acclamations: with Joy must we draw Water out of the Wells of Salvation, Isa. 12. 3. As the Brazen Serpent was a Figure of Christ who is lifted up for our Cure, so is this Well a Figure of the Spirit, who is poured forth for our Comfort, and from whom flow to us Rivers of living Water. John 7. 38. Doth this Well spring up in our Souls? We should sing to it; take the Comfort to ourselves, and give the Glory to God; stir up this Gift, sing to it, Spring up, O Well, thou Fountain of Gardens, to water my Soul, Cant. 4. 15. Plead the Promise, which perhaps alludes to this Story, Isa. 41. 17, 18. I will make the Wilderness Wells of Water. 3. That whereas before the Remembrance of the Miracle was perpetuated in the Name given to the Places, which signified the People's Strife and Murmuring, now was it perpetuated in a Song of Praise, which preserv'd on Record the Manner how it was done, v. 18. The Princes digged the Well, the Seventy Elders 'tis Probable, by the Direction of the Lawgiver, i. e. Moses under God, with their Staves; that is, with their Staves they made Holes in the soft sandy Ground, and God caused the Water miraculously to spring up in the Holes they made. Thus the pious Israelites, long after passing through the Valley of Baca, a dry and thirsty Place, made Wells, and God by Rain from Heaven fill'd the Pools, Pl. 84. 6. Observe, (1.) God promised to give them Water, but they must open the Ground to receive it, and give it vent. God's Favours must be expected in the use of such means as lye within our Power, but still the Excellency of the Power is of God. 2. The Nobles of Israel were forward to set their Hands to this Work, and us'd their Staves, probably those that were the Ensigns of their Honour and Power for the publick Service, and 'tis upon Record to their Honour. And we may suppose it was a great Confirmation to them in their Offices, and a great Comfort to the People that they were made use of by the Divine Power, as Instruments in this miraculous Supply. By this it appear'd that the Spirit of Moses, who must shortly die, rested in some measure upon the Nobles of Israel, Moses did not strike the Ground himself, as formerly the Rock, but gave them Direction to do it, that their Staves might share in the Honour of his Rod, and they might comfortably hope, that when he should leave them, yet God would not, but that they also in their Generation should be publick Blessings, and might expect the Divine Presence with them, as long as they acted by the Direction of the Law-giver. For Comfort must be look'd

look'd for only in the way of Duty; and if we would share in Divine Joys, we must carefully follow the Divine Conduct.

21 ¶ And Israel sent messengers unto Sihon king of the Amorites, saying, 22 Let me pass through thy land, we will not turn into the fields, or into the vineyards, we will not drink of the waters of the well, *but* we will go along by the kings high way, until we be past thy borders. 23 And Sihon would not suffer Israel to pass through his border: but Sihon gathered all his people together, and went out against Israel into the wilderness: and he came to Jahaz, and fought against Israel. 24 And Israel smote him with the edge of the sword, and possessed his land from Arnon unto Jabbok, even unto the children of Ammon: for the border of the children of Ammon *was* strong. 25 And Israel took all these cities: and Israel dwelt in all the cities of the Amorites, in Heshbon, and in all the villages thereof. 26 For Heshbon *was* the city of Sihon the king of the Amorites, who had fought against the former king of Moab, and taken all his land out of his hand, even unto Arnon. 27 Wherefore they that speak in proverbs say, Come into Heshbon: let the city of Sihon be built and prepared. 28 For there is a fire gone out of Heshbon, a flame from the city of Sihon: it hath consumed Ar of Moab, and the lords of the high places of Arnon. 29 Wo to thee, Moab, thou art undone, O people of Chemosh: he hath given his sons that escaped, and his daughters into captivity, unto Sihon king of the Amorites: 30 We have shot at them: Heshbon is perished even unto Dibon, and we have laid them waste even unto Nophah, which reacheth unto Medeba. 31 ¶ Thus Israel dwelt in the land of the Amorites. 32 And Moses sent to spy out Jaazer; and they took the villages thereof, and drove out the Amorites that were there. 33 ¶ And they turned and went up by the way of Bashan: and Og the king of Bashan went out against them, he, and all his people to the battle at Edrei. 34 And the LORD said unto Moses, Fear him not: for I have delivered him into thy hand, and all his people, and all his land, and thou shalt do to him as thou didst unto Sihon king of the Amorites, which dwelt in Heshbon. 35 So they smote him, and his sons, and all his people, until there was none left him alive: and they possessed his land:

We have here an account of the Victorious Israel obtain'd over Sihon and Og, which must be distinctly consider'd, not only because they are here distinctly related, but because long after the Memorial of them is distinctly celebrated, and they are severally assign'd as Instances of everlasting Mercy; He slew Sihon King of the Amorites, for his Mercy endureth for ever; and Og the King of Bashan, for his Mercy endureth for ever, Psal. 136. 19, 20.

1. Israel sent a peaceable Message to Sihon King of the Amorites, v. 12. but received an unpeaceable Return, worse than that of the Edomites to the like Message, Chap. 20. 18, 20. For the Edomites only refus'd them Passage, and stood upon their own Defence to keep them out; but Sihon went out with his Forces against Israel in the Wilderness, out of his own Borders, without any Provocation given him, v. 23. and so run himself upon his own Ruin. Jephtha saith he was prompted by his Politicks to do this, Judg. 11. 20. Sihon trusted not Israel to pass through his Coast, but his Politicks deceived him, for Moses saith, God hardened his Spirit, and made his heart obstinate, that he might deliver him into the hand of Israel, Deut. 2. 30. The Enemies of God's Church are often infatuated in those very Counsels which they think most wisely taken. Sihon's Army was routed, and not only so, but all his Country came into the Possession of Israel, v. 24, 25.

This Seizure is justified, 1. Against the Amorites themselves, for they were the Aggressors, and provok'd the Israelites to Battle; and yet perhaps that would not have been sufficient to entitle Israel to their Land, but that God himself, the King of Nations, and Lord of the whole Earth, had given them a grant

of it. The Amorite was one of the devoted Nations, whose Land God had promis'd to Abraham and his Seed, which Promise should be perform'd, when the Iniquity of the Amorites should be full, Gen. 15. 16. Jephtha insists upon this Grant as their Title, Judg. 11. 23, 24. The Victory God gave them over the Amorites put them in Possession, and then the Promise made to their Fathers having given them a Right, by Virtue of that they kept Possession. 2. Against the Moabites, who had formerly been the Lord's Proprietors of this Country; if they should ever lay claim to it, and should plead, that God himself had provided that none of their Land should be given to Israel for Possession, Deut. 2. 9. Moses here furnisheth Posterity with a Replication to their Plea, and Jephtha makes use of it against the Amorites Two Hundred and Sixty Years after, when Israel's Title to this Country was question'd. (1.) The Justification itself is, that though 'tis true, this Country had belong'd to the Moabites, yet the Amorites had taken it from them some time before, and were now in full and quiet Possession of it, v. 26. The Israelites did not take it out of the Hands of the Moabites, they had before lost it to the Amorites, and were constrain'd to give up their Pretensions to it, and when Israel had taken it from the Amorites, they were under no Obligation to restore it to the Moabites, whose Title to it was long since extinguish'd. See here the uncertainty of worldly Possessions, how oft they change their Owners, and how soon we may be depriv'd of them, even when we think ourselves most sure of them; they make themselves Wings. 'Tis our Wisdom therefore to secure the good Part which cannot be taken away from us. See also the Wisdom of the Divine Providence, and its perfect Foresight, by which Preparation is made long before for the Accomplishment of all God's Purposes in their Season. This Country being design'd in due time for Israel, it is beforehand put into the Hand of the Amorites, who little think that they have it but as Trustees, till Israel comes of Age, and then must surrender it. We understand not the vast Reaches of Providence, but known unto God are all his Works, as appears in this Instance, that he set the bounds of the People according to the number of the Children of Israel, Deut. 32. 8. All that Land which he intended for his chosen People, he put into the Possession of the devoted Nations; that were to be driven out. 2. For Proof of the Allegation, he refers to the authentick Records of the Country, for so their Proverbs, or Songs were, one of which he quotes some Passages out of, v. 27, 28, 29, 30. which sufficiently proves what it is vouch'd for, viz. 1. That such and such Places that are here nam'd, though they had been in the Possession of the Moabites, were by Right of War become the Dominion of Sihon King of the Amorites. Heshbon is become his City, and he obtain'd such a quiet Possession of it, that it was built and prepar'd for him, v. 27. and the Country to Dibon and Nophah was likewise subdued, and annex'd to the Kingdom of the Amorites, v. 30. 2. That the Moabites were utterly disabled even to regain the Possession. Even Ar of Moab, though not taken or attempted by Sihon, but still remaining the Metropolis of Moab, yet was so wasted by this Loss, that it would never be able to make head, v. 28. The Moabites were undone, and even Chemosh their God hath given them up, as unable to rescue them out of the Hands of Sihon, v. 29. By all this it appears, that the Moabites Claim to this Country was bar'd for ever. There may be a further Reason for inserting this Amorite Poem, viz. to shew, That the triumphing of the Wicked is short. They that had conquer'd the Moabites, and insulted over them, are now themselves conquer'd and insulted over by the Israel of God. 'Tis very probable that the same Sihon King of the Amorites, that had got this Country from the Moabites, now lost it to the Israelites; for though it be said to be taken from a former King of Moab, v. 26: yet not by a former King of the Amorites; and then it shews how sometimes Justice makes Men to see the Loss of that which they got by Violence, and were puff'd up with the Gain of. They are exalted but for a little while, Job 24. 24.

2. Og King of Bashan, instead of being warn'd by the Fate of his Neighbours to make Peace with Israel, is alarm'd by it to make War upon them, which proves in like manner to be his Destruction. Og was also an Amorite, and therefore perhaps thought himself better able to deal with Israel than his Neighbours were, and more likely to prevail, because of his own Gigantick Strength and Stature, which Moses takes Notice of, Deut. 3. 11. Where he gives a more full Account of this Story. Here observe, 1. That the Amorite begins the War, v. 33. He went out to battle against Israel. His Country was very rich and pleasant, Bashan was famous for the best Timber, witness the Oaks of Bashan, and the best Breed of Cattle, witness the Bulls and Kine of Bashan, and the Lambs and Rams of that Country which are celebrated, Deut. 32. 14. Wicked Men do their utmost to secure themselves and their Possessions against the Judgments of God, but all in vain when their Day comes to fall. 2. That God interests himself in the Cause, bids Israel not to fear this threatening Force, promiseth a complete Victory, I have deliver'd him into thy hand, v. 34. the thing is as good as done already, it's all thine own, enter

and take Possession. Giants are but Worms before God's Power. 3. That *Israel* is more than a Conqueror, not only routs the Enemies Army, but gains the Enemies Country, which afterwards was part of the Inheritance of the two Tribes and a half that were first seated on the other side *Jordan*. God gave *Israel* the Successes while *Moses* was yet with them, both for his Comfort, that he might see the beginning of that glorious Work, which he must not live to see the finishing of; and for the Encouragement of the People in the War of *Canaan* under *Joshua*. Though this was to them in comparison but as the Day of small things, yet it was an earnest of great things.

C H A P. XXII.

At this Chapter begins the famous Story of Balak and Balaam, their Attempt to curse *Israel*, and the baffling of that Attempt; God's People are long after bid to remember what Balak the King of *Moab* consulted, and what Balaam the son of *Beor* answer'd him, that they might know the Righteousness of the Lord, *Mic. 6. 5.* In this Chapter we have, 1. Balak's Fear of *Israel*, and the Plot he had to get them curs'd, v. 1, 4. 2. The Embassy he sent to Balaam a Conjuror to fetch him for that purpose, and the Disappointment he met with in that first Embassy, v. 5, 14. 3. Balaam's coming to him upon his second Message, v. 15, 21. 4. The Opposition Balaam met with by the way, v. 22, 35. 5. The interview at length between Balak and Balaam, v. 36, 41.

AND the children of *Israel* set forward, and pitched in the plains of *Moab*, on this side *Jordan* by *Jericho*. 2 And Balak the son of *Zippor* saw all that *Israel* had done to the *Amorites*. 3 And *Moab* was sore afraid of the people, because they were many, and *Moab* was distressed because of the children of *Israel*. 4 And *Moab* said unto the elders of *Midian*, Now shall this company lick up all that are round about us, as the Ox licketh up the grafs of the field. And Balak the son of *Zippor* was king of the *Moabites* at that time. 5 He sent messengers therefore unto Balaam the son of *Beor* to *Pethor*, which is by the river of the land of the children of his people, to call him, saying, Behold, there is a people come out from *Egypt*: behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me. 6 Come now therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people, for they are too mighty for me: peradventure I shall prevail, that we may smite them, and that I may drive them out of the land: for I wot, that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed. 7 And the elders of *Moab*, and the elders of *Midian* departed, with the rewards of divination in their hand: and they came unto Balaam, and spake unto him the words of Balak. 8 And he said unto them, Lodge here this night, and I will bring you word again as the LORD shall speak unto me: and the princes of *Moab* abode with Balaam. 9 And God came unto Balaam and said, What men are these with thee? 10 And Balaam said unto God, Balak the son of *Zippor*, king of *Moab*, hath sent unto me, saying, 11 Behold, there is a people come out of *Egypt*, which covereth the face of the earth: come now, curse me them, peradventure I shall be able to overcome them, and drive them out. 12 And God said unto Balaam, Thou shalt not go with them, thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed. 13 And Balaam rose up in the morning, and said unto the princes of Balak, Get you into your land: for the LORD refuseth to give me leave to go with you. 14 And the princes of *Moab* rose up, and they went unto Balak, and said, Balaam refuseth to come with us.

The Children of *Israel* have at length finish'd their Wandrings in the Wilderness, out of which they went up, *ch. 21. 18.* and are now encamp'd in the plains of *Moab* near *Jordan*, where they continued till they passed through *Jordan* under *Joshua*, after the Death of *Moses*. Now here we have, 1. The mighty Fright that the *Moabites* were in upon the Approach of

Israel, v. 2, 3, 4. They needed not to fear any harm from them, if they knew (and 'tis probable *Moses* let them know) the Orders God had given *Israel*, not to contend with the *Moabites*, nor to use any Hostility against them, *Deut. 2. 9.* But if they had any Notice of this, they were jealous that it was but a Sham, to make them secure, that they might be the easier conquer'd. Notwithstanding the old Friendship between *Abraham* and *Lot*, the *Moabites* resolv'd to ruin *Israel* if they could, and therefore they will take it for granted without any ground for the Suspicion, that *Israel* resolves to ruin them. Thus 'tis common for those that design Mischief to pretend that Mischief is design'd against them; and their groundless Jealousies must be the colour of their causeless Malice. They hear of their Triumphs over the *Amorites*, v. 2. and think their own Heufe is in danger, when their Neighbour's is on fire. They observe their Multitude, v. 3. They were many; and hence infer how easily they would conquer their Country, and all about them, if some speedy and effectual Course were not taken to stop the Progress of their victorious Arms; they shall lick up, or devour us, and all that are round about us, as speedily and irresistibly as the Ox eats up the Grafs, v. 4. owning himself to be an unequal Match for so formidable an Enemy. Therefore they were sore afraid and distressed themselves; thus were the wicked in great fear where no fear was, *Psal. 53. 5.* These Fears they communicated to their Neighbours, the *Elders* of *Midian*, that some measures might be concerted between them for their common Safety; for if the Kingdom of *Moab* fall, the Republic of *Midian* cannot stand long. The *Moabites*, if they had pleas'd, might have made a good Use of the Advances of *Israel*, and their Successes against the *Amorites*; they had Reason to rejoyce, and give God and *Israel* thanks for freeing them from the threatening Power of *Sidon* King of the *Amorites*; who had taken from them Part of their Country, and was likely to over-run the rest. They had Reason likewise to have courted *Israel*'s Friendship, and to have come in to their Assistance; but having forsaken the Religion of their Father *Lot*, and being sunk into Idolatry, they hated the People of the God of *Abraham*, and were justly insatuated in their Counsels, and given up to Distress. 2. The Project the King of *Moab* had, to get the People of *Israel* curs'd, i. e. to set God against them, whom he perceiv'd, hitherto fought for them. He trusted more to his Arts than to his Arms, and had a Notion, that if he could but get some Prophet or other with his powerful Charms to imprecate Evil upon them, and so pronounce a Blessing upon himself and his Forces, that then, though otherwise too weak, yet he should be able to deal with them. This Notion arose. (1.) Out of the Remains of some Religion, for it owes a dependance upon some invisible Sovereign Powers that rule in the Affairs of the Children of Men, and determine them, and an Obligation upon us to make Application to these Powers. (2.) Out of the Ruins of the true Religion; for if the *Midianites* and *Moabites* had not wretchedly degenerated from the Faith and Worship of their pious Ancestors *Abraham* and *Lot*, they could not have imagin'd it possible with their Curses to do any Prejudice to a People who alone adher'd to the Service of the true God, from whose Service they had revolted. 3. The Court he made to Balaam the Son of *Beor*, a famous Conjuror, to engage him to curse *Israel*. This Balaam liv'd a great way off in that Country from whence *Abraham* came, and where *Laban* liv'd; but though 'tis probable there were many nearer home that were Pretenders to Divination, yet none that had so great a Reputation for Success as Balaam, and Balak will employ the best he can hear of, though he send a great way for him, so much is his Heart upon this Project. And to gain him, (1.) He makes him his Friend, complaining to him as his Confident, of the Danger he was in from the Numbers and Neighbourhood of the Camp of *Israel*, v. 5. They cover the face of the Earth, and they abide over against me. (2.) In effect he makes him his God, by the great Power he attributes to his Word, he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed, v. 6. The learned Bishop *Patrick* inclines to think, with many of the Jewish Writers, that Balaam had been a great Prophet, who for the Accomplishment of his Predictions, and the Answers of his Prayers both for Good and Evil, had been look'd upon justly as a Man of great Interest with God, but growing Proud and Covetous God departed from him, and then to support his sinking Credit, he betook himself to Diabolical Arts. He is call'd a Prophet, 2 *Pet. 2. 16.* because he had been one, Or, perhaps he had rais'd his Reputation from the first by his Magical Charms, as *Simon Magus*, who bewitch'd the People so far, that he was call'd the Great Power of God, *Acts 8. 10.* Curses pronounced by God's Prophets in the Name of the Lord, have wonderful Effects, as *Noah's*, *Gen. 9. 25.* *El'sha's*, 2 *Kin. 2. 24.* But the Curse causeless shall not come, *Prov. 26. 2.* No more than *Goliath's*, when he cursed *David* by his Gods, 1 *Sam. 17. 43.* Let us desire to have the Prayers of God's Ministers and People for us, and dread having them against us, for they are greatly regarded by him who blesseth indeed, and curseth indeed. But Balak cannot rely upon these Compliments as sufficient to prevail with Balaam, the main Inducement is yet behind, v. 7. they took the Rewards of Divination in their

their Hand; the Wages of Unrighteousness, which he loved, 2 Pet. 2. 15. 4. The Restraint God lays upon Balaam, forbidding him to curse Israel. 'Tis very likely Balaam, being a curious inquisitive Man, was no Stranger to Israel's Case and Character, but had heard that God was with them of a Truth; so that he ought to have given these Messengers their Answer immediately, that he would never curse a People whom God had blessed; but he lodges the Messengers and takes a Nights time to consider what he should do, and to receive Instructions from God, v. 8. When we enter into a Parley with Temptations, we are in great Danger of being overcome by them. In the Night God comes to him, probably in a Dream, enquires what Business those Strangers had with him; He knows it, but he will know it from him. Balaam gives him an Account of their Errand, v. 9, 10, 11. And God thereupon chargeth him not to go with them, nor attempt to curse that blessed People, v. 12. Thus God sometimes for the Preservation of his People was pleas'd to speak to bad Men, as to Abimelech, Gen. 20. 3, and to Laban, Gen. 31. 24. And we read of some that were Workers of Iniquity, and yet in Christ's Name prophesied, and did many wondrous Works. Balaam is charged not only to go to Balak, but not to offer to curse this People, which he might have attempted at a distance; and the Reason is given, *they are blessed*. This was Part of the Blessing of Abraham, Gen. 12. 3. *I will curse him that curseth thee*. So that an Attempt to curse them would be not only fruitless but perilous. Israel had often provoked God in the Wilderness, yet he will not suffer their Enemies to curse them, for he rewards them not according to their Iniquities. The Blessedness of those whose Sin is covered cometh upon them, Rom. 4. 6, 7. 5. The Return of the Messengers without Balaam.

1. Balaam is not faithful in returning God's Answer to the Messengers, v. 13. He only tells them, *the Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you*; he doth not tell them, as he ought to have done, that Israel was a blessed People, and must by no means be cursed, for then the Design had been crush'd, and the Temptation had not been renew'd: but he doth in effect desire 'em to give his humble Service to Balak, and let him know that he applauded his Project, and would have been very glad to gratifie him, but truly he has the Character of a Prophet, and must not go without leave from God, which he has not yet obtain'd, and therefore for the present he must be excus'd. Note, Those are a fair Mark for Satan's Temptations, that speak diminishingly of Divine Prohibition, as if they amounted to no more than the Denial of a Permission, and as if to go against God's Law were only to go without his Leave. 2. The Messengers are not faithful in returning Balaam's Answer to Balak; all the Account they give of it is, *Balaam refuseth to come with us*, v. 14. intimating that he only wanted more Courtship, and higher Proffers; but they are not willing Balak should know that God had signified his Disallowance of the Attempt. Thus are great Men wretchedly abus'd by the Flatteries of those about them, who do all they can to prevent their seeing their own Faults and Follies.

15 ¶ And Balak sent yet again princes, more, and more honourable then they. 16 And they came to Balaam, and said to him, Thus saith Balak the son of Zippor, Let nothing, I pray thee, hinder thee from coming unto me: 17 For I will promote thee unto very great honour, and I will do whatsoever thou sayest unto me: come therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people. 18 And Balaam answered and said unto the servants of Balak, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the LORD my God, to do less or more. 19 Now therefore, I pray you, tarry ye also here this night, that I may know what the LORD will say unto me more. 20 And God came unto Balaam at night, and said unto him, If the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with them: but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do. 21 And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab.

We have here a second Embassy sent to Balaam to fetch him over to curse Israel. 'Twere well for us if we would be as earnest and constant in prosecuting a good Work, notwithstanding Disappointments, as Balak was in pursuing this ill Design. The Enemies of the Church are restless and unwearied in their Attempts against it; but he that sits in Heaven laughs at them. Observe, 1. The Temptation Balak laid before Balaam; he contriv'd to make this Assault more vigorous

than the former. 'Tis very probable he sent double Money in the Hands of his Messengers, but besides that now he tempted him with Honours; laid a Bait not only for his Covetousness; but for his Pride and Ambition. How earnestly should we beg of God daily to mortifie in us these two Limbs of the Old Man. Those that know how to look with a Holy Contempt upon worldly Wealth and Preferment, will find it not so hard a Matter as most Men do to keep a good Conscience. See how artfully Balak manag'd the Temptation. 1. The Messengers he sent were more, and more Honourable, v. 15. He sent to this Conjuror with as great Respect and Deference to his Quality as if he had been a Sovereign Prince, apprehending perhaps that Balaam had thought himself slighted in the fewness and meanness of the former Messengers. 2. The Request was very urgent; this powerful Prince becomes a suitor to him, *Let nothing, I pray thee, hinder thee*, v. 16. No not God, or Conscience, or any Fear either of Sin or Shame. 3. The Proffers were high: *I will promote thee to very great Honour among the Princes of Moab*, nay, he gives him a Blank, and he shall write his own Terms, *I will do whatsoever thou sayest*, i. e. I will give thee whatever thou desirest, and observe whatever thou orderest; thy Word shall be a Law to me, v. 17. Thus Sinners stick at no Pains, spare no Cost, and care not how low they stoop for the gratifying either of their Luxury or of their Malice, shall we then be stiff and strait-handed in our compliance with the Laws of Virtue; God forbid. 2. Balaam's seeming resistance of, but real yielding to this Temptation. We may here discern in Balaam a struggle between his Convictions and his Corruptions. (1.) His Convictions charg'd him to adhere to the Command of God, and he spoke their Language, v. 18. Nor could any Man have said better, *If Balak would give me his house full of Silver and Gold*; and that's more than he can give, or I can ask, *I cannot go beyond the Word of the Lord my God*. See how honourable he speaks of God, he is *Jehovah*, my God; Note, Many call God theirs, that are not his, not truly his, because not only they swear by the Lord and by Malcham. See how respectfully he speaks of the Word of God, as one resolv'd to stick to it, and in nothing to vary from it, and how slightly of the Wealth of this World, as if Gold and Silver were nothing to him in Comparison with the Favour of God; and yet at the same time, the Searcher of Hearts knew that he loved the Wages of Unrighteousness. Note, It's an easie thing for bad Men to speak very good Words, and to make a shew of Piety, from the Teeth outward. There's no Judging of Men by their Words, God knows the Heart. (2.) His Corruptions at the same time strongly inclin'd him to go contrary to the Command. He seem'd to refuse the Temptation, v. 18. But even then he express'd no Abhorrence of it, as Christ did when he had the Kingdoms of the World offer'd him, *Get thee hence Satan*: And as Peter did when Simon Magus offer'd him Money; *Thy Money perish with thee*. But it appears, v. 19. That he had a great Mind to accept the Proffer, for he would further attend to know what God would say to him, hoping he might alter his Mind, and give him leave to go. This was a vile Reflection upon God Almighty, as if he would change his Mind, and now at last suffer those to be cursed whom he had pronounced blessed; and as if he would be brought to allow of that which he had already declar'd to be evil. Surely he thought God altogether such a one as himself. He had already been told What the Will of God was, in which he ought to have acquiesc'd, and not to have desir'd a re-hearing of that Cause which was already so plainly determin'd. Note, It is a very great Affront to God, and a certain Evidence of the Dominion of Corruption in the Heart to beg leave to Sin. 3. The Permission God gave him to go, v. 20. God came to him probably by an Angel, and told him he might if he pleas'd go with Balak's Messengers. So he gave him up to his own Hearts Lust. Since thou hast Such a Mind to go, e'en go, yet know that the Journey thou undertakest shall not be for thine honour, for tho' thou hast leave to go, thou shalt not, as thou hopest, have leave to curse, for the Word which I shall say unto thee that thou shalt do. Note, God hath wicked Men in a Chain; hitherto they shall come by his Permission, but no further than he doth permit him. Thus he makes the Wrath of Man to praise him, yet at the same time restrains the remainder of it. 'Twas in Anger that God said to Balaam go with them, and we have Reason to think that Balaam himself so understood it, for we do not find him pleading this Allowance when God reprov'd him for going. Note, As God sometimes denies the Prayers of his People in Love, so sometimes he grants the Desires of the wicked in Wrath. 4. His setting out in the Journey, v. 21. God gave him leave to go if the Men call'd him, but he was so fond of the Journey that we don't find he staid for their calling him; but he himself rose up in the Morning, got every thing ready with all speed, and went with the Princes of Moab, who were proud enough that they had carried their Point. The Apostle describes Balaam's Sin here to be, that he ran greedily into an Error for Reward, Jude 11. The Love of Money is the Root of all Evil.

22 ¶ And Gods anger was kindled because he went: and the angel of the LORD stood in the way for an adversary against him: now he was riding upon his ass, and his two servants were with him. 23 And the ass saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand and the ass turned aside out of the way, and went into the field: and Balaam smote the ass, to turn her into the way. 24 But the angel of the LORD stood in a path of the vineyards, a wall being on this side, and a wall on that side. 25 And when the ass saw the angel of the LORD, she thrust her self unto the wall, and crushed Balaams foot against the wall: and he smote her again. 26 And the angel of the LORD went further and stood in a narrow place, where was no way to turn either to the right hand, or to the left. 27 And when the ass saw the angel of the LORD, she fell down under Balaam, and Balaams anger was kindled, and he smote the ass with a staff. 28 And the LORD opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times? 29 And Balaam said unto the ass, Because thou hast mocked me: I would there were a sword in mine hand, for now would I kill thee. 30 And the ass said unto Balaam, Am not I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine, unto this day? was I ever wont to do so unto thee? and he said, Nay. 31 Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face. 32 And the angel of the LORD said unto him, Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? Behold, I went out to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse before me. 33 And the ass saw me, and turned from me these three times: unless she had turned from me, surely now also I had slain thee, and saved her alive. 34 And Balaam said unto the angel of the LORD, I have sinned, for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me: now therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again. 35 And the angel of the LORD said unto Balaam, Go with the men, but only the word that I shall speak unto thee that thou shalt speak: so Balaam went with the princes of Balak.

We have here an Account of the Opposition God gave to Balaam in his Journey towards Moab; probably the Princes were gone before, or gone some other way, and Balaam had appointed where he would meet them, or where they should stay for him, for we read nothing of them in this Encounter, only that Balaam, like a Person of some Quality was attended with his two Men; Honour enough one would think for such a Man, he needed not be beholden to Balak for Promotion. 1. Here's God's Displeasure against Balaam for undertaking this Journey. God's anger was kindled because he went, v. 22. Note, 1. The Sin of Sinners is not to be thought the less provoking to God for his permitting it. We must not think that, because God doth not by his Providence restrain Men from Sin, therefore he approves of it, or that it is therefore not hateful to him; he suffers Sin and yet is angry at it. 2. Nothing is more displeasing to God, than malicious Designs against his People; He that touches them, touches the Apple of his Eye. 3. The way God took to let Balaam know his Displeasure against him. An Angel stood in the way for an Adversary. Now God fulfill'd his Promise to Israel, Exod. 23. 22. I will be an Enemy to thine Enemies. The Holy Angels are Adversaries to Sin, and perhaps are employ'd more than we are aware of in preventing it, particularly in opposing those that have any ill Designs against God's Church and People, for whom Michael our Prince stands up, Dan. 12. 1, 10, 21. What a Comfort is this to all that wish well to the Israel of God, that he never suffers wicked Men to form any Attempt against them, but he sends his Holy Angels forth to break the Attempt, and secure his little ones. When the Prophet saw the four horns that scatter'd Judah, at the same Time he saw four Carpenters that were to fray those Horns, Zech. 1. 18. When the

Enemy comes in like a Flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a Standard against him. This Angel was an Adversary to Balaam, because Balaam counted him his Adversary, otherwise those are really our best Friends, and we are so to reckon them, that stop our Progress in a sinful Way. The Angel stood with his Sword drawn, v. 23. A flaming Sword, like that in the Hands of the Cherub, Gen. 3. 24. Turning every way, Note. The Holy Angels are at War with those with whom God is angry, for they are the Ministers of his Justice.

Balaam has Notice given him of God's Displeasure. 1. By the Ass and that did not startle him. The Ass saw the Angel, v. 23. How vainly did Balaam boast that he was a Man whose Eyes were open, and that he saw the Visions of the Almighty, Chap. 24. 3, 4. when the Ass he rode on saw more than he did, his Eyes being blinded with Covetousness and Ambition, and dazzled with the Rewards of Divination. Note, Many have God against them, and his Holy Angels, but are not aware of it. The Ass knows his Owner, sees his Danger, but Balaam doth not know, doth not consider, Isa. 1. 3. Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see. Let none be puffed up with a Conceit of Visions and Revelations, when even an Ass saw an Angel, yet let those be ashamed of their own Sortifiness, worse than that of the Beasts that perish, who when they are told of the Sword of God's Wrath drawn against them, while they persist in wicked Ways, yet will go on; the Ass understood the Law of Self-preservation better than so, for to save both herself and her senseless Rider, (1.) She turn'd aside out of the way, v. 23. Balaam should have taken the hint of this, and consider'd whether he were not out of the way of his Duty, but instead of that he beat her into the way again. Thus they who by wilful Sin are running Head-long into Perdition, are angry at those that would prevent their Ruin. (2.) She had not gone much farther, but she sees the Angel again, and then to avoid him runs up to a Wall, and crushes her Rider's Foot, v. 24, 25. How many ill Accidents are we liable to in travelling upon the Road, from which if we are preserv'd, we must own our Obligations to the Divine Providence, which by the Ministry of Angels keeps us in all our Ways, lest we dash our Foot against a Stone; but if we at any Time meet with a Disaster, it should put us upon Enquiry, whether our Way be right in the sight of God or no? The crushing of Balaam's Foot, tho' it was the saving of his Life, yet provok'd him so much that he smote his Ass the second Time. So angry are we apt to be at that which tho' a present uneasiness, yet is a real kindness. (3.) Upon the next Encounter with the Angel, the Ass fell down under Balaam, v. 26, 27. He ought to have consider'd, that there was certainly something extraordinary in this, for his Ass was not resty, nor did she use to serve him thus: But 'tis common for those whose Hearts are fully set in them to do evil, to push on violently and break through all the Difficulties which Providence lays in their way to give check to them, and to stop them in their Career. Balaam the third Time smote his Ass, tho' he had now done him the best Piece of Service that ever she did him, saving him from the Sword of the Angel, and by her falling down teaching him to do likewise. (4.) When all this would not work upon him, God open'd the Mouth of the Ass, and she spoke to him once and again; and yet neither did this move him, v. 28. The Lord open'd the Mouth of the Ass. This was a great Miracle, quite above the Power of Nature, and wrought by the Power of the God of Nature; who made Man's Mouth, and taught him to speak, for otherwise (since we learn to speak purely by Imitation, and therefore they that are born Deaf are consequently Dumb) the first Man had never spoke, nor any of his Seed. He that made Man speak, could when he pleas'd make the Ass to speak with Man's voice, 2 Pet. 2. 16. Here Mr. Ainsworth observes, that the Devil when he tempted our first Parents to Sin, did it by a subtle Serpent: But God when he would convince Balaam, did it by a silly Ass, a Creature dull and foolish to a Proverb; for Satan corrupts Mens Minds by the Craftiness of those that lye in wait to deceive; but Christ has chosen the foolish Things of the World to confound the wise. By a dumb Ass God rebukes the madness of the Prophet, for he will never want Reprovers, but when he pleases can make the Stones to cry out as Witnesses to him, Luke 19. 40. Hab. 2. 11. 1. The Ass complain'd of Balaam's Cruelty, v. 28. What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me? Note, The righteous God will not see the meanest and weakest abus'd; but either they shall be enabled to speak in their own Defence, or he will some way or other speak for them. If God would not suffer a Beast to be wrong'd, much less a Man, a Christian, a Child of his own. We cannot open the Mouth of the Dumb as God did here, but we may and must open our Mouth for the Dumb, Prov. 31. 8. Job 31. 13. The Asses Complaint was just, What have I done? Note, Those we smite with Hand or Tongue, we should consider what they have done unto us, and what Provocation they have given us. We hear it not, but thus the whole Creation groans being burthen'd, Rom. 8. 22.

'Twas much that Balaam was not astonish'd to hear his Ass speak, and put to confusion; but some think, being a Conjur-

rer, it was no new Thing to him to be thus spoken to by his Familiars; others rather think, that his brutish headstrong Passion so blinded him, that he could not observe or consider the strangeness of the Thing. Nothing befors Men worse than unbridled Anger doth. *Balaam in his Fury wisheth he had a Sword to kill his As's with, v. 29.* See his Impotency; can he think by his Curses to do mischief to *Israel*, that has it not in his Power to kill his own As's? This he cannot do, yet he saith would; and what would he get by that, but make himself so much the poorer, (as many do) to gratify his Passion and Revenge; such was the *Madness of this false Prophet*. Here *Bishop Hall* observes, it's ill falling into the Hands of those whom the brute Creatures find unmerciful; for a good Man regards the Life of his Beast. 2. The As's reason'd with him, v. 30. God enabled not only a dumb Creature to speak, but a dull Creature to speak to the Purpose. Three Things he argues with him from, (1.) His Propriety in her. *Am not I thine As's?* Note, 1. God has given to Man a Dominion over the Creatures: They are deliver'd into his hand to be us'd, and put under his Feet to be rul'd. 2. Even wicked People have a Title to the Possessions God gives them, which they are not to be wrong'd of. 3. The Dominion God has given us over the Creatures, is a good Reason why we should not abuse them. We are their Lords, and therefore must not be Tyrants. (2.) Her Serviceableness to him, — *On which thou hast ridden.* Note, It is good for us often to consider how useful the inferior Creatures are, and have been to us, that we may be thankful to God, and tender of them. (3.) That she was not wont to do so by him; had never before crush'd his Foot, or fallen down under him; he might therefore conclude, there was something more than ordinary that made her do so now. Note, 1. The seldomness of an Offence should moderate our Displeasure against an Offender. 2. When the Creatures depart from their wonted Obedience to us, we should enquire the Cause within ourselves, and be humbled for our Sin. 2. *Balaam* at length hath Notice of God's Displeasure, by the Angel, and that did startle him. When God open'd his Eyes he saw the Angel, v. 31, and then he himself fell flat upon his Face, in Reverence of that glorious Messenger, and in fear of the Sword he saw in his Hand. God has many ways of breaking and bringing down the hard and unhumbl'd Heart. 1. The Angel reprov'd him for his Outragiousness, v. 32, 33. *Wherefore hast thou smitten thine As's?* Whether we consider it or no, 'tis certain God will call us to Account for the Abuses done to his Creatures. Nay, he shews him how much more Reason he had to smite upon his Breast, and to condemn himself, than to fly out thus against his As's; *thy way is perverse before me*, and then how canst thou expect to prosper? And how much wiser his As's was than he himself, and how much beholden he was to her, that she turn'd aside; 'twas for his Safety, and not for her own, for had she gone on, he had been slain, and she had been saved alive. Note, When our Eyes are open'd we shall see what Danger we are in, in a sinful Way; and how much it was for our Advantage to be cross'd in it, and what Fools we were to quarrel with our Crosses which help'd to save our Lives. 2. *Balaam* then seem'd to relent, v. 34. *I have sinned*; sinn'd in undertaking this Journey, sinn'd in pushing on so violently; but he excuses it with this, that he saw not the Angel, but now he did see him, he was willing to go back again. That which was displeasing to God was not so much his going, as his going with a malicious Design against *Israel*, and a secret Hope, that notwithstanding the Proviso with which his Permission was clogg'd, he might prevail to curse them, and so gratify *Balak*, and get Preferment under him. Now this Wickedness of his Heart it doth not appear that he is sensible of, or willing to own, but if he finds he cannot go forward, he will be content (since there's no Remedy) to go back. Here's no Sign that his Heart is turn'd, but if his Hands be ty'd, he cannot help it. Thus many leave their Sins only, because their Sins have left them. There seems to be a Reformation of the Life, but what will that avail, if there be no Renovation of the Heart? 3. The Angel however continued his Permission, v. 35. *Go with the Men.* Go, if thou hast a Mind to be made a Fool of, and to be sham'd before *Balak*, and all the Princes of *Moab*; Go, but the Word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak, whether thou wilt or no. For this seems not to be a Precept, but a Prediction of the Event, that he should not only not be able to curse *Israel*, but he should be forc'd to bless them; which would be more for the Glory of God, and his own Confusion, than if he had turn'd back. Thus God gave him fair Warning, but he would not take it, he went with the Princes of *Balak*. For the Iniquity of *Balaam's* Covetousness God was wrath, and smote him, but he went on forwardly, *Ira. 57. 17.*

36 ¶ And when *Balak* heard that *Balaam* was come, he went out to meet him, unto a city of *Moab*, which is in the border of *Arnon*, which is in the utmost coast. 37 And *Balak* said unto *Balaam*, Did I not earnestly send unto thee to call thee? wherefore camest thou not unto me? am I not able indeed to promote thee to honour?

38 And *Balaam* said unto *Balak*, Lo, I am come unto thee: have I now any power at all to say any thing? the word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak. 39 And *Balaam* went with *Balak*, and they came unto *Kirjath-Huzoth*. 40 And *Balak* offered oxen, and sheep, and sent to *Balaam*, and to the princes which were with him. 41 And it came to pass on the morrow, that *Balak* took *Balaam*, and brought him up into the high places of *Baal*, that thence he might see the utmost part of the people.

We have here the meeting between *Balak* and *Balaam*, confederate Enemies to God's *Israel*, but here they seem to differ in their Expectations of the Success.

1. *Balak* speaks of it with Confidence, not doubting but to gain his Point now *Balaam* was come. In Expectation of this he went out to meet him, even to the utmost Border of his Country, v. 36, partly to gratify his own impatient Desire to see one he had such great Expectations from, and partly to do honour to *Balaam*, and so to engage him with his utmost Power to serve him. See what Respect Heathen Princes paid to those that had but the Name and Face of Prophets, and pretended to have any Interest in Heaven; and how welcome one was that came with his Mouth full of Curses. What a Shame is it then, that the Ambassadors of Christ are so little respected by most, so much despised by some! And that they are so coldly entertain'd, who bring Tidings of Peace and a Blessing. *Balak* has now nothing to complain of, but that *Balaam* did not come sooner, v. 37. And he thinks he should have consider'd both the Importunity *Balak* had us'd, *Did I not earnestly send to thee?* And the Importunity of lesser People than Kings has prevail'd with many against their Inclinations. And that he should also have consider'd *Balak's* Intentions concerning him; *Am not I able to promote thee to honour?* *Balak* as King, was in his own Kingdom the Fountain of Honour, and *Balaam* should have his Choice of all the Preferments that were in his Gift; he therefore takes himself affronted by *Balaam's* Delays; which look'd as if he thought the Honours prepar'd not worthy his Acceptance. Note, Promotion to Honour is a very tempting Bait to many People, and 'twere well if we would be drawn into the Service of God by the Honour he sets before us. Why do we delay to come unto him? Is not he able to promote us to honour? 2. *Balaam* speaks doubtfully of the Issue, and bids *Balak* not depend too much upon him, v. 38. *Have I now any Power at all to say any thing?* I am come, but what the nearer am I? Gladly would I curse *Israel*; but I must not, I cannot, God will not suffer me. He seems to speak with Vexation at the *Hork* in his Nose, and the *Bridle* in his Jaws, such as *Sennacherib* was ty'd up with, *Ira. 37. 29.* 3. They address themselves with all speed to the Business, *Balaam* is nobly entertain'd over Night; a Sacrifice of Thanksgiving is offer'd to the Gods of *Moab*, for the safe Arrival of this welcome Guest, and he is treated with a Feast upon the Sacrifice, v. 40. And the next Morning, that no Time might be lost, *Balak* takes *Balaam* in his Chariot, to the High Places of his Kingdom, not only because their Holiness, (such as it was) he thought, might give some Advantage to his Divinations, but their Height might give him a convenient Prospect of the Camp of *Israel*, which was to be the Butt or Mark at which he must shoot his venom'd Arrows. And now *Balaam* is really as solicitous to please *Balak*, as ever he had pretended to be to please God. See what need we have to pray every Day, *Our Father in Heaven, lead us not into Temptation.*

CHAP. XXIII.

In this Chapter we have *Balak* and *Balaam* busy at work to do *Israel* a Mischief, and for ought appears, neither *Moses* nor the Elders of *Israel* know any Thing of the Matter; nor are in a Capacity to break the Snare; but God, who keeps *Israel*, and neither slumbers nor sleeps, baffles the Attempt, without any Intercession or Contrivance of theirs. Here's 1. The first Attempt to curse *Israel*. (1.) The Preparation made for it by Sacrifice, v. 1, 3. (2.) The contrary Instruction God gave *Balaam*, v. 4, 5. (3.) The Blessing *Balaam* was compell'd to pronounce upon *Israel* instead of a Curse, v. 7, 10. (4.) The great Disappointment *Balak* was hereby put under, v. 11, 12. 2. The second Attempt in the same manner made, and in the same manner balk'd, v. 13, 26. 3. Preparations made for a third Attempt, v. 27, 30. The Issue of which we have in the next Chapter.

AND *Balaam* said unto *Balak*, Build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven oxen

oxen, and seven rams. 2 And Balak did as Balaam had spoken, and Balak and Balaam offered on every altar a bullock and a ram. 3 And Balaam said unto Balak, Stand by thy burnt-offering, and I will go: peradventure the LORD will come to meet me: and whatsoever he sheweth me, I will tell thee. And he went to an high place. 4 And God met Balaam; and he said unto him, I have prepared seven altars, and I have offered upon every altar a bullock and a ram. 5 And the LORD put a word in Balaam's mouth, and said, Return unto Balak, and thus thou shalt speak. 6 And he returned unto him, and lo, he stood by his burnt-sacrifice, he, and all the princes of Moab. 7 And he took up his parable, and said, Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east: saying, Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defie Israel. 8 How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defie, whom the LORD hath not defied? 9 For from the tops of the rock I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. 10 Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his. 11 And Balak said unto Balaam, What hast thou done unto me? I took thee to curse mine enemies, and behold, thou has blessed them altogether. 12 And he answered and said, Must I not take heed to speak that which the LORD hath put into my mouth?

Here's 1. Great Preparations made for the cursing of Israel. That which was aim'd at was to engage the God of Israel to forsake them, and either to be on Moab's side, or to stand Neuter. O the Stiffness of Superstition, to imagine that God will be at Mens Beck? Balaam and Balak think to bribe him with Altars and Sacrifices, offer'd without any Warrant or Institution of his: As if he would eat the Flesh of Bulls, or drink the Blood of Goats. Ridiculous Nonsense, to think that these would please God, and gain his Favour, when there could be in them no Exercise either of Faith or Obedience. Yet it should seem they offer'd these Sacrifices to the God of heaven, the supreme Numen, and not to any of their local Deities. But the multiplying of Altars was an Instance of their Degeneracy from the Religion of their Ancestors, and their Apostasy to Idolatry, for they that multiply'd Altars, multiply'd Gods, Ephraim made many Altars to Sin, Hos. 8. 11. Thus they liked not to retain God in their Knowledge, but became vain in their Imaginations; and yet presumptuously expected hereby to gain God over to them, from Israel who had his Sanctuary among them, and his anointed Altar.

Observe here, (1.) How very imperious Balaam was, proud to have the Command of a King, and to give Law to Princes. Such is the Spirit of that wicked one who exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; with what Authority doth Balaam give Orders, build me here (in the Place I have pitch'd upon) Seven Altars, of Stone or Turf. Thus he covers his Malice against Israel with a shew of Devotion, but his Sacrifice was an Abomination, being brought with such a wicked Mind, Prov. 21. 27. That which he aim'd at was not to honour God with the Sacrifices of Righteousness, but to enrich himself with the Wages of Unrighteousness. (2.) How very obsequious Balak was. The Altars were presently built, and the Sacrifices prepar'd, the best of the sort, seven Bullocks and seven Rams. Balak sticks not at the Charge, nor doth he snuff at it, or think it either a Weariness or a Disparagement to stand by his Burnt-Offering, as Balaam order'd him.

2. The turning of the Curse into a Blessing, by the over-ruling Power of God, in love to Israel; which is the Account Moses gives of it, Deut. 23. 5.

1. God puts the Blessing into the Mouth of Balaam. While the Sacrifices were burning Balaam retir'd, he went solitary, into some dark Grove on the Top of the High Place, v. 3. Marg. Thus much he knew, that Solitude gives a good Opportunity of communion with God; those that would meet with him must retire from the World, and the Business and Conversation of it, and love to be private, reckoning themselves never less alone than when alone, because the Father is with them. Enter therefore into thy Closet, and shut the Door, and be assur'd God will meet thee if thou seek him in the due Order; but Balaam retir'd with a peradventure only, having some Thoughts

that God might meet him, but being conscious to himself of Guilt, and knowing that God had lately met him in Anger, he had Reason to speak doubtfully, v. 3. Peradventure the Lord will come to meet me. But let not such a Man think that he shall receive any Favour from God. Nay, it should seem, tho' he pretended to go meet with God, he really design'd to use Enchantments, see Chap. 24. 1. But whatever he intended, God design'd to serve his own Glory by him, and therefore met Balaam, v. 4. What Communion has Light with Darkness? No friendly Communion we may be sure; Balaam's way was still perverse, and God was still an Adversary to him, but Balak having chosen him for his Oracle, God would constrain him to utter such a Confession to the Honour of God and Israel, as should render those for ever inexcusable, who should appear Arms against them. When Balaam was aware that God met him, probably by an Angel, he boasted of his Performances, I have prepared seven Altars, and offered upon every Altar a Bullock and a Ram. How had he done it? It cost him nothing, 'twas done at Balak's Expence; yet, (1.) He brags of it, as if he had done a mighty Thing. The Acts of Devotion which are done in Hypocrisy, are commonly reflected upon with Pride and Vainglory. Thus the Pharisee went up to the Temple to boast of his Religion, Luk. 18. 12. (2.) He insists upon it as a Reason why God should gratify him in his Desire to curse Israel, as if now he had made God his Debtor, and might draw upon him for what he pleas'd. He thinks God is so much beholden to him for these Sacrifices, that the least he can do in recompence for them, is to sacrifice his Israel to the Malice of the King of Moab. Note, It is a common Cheat that wicked People put upon themselves to think, that by the shews of Piety they may prevail with God to countenance them, and connive at them in their greatest Immoralities, especially in Persecution, Isa. 66. 5. However, tho' the Sacrifice was an Abomination, God took the Occasion of Balaam's Expectation, to put a Word into his Mouth, v. 5. for the Answer of the Tongue is from the Lord, and thus he would shew how much they are mistaken, who say, with our Tongue we will prevail, our Lips are our own, Psal. 12. 4. He that made Man's Mouth, knows how to manage it, and to serve his own Purposes by it. This speaks Terror to daring Sinners, that set their Mouth against the heaven, God can make their own Tongues to fall upon themselves, Psal. 64. 8. And it speaks Comfort to God's Witnesses, whom at any time he calls out to appear for him; If God put a Word into the Mouth of Balaam, who would have defied God and Israel, surely he will not be wanting to those who desire to glorify God, and edify his People by their Testimony; but it shall be given them in that same hour what they shall speak. 2. Balaam pronounc'd the Blessing in the Ears of Balak. He found him standing by his Burnt-Sacrifice, v. 6. closely attending it, and earnestly expecting the Success. Those that would have an Answer of Peace from God, must abide by the Sacrifice, and attend on the Lord without Distraction, not weary in well-doing. Balaam having fix'd himself in the Place appointed for his denouncing Curses against Israel, which perhaps he had drawn up in form ready to deliver, takes up his Parable, and it proves a Blessing, v. 7. He pronounceth Israel safe and happy, and so blesteth them.

1. He pronounceth them safe, and out of the reach of his envenom'd Darts. (1.) He owns the Design was to curse them; that Balak sent for him out of his own Country, and he came with that Intent, v. 7. The Message sent to him was, Come curse me Jacob, and come defie Israel. Balak intended to make War upon them, and he would have Balaam to bless his Arms, and to prophesy and pray for the Ruin of Israel. (2.) He owns the Design defeated, and his own Inability to accomplish it. He could not so much as give them an ill Word, or an ill Wish. How shall I curse whom God has not cursed, v. 8. not that therefore he would not do it, but therefore he could not do it. This is a fair Confession, 1. Of the Weakness and Impotency of his own Magick Skill, for which others valued him so much, and doubtless he valud himself no less. He was the most celebrated Man of that Profession, and yet owns himself baffled. God had warn'd the Israelites not to use Divination, Lev. 19. 31. and this Providence gave them a Reason for that Law, by shewing them the Weakness and Folly of it: As they had seen the Magicians of Egypt befooled, so here the great Conjuror of the East. See Isa. 47. 12, 13, 14. 2. 'Tis a Confession of the Sovereignty and Dominion of the Divine Power. He owns, that he could do no more than God would suffer him to do, for God could over-rule all his Purposes, and turn his Counsels headlong. 3. 'Tis a Confession of the inviolable Security of the People of God. Note, 1. God's Israel are own'd and blessed of him. He has not cursed them, for they are deliver'd from the Curse of the Law, he has not defied them, nor reiected, or abandon'd them, tho' mean and vile. 2. Those that have the good Will of Heaven have the ill Will of Hell; the Serpent and his Seed have an Enmity to them. 3. Tho' the Enemies of God's People may prevail far against them, yet they cannot curse them; that is, they cannot do them any real Mischief, much less a ruining Mischief, for they cannot separate them from the Love of God, Rom. 8. ult. 2. He pro:

pronounceth them Happy — in three Things. 1. *Happy in their Peculiarity*, and Distinction from the rest of the Nations; v. 9. *From the top of Rocks I see him.* And it seems to have been a mighty Surprise to him, that whereas 'tis probable they were represented to him as a rude and disorderly Rabble, that infested the Countries in rambling Parties, he saw them a regular incorporated Camp, in which appear'd all the Marks of Discipline and good Order; he saw them a People dwelling alone, and foresaw they would continue so, and their Singularity would be their unspeakable Honour. Persons of Quality we call Persons of Distinction, this was *Israel's* Praise, tho' their Enemies turn'd it to their Reproach, that they differ'd from all the Neighbour Nations, not only in their Religion and sacred Rites, but in their Diet and Dress, and common Usages, as a People called out of the World, and not to be conformed to it. They never lost their Reputation, till they mingled themselves among the heathen, *Psal. 106. 35.* Note, It is the Duty and Honour of those that are dedicated to God to be separated from the World, and not to walk according to the Course and Custom of it. Those who make Conscience of peculiar Duties, may take the Comfort of peculiar Privileges, which 'tis likely *Balaam* has an Eye to here; God's *Israel* shall not stand upon a Level with other Nations, but be dignified above them all, as a People near to God, and set apart for him. 2. *Happy in their Numbers*; not so few and despicable as they were represented to him, but an innumerable Company, which made them both honourable and formidable, v. 10. *Who can count the Dust of Jacob?* The Number of the People was the thing that *Balaam* was vex'd at, chap. 22. 3. *Moab was afraid of them, because they were many*, and God doth here by *Balaam* increase that Fear and Vexation, foretelling their further Increase. *Balak* would have him see the utmost Part of the People, chap. 22. 41. Hoping the more he saw of them, the more he would be exasperated against them, and throw about his Curses with the more Keenness and Rage, but it prov'd quite contray, instead of being angry at their Numbers, he admir'd them. The better acquainted we are with God's People, the better Opinion we have of them. He takes Notice of the Number, (1.) Of the *Dust of Jacob*, i. e. the People of *Jacob*, concerning whom it was foretold that they should be as the Dust for Number, *Gen. 28. 14.* Thus he owns the fulfilling of the Promise made to the Fathers, and expects that it should be yet further accomplished. Perhaps it was part of *David's* Fault in numbring the People, that he offer'd to count the Dust of *Jacob*, which God had said should be innumerable. (2.) Of the fourth part of *Israel*, alluding to the Form of their Camp, which was cast into four Squadrons, under four Standards. Note, God's *Israel* is a very great Body, his Spiritual *Israel* is so, and they will appear to be so, when they shall all be gather'd together unto him in the great Day, *Rev. 7. 9.* 3. *Happy in their last end.* Let me die the death of the righteous *Israelites*, that are in Covenant with God, and let my last End, or future State, be like theirs, or my Redemption, viz. in the other World. Here it is taken for granted that Death is the end of all Men; the Righteous themselves must die, and 'tis good for each of us to think of this with Application, as *Balaam* himself doth here, speaking of his own Death. 2. He goes upon the Supposition of the Soul's Immortality, and a different State on t'other side Death, to which this is a noble Testimony, and an Evidence of its being anciently known and believ'd: For how could the Death of the Righteous be more desirable than the Death of the Wicked upon any other Account, but that of a Happiness in another World, since in the manner and Circumstances of dying, we see all Things come alike to all. 3. He pronounces the Righteous truly blessed, not only while they live, but when they die; which makes their Death not only more desirable than the Death of others, but even more desirable than Life itself; for in that Sense, his Wish may be taken, not only when I do die, let me die the Death of the Righteous, but I could even now be willing to die, on that Condition that I might die the Death of the Righteous, and take my End this Moment, provided it may be like his. Very near the Place where *Balaam* now was, on one of the Mountains of *Moab*, not long after *Moses* died, and to that perhaps God that put his Word into his Mouth, design'd it should have a Reference; that by it *Moses* might be encourag'd to go up and die such a Death as *Balaam* himself wish'd to have died. 4. He shews his Opinion of Religion to be better than his Resolution; there are many who desire to die the Death of the Righteous, but do not endeavour to live the Life of the Righteous; gladly would they have their End like theirs, but not their Way. They would be Saints in Heaven, but not Saints on Earth. This is the Desire of the Slothful, which kills him because his hands refuse to Labour. This of *Balaam's* is only a Wish, not a Prayer, and it is a vain Wish, being only a Wish of the End, without any Care of the Means. Thus far this blessing goes, even to Death and beyond it, as far as the last end; Now we are told, v. 11, 12.

1. How *Balak* fretted at it, v. 11. He pretended to Honour the Lord with his Sacrifices, and to wait for the Answer God would send him, and yet when it did not prove according to

his Mind, he forgot God, and flew out in a great Passion against *Balaam*, as if it had been purely his doing, *what hast thou done unto me?* How hast thou disappointed me? Sometimes God makes the Enemies of his Church a Vexation one to another, while he that sits in Heaven laughs at them, and the Efforts of their impotent Malice. 2. How *Balaam* was forc'd to acquiesce in it. He submits, because he cannot help it, and yet humours the Thing well enough, as if he had been mighty Conscientious, answering *Balak* with the Gravity of a Prophet, *must I not take heed to speak that which the Lord has put in my Mouth?* v. 12. Thus a Confession of God's over-ruling Power is extorted from a wicked Prophet to the further Confusion of a wicked Prince.

13 And *Balak* said unto him, Come, I pray thee, with me unto another place, from whence thou mayest see them: thou shalt see but the utmost part of them, and shalt not see them all and curse me them from thence. 14 ¶ And he brought him into the field of *Zophin* to the top of *Pisgah*, and built seven altars, and offered a bullock and a ram on every altar. 15 And he said unto *Balak*, Stand here by thy burnt offering, while I meet the LORD yonder. 16 And the LORD met *Balaam*, and put a word in his mouth, and said, Go again unto *Balak*, and say thus. 17 And when he came to him, behold, he stood by his burnt-offering, and the princes of *Moab* with him. And *Balak* said unto him, What hath the LORD spoken? 18 And he took up his parable, and said, Rise up, *Balak*, and hear; hearken unto me, thou son of *Zippor*: 19 God is not a man that he should lie, neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? 20 Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and he hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it. 21 He hath not beheld iniquity in *Jacob*, neither hath he seen perverseness in *Israel*: the LORD his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them. 22 God brought them out of *Egypt*: he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn. 23 Surely there is no enchantment against *Jacob*, neither is there any divination against *Israel*: according to this time it shall be said of *Jacob* and of *Israel*, What hath God wrought? 24 Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion: he shall not lie down, until he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain. 25 ¶ And *Balak* said unto *Balaam*, Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all. 26 But *Balaam* answered and said unto *Balak*, Told not I thee, saying, All that the LORD speaketh that I must do? 27 ¶ And *Balak* said unto *Balaam*, Come, I pray thee, I will bring thee unto another place: peradventure it will please God that thou mayest curse me them from thence. 28 And *Balak* brought *Balaam* unto the top of *Peor*, that looketh toward *Jeshimon*. 28 And *Balaam* said unto *Balak*, Build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven bullocks, and seven rams. 30 And *Balak* did as *Balaam* had said, and offered a bullock and a ram on every altar.

Here's 1. Preparation made the second time, as before, for the cursing of *Israel*. (1.) The Place is chang'd, v. 13. *Balak* fancied that *Balaam* having so full a Prospect of the whole Camp of *Israel*, from the top of the Rocks, v. 9. He was either enamour'd with the Beauty of it that he would not curse them, or so affrighted with the Terror of it that he durst not, and therefore he would bring him to another Place, from which he might see only some Part of them, which would appear more despicable, and that Part at least which would lie in View he hoped he might obtain leave to curse, and so by degrees he should get Ground against them, intending, no doubt if he had gain'd this Point, to make his Attack on that Part of the Camp of *Israel*, which *Balaam* now had in his Eye, and into which he was to throw the Fire-balls of his Curses. See how restless and unwearied the Churches Enemies are in their malicious Attempts to ruin it; they leave no Stone unturn'd, no Project untry'd to compass it. O that we were as full of Contrivance

trivance and Resolution in prosecuting good Designs for the Glory of God. (2.) The Sacrifices are repeated, new Altars are built, a Bullock and a Ram offer'd on every Altar, and Balak attends his Sacrifice as closely as ever, v. 14, 15. Were we thus earnest to obtain the Blessing, as Balak was to procure a Curse, (designedly upon Israel, but really upon himself and his People,) we would not stick at the Return both of the Charge and of the Labour of Religious Exercises. (3.) Balaam renews his Attendance on God, and God meets him the second time, and puts another Word into his Mouth, not to reverse the former, but to ratify it, v. 16, 17. If God said not to Balaam seek in vain, much less will he say to any of the Seed of Jacob, who shall surely find him not only as Balaam their Instructor and Oracle, but their bountiful Rewarder. When Balaam return'd, Balak was impatient to know what Message he had, *what hath the Lord spoken?* Is there any better Tidings yet? Any hopes of Speeding? This should be our Enquiry when we come to hear the Word of God. See Jer. 23. 35. 2. A second Conversion of the Curse into a Blessing by the over-ruling Power of God; and this Blessing is both larger and stronger than the former, and quite cuts off all Hopes of altering it. Balak having been so forward to ask what the Lord had spoken, v. 17. Balaam now addresseth himself particularly to him, v. 18. *Rise up Balak and hear.* 'Twas a Message from God he had to deliver, and it is requir'd of Balak, tho' a King. (1.) That he attend, hear and hearken, with a close Application of Mind, let not a Word slip. (2.) That he attend with Reverence. *Rise up and hear.* His Successor Eglon, when he was to receive a Message from God, *rose out of his seat*, Judg. 3. 20.

Two things Balaam in this Discourse informs Balak of, forely to his Grief and Disappointment. 1. That he had no Reason to hope he should ruin Israel; 'twould be to no Purpose to attempt it, and he would deceive himself if he expected it, for two Reasons. 1. Because God is unchangeable, v. 19. *God is not a Man that he should lie.* Men change their Minds, and therefore break their Words; they lie, because they repent. But God doth neither. He never changes his Mind, and therefore never recalls his Promise. Balaam had own'd, v. 8. That he could not alter God's Counsel, and from thence he infers here, that God himself would not alter it; such is the Imperfection of Man, and such the Perfection of God. 'Tis impossible for God to lie, Heb. 6. 18. And when in Scripture he is said to repent, 'tis not meant of any Change of his Mind, for he is in one Mind, and who can turn him! But only of the change of his Way. This is a great Truth, that with God there is no variableness or shadow of turning; Now here, 1. He appeals to Balak himself concerning it? *Hath he said, and shall he not do it?* Said it in his own purpose, and shall he not perform it in his Providence, according to the Counsel of his Will. *Hath he spoken in his Word, in his Promise, and shall he not make it good?* Can we think otherwise of God, but that he is unchangeably one with himself, and true to his Word. All his Decrees are unalterable, and all his Promises inviolable. 2. He applies this general Truth to the Case in hand, v. 20. He hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it, i.e. I cannot prevail with him to reverse it. Israel was of old a blessed People, a Seed that the Lord had blessed, the Blessing of Abraham came upon them; they were born under the Blessing of the Covenant, and born to the Blessing of Canaan, and therefore they could not be cursed, unless you could suppose, that the God of Eternal Truth should break his Word, and become false to himself and his People. 2. Because Israel is at present unblameable, v. 21. *He has not beheld iniquity in Jacob.* Not but that there was iniquity in Jacob, and God saw it; but 1. There was not such a Degree of Iniquity as might provoke God to abandon them, and give them up to ruin. As bad as they were, they were not so bad. 2. There was no Idolatry among them, which is in a particular Manner call'd iniquity, and perverseness; we have found nothing of that kind in Israel since the Golden Calf, and therefore tho' they were in other Instances very provoking, yet God would not cast them off. Balaam knew that nothing would separate between them and God but Sin; while God saw no reigning Sin among them, he would send no destroying Curse among them; and therefore as long as they kept in with God, he despair'd of ever doing them any Mischief. Note, While we keep from Sin, we keep from Harm. Some give another Sense of these Words: They read it thus, *He has not beheld wrong suffered to Jacob, nor will he see any grievance done to Israel*, i.e. He hath not, nor will he permit it, or allow it; he will not see Israel injur'd, but he will right them, and avenge their Quarrel. Note, God will not bear to see any Injury done to his Church and People; for what is done against them, he takes as done against himself, and will reckon for it accordingly. 3. Because the Power of both was irresistible. He shews Balak there was no dealing with them, 'twas to no Purpose to offer it; for, 1. They had the Presence of God with them. *The Lord his God is with him*, in a particular Manner, and not provok'd to withdraw from him. 2. They had the Joy of that Presence, and were always made to triumph in it; the shout or

alarm of a King is among them. They shout against their Enemies as sure of Victory and Success, glorifying continually in God as their King, and Conqueror for them. 3. They had had the Experience of the Benefit of God's Presence with them, and his Power engaged for them. For God brought them out of Egypt, v. 22. The Power that had done that could never be restrain'd, never resisted; and having begun so gloriously, would no doubt finish gloriously. 4. While they had God's Presence with them, they had the strength of an Unicorn, able to make Head against all that oppos'd them. See Chap. 24. 8. Such is the Strength which the God of Israel gives unto his People.

Now from all this he infers, that it was to no Purpose for him to think of doing them a Mischief by all the Arts he could use, v. 23. 1. He owns himself baffled. *Surely there is no Enchantment against Jacob*, so as to prevail. The Curses of Hell can never take Place against the Blessings of Heaven. Not but that Attempts of this kind would be made, but they would certainly be fruitless and ineffectual. Some observe, that Jacob speaks the Church low and afflicted, Israel speaks it prosperous and advanced; but be the Church high or low, be her Friends few or many, do second Causes smile or frown, it comes all to one. No Weapon form'd against it shall prosper. Note, God easily can, and certainly will baffle and disappoint all the Devices and Designs of the Powers of Darkness against his Church; so that they shall not prevail to destroy it. 2. He foresees that this would be remember'd in Time to come. *According to this Time*, i.e. with Reference to this we are now about, it shall be said concerning Jacob and Israel, and said by them, *What hath God wrought?* What great Things hath God done for his People? It shall be said with Wonder, Joy and Thankfulness, and a Challenge to the Neighbour Nations, to produce any like Instances of the Care of their Gods for them. Note, The defeating of the Designs of the Churches Enemies, ought to be had in everlasting Remembrance to the Glory of God. *There is none like unto the God of Jesurun.* What Balaam saith here concerning the Preheminence of the God of Israel, above all the Gods of the Gentiles; perhaps Moses refers to when he saith, Deut. 32. 31. *Their Rock is not as our Rock, even our Enemies themselves being Judges;* Balaam particularly. Balak therefore has no Hopes of ruining Israel; but 2. Balaam shews him, that he had more Reason to fear being ruin'd by them, for they were likely to make bloody Work among his Neighbours, and if he and his Country escap'd, it was not because he was too big for them to meddle with, but because he fell not within their Commission, v. 24. *Behold, and tremble, the People that now have lain for some time closely encamp'd, do but repose themselves for a while like a Lyon Couchant, but shortly they shall rise up as a great Lyon, a Lyon Rampant, that shall not lie down till he eat of the Prey, and drink the Blood of the slain.* This seems to point at the Victories he foresaw they would obtain over the Canaanites; that they would never lay down their Arms, till they had made a compleat Conquest of the Land they had now in view; and when his Neighbour's House was on Fire, he had Reason to think his own in Danger.

Now what was the Issue of this Disappointment! 1. Balak and Balaam were both of them sick of the Cause. 1. Balak is now willing to have his Conjuror silenc'd. Since he cannot say what he would have him, he wishes him to say nothing. *Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all*, v. 25. If thou canst not curse them, prithee do not bless them. If thou canst not assist and encourage my Forces, yet do not oppose and discourage them. Note, God can make those that depart from him weary of their Counsels, Isa. 47. 13-17. 2. Balaam is still willing to own himself over-ruled, and appeals to what he had said in the beginning of this Enterprize, Chap. 22. 38. *All that the Lord speaketh, that must I do*, v. 26. This shews, (1.) In general, That the Way of Man is not in himself; there are many Devices in Man's Heart, but God's Counsels shall stand. (2.) In particular, That as no Weapon form'd against the Church shall prosper, so every Tongue that riseth against her in Judgment, God will controul and condemn, Isa. 54. 17. 2. Yet they resolve to make another Attempt. They think it Scorn to be baffled, and therefore pursue the Design, tho' it be only to their further Confusion. And now the third Time, 1. They change the Place. Balak is at last convinc'd, that 'tis not Balaam's Fault, on whom before the had laid the Blame, but that really he was under a Divine Check, and therefore now he hopes to bring him to a Place, from whence God might at least permit him to curse them, v. 27. Probably he and Balaam were the more encourag'd thus to repeat their Attempt, because God had the second Time allow'd Balaam to go, tho' he had forbidden him the first Time; because by repeated Tryals he had carried that Point, they hope in like manner to carry this. Thus because Sinners are convinc'd at, and Sentence against their evil Works is not executed speedily, their Hearts are the more fully set in them to do Evil. The Place he now took him to was the Top of Peor; the most eminent high Place in all his Coun-try,

try, where 'tis probable Baal was worshipped, and was thence called Baal-Peor. He chose this Place in hopes either, (1.) That it being the Residence (as he fancied) of Baal, the God of Moab, *Jehovah*, the God of Israel would not, or could not come thither to hinder the Operation; or, (2.) That it being a Place acceptable to his God, it would be so to the Lord, and there he would be brought into a good Humour. Such idle Conceits have foolish Men of God, and so vain are their Imaginations concerning him. Thus the Syrians fancied the Lord to be God of the Hills, but not of the Vallies, 1 Kings 20. 28. as if he were more Powerful in one Place, than he is in every Place. 2. They repeat their Sacrifice, seven Bullocks, and seven Rams, upon seven Altars, v. 29, 30. Thus do they persevere in their expensive Oblations, tho' they had no Promise on which to build their Hopes of speeding. Let not us therefore who have Promise that the Vision at the End shall Ipeak and not lye, be discourag'd by Delays, but continue instant in Prayer, and not faint, Luke 18. 1.

CHAP. XXIV.

This Chapter continues and concludes the History of the Defeat of the Counsels of Balak and Balaam against Israel not by Might, nor by Power, but by the Spirit of the Lord of Hosts; and as great an Instance it is of God's Power over the Children of Men, and his Favour towards his own Children, as any Victories recorded in the Book of the Wars of the Lord. What Preparation was made the third time, for the cursing of Israel, we read of in the close of the foregoing Chapter. In this Chapter we are told, 1. What the Blessing was into which that intended Curse was turn'd v. 1-9. 2. How Balak dismiss'd Balaam from his Service thereupon, v. 10-13. 3. The Predictions Balaam left behind him, concerning Israel, and some of the Neighbour Nations, v. 14-25.

AND when Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, he went not as at other times, to seek for enchantments, but he set his face toward the wilderness. 2 And Balaam lift up his eyes, and he saw Israel abiding in his tents, according to their tribes: and the spirit of God came upon him. 3 And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open, hath said: 4 He hath said, which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open: 5 How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! 6 As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the rivers side, as the trees of lign-aloes which the LORD hath planted, and as cedar-trees beside the waters. 7 He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters, and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted. 8 God brought him forth out of Egypt, he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn: he shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce them through with his arrows. 9 He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion: who shall stir him up? Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee.

The Blessing itself which Balaam here pronounceth upon Israel, is much the same with the two we had in the foregoing Chapter, but the Introduction to it is different, 1. The Method of Proceeding here varies much in several Instances. 1. Balaam laid aside the Enchantments, he had hitherto depended on; us'd no Spells, or Charms, or Magick Arts, finding they did him no Service; 'twas to no Purpose to deal with the Devil for a Curse when it was plain, God was determin'd immovably to bless, v. 1. Sooner or latter God will convince Men of their Folly in seeking after lying Vanities which cannot profit. To what Purpose should he seek for Enchantments, he knew God was out of the reach of them. 2. He did not now retire into a solitary Place, as before, but set his Face directly towards the Wilderness where Israel lay encamp'd; and since there's no Remedy but they must be blessed, he will design nothing else, but will submit by Compulsion. 3. Now the Spirit of God came upon him, viz. the Spirit of Prophecy, as upon Saul to prevent him from taking David, 1 Sam. 19. 23. He spake not his own Sense, but the Language of the Spirit that came upon him. 4. He us'd a different Preface now from what he had us'd before, v. 3, 4, much like that of David's,

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2 Sam. 23. 1, 2, 3. yet favouring very much (as some think) of Pride and Vainglory, taking all the Praise of this Prophecy to himself, and magnifying himself as one of the Cabinet Council of Heaven. Two Things he boasts of, 1. The Favour God did him in making known himself to him. He heard the Words of God, and saw the Vision of the Almighty; God himself had met him, and spoken to him, Chap. 23. 16. and this he is hugely puff'd up with. Paul speaks with Humility of his Visions and Revelations, (2 Cor. 12. 1.) But Balaam speaks of them with Pride. 2. His own Power to receive and bear those Revelations. He fell into a Trance indeed, as other Prophets did, but he had his Eyes open. This he mentions twice; but the Words in the Original are not the same. The Man whose Eyes were shut, some think it may be read so, v. 3. but now having his Eyes open, v. 4. when he had attempted to curse Israel, he owns himself in a Mistake, but now he began to see his Error; and yet still he remain'd blinded by Covetousness and Ambition, those foolish and hurtful Lusts. Note, 1. Those that oppose God and his People, will sooner or later be made to see themselves wretchedly deceiv'd. 2. Many have their Eyes open that have not their Hearts open; are enlighten'd; but not sanctified; and that Knowledge which puffs Men up with Pride, will but serve to light them to Hell, whither many go with their Eyes open. 2. Yet the Blessing is for Substance the same with those before. Several Things he admires in Israel. 1. Their Beauty, v. 5. How goodly are thy Tents, O Jacob. Tho' they dwelt not in stately Palaces, but in coarse and homely Tents, and those no doubt sadly Weather-beaten, yet Balaam sees a Beauty in those Tents, because of their admirable Order, according to their Tribes, v. 2. Nothing recommends Religion more to the good Opinion of those that look upon it at a Distance, than the Unity and Harmony of its Professors, Psal. 133. 1. The Amiability of this People, and the great Reputation they should gain among their Neighbours, is compar'd (v. 6.) to the Beauty and Sweetness of fruitful Vallies, and fine Gardens, flourishing Trees, and fragrant Spices. Note, Those whose Eyes are open, see the Saints on the Earth to be excellent Ones, and their Delight is accordingly in them. The Righteous doubtless is more excellent than his Neighbour. They are Trees which the Lord has planted, that's their Excellency. The Branches of Righteousness are the planting of the Lord. See Hos. 14. 5, 6, 7. 2. Their Fruitfulness and Increase. This may be intended by those Similitudes, v. 6. of the Vallies, Gardens and Trees; as well as by those Expressions, v. 7. He shall pour the Water out of his Buckets, i. e. God shall water them with his Blessing like Rain from Heaven, and then his Seed shall be in many Waters: Compare Hos. 2. 23. I will sow her unto me in the Earth. And Waters are in Scripture put for People, and Multitudes, and Nations. This has been fulfill'd in the wonderful Increase of that Nation, and their vast Multitude even in their Dispersion; 3. Their Honour and Advancement. As the Multitude of the People is the Honour of the Prince, so the Magnificence of the Prince is the Honour of the People; Balaam therefore foretels that his King shall be higher than Agag. Agag 'tis probable was the most potent Monarch in those Parts; Balaam knew of none more considerable than he, he top'd the rest of his Neighbours, but Balaam foretels that Israel's chief Commander, who after Moses, was Joshua, should be more great and honourable than ever Agag was, and make a far better Figure in History, Saul their first King triumph'd over Agag, tho' 'tis said he came delicately. 4. Their Power and Victory, v. 8. (1.) He looks back upon what they had done, or rather what had been done for them. God brought him forth out of Egypt, this he had spoken of before, Chap. 23. 22. The Wonders that attended their Deliverance out of Egypt contributed more to their Honour, and the Terror of their Adversaries, than any thing else, Josh. 2. 10. He that brought them out of Egypt, will not fail to bring them into Canaan, for as for God his Work is perfect. (2.) He looks down upon their present Strength. Israel hath as it were the Strength of an Unicorn; of which Creature it is said, Job 39. 9, 10. Will he be willing to serve thee, or abide thy Crib? Canst thou bind him with his Band in the Farrow? No, Israel is too powerful to be check'd or held in by my Curses, or thy Armies. (3.) He looks forward to their future Conquests. He shall eat up the Nations their Enemies, i. e. He shall not only destroy and devour them as easily and irresistibly as a Lion doth his Prey, but he shall himself be strengthened, and fattened, and enrich'd by their Spoils. 5. Their Courage and Security, v. 9. He lay down as a Lion, as a great Lion. Now he doth so, in the Plains of Moab, and asks no leave of the King of Moab, nor is he in fear of him; shortly will he do so in Canaan, when he has torn his Prey, he will take his Repose, quiet from the fear of evil, and bid Defiance to all his Neighbours; for who shall stir up a sleeping Lion? It is observ'd of Lions, (as the learned Bishop Patrick takes Notice here) that they do not retire into Places of Shelter to sleep, but lye down any where, knowing that none dares meddle with them: Thus secure was Israel in Canaan, chiefly in the Days of David and Solomon; and thus is the Righteous bold as a Lion, Prov. 28. 1. not to assault

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assault others, but to repose themselves, because *God maketh them to dwell in Safety*, Psa. 4. 8. 6. Their Interest and Influence upon their Neighbours. Their Friends, and those in Alliance with them were happy, *blessed is he that blest thee*, those that do them any Kindness will certainly fare the better for it: But their Enemies, and those in Arms against them, were certainly miserable; *curst is he that curst thee*, those that do them any Injury, it is at their Peril; for God takes what is done to them whether Good or Evil, as done to himself. Thus he confirms the Blessing of Abraham, Gen. 12. 3. And speaks as if, therefore, he did at this time bless Israel, and not curse them, because he desir'd to share in the Blessing of Israel's Friends, and dreaded the Curse on Israel's Enemies.

10 ¶ And Balaks anger was kindled against Balaam, and he smote his hands together: and Balak said unto Balaam, I called thee to curse mine enemies, and behold, thou hast altogether blessed them these three times. 11 Therefore now, flee thou to thy place, I thought to promote thee unto great honour, but lo, the LORD hath kept thee back from honour. 12 And Balaam said unto Balak, Spake I not also to thy messengers which thou sentest unto me, saying, 13 If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of the LORD, to do either good or bad of mine own mind? but what the LORD saith, that will I speak. 14 And now behold, I go unto my people: come therefore, and I will advertise thee, what this people shall do to thy people in the latter days.

We have here the Conclusion of this vain Attempt to curse Israel, and the letting of it fall. 1. Balak made the worst of it. He broke out into a Rage against Balaam, v. 10. Express'd both in Words and Gesture the highest degree of Vexation at the Disappointment; he smote his hands together for Indignation to see all his Measures thus broke, and his Project baffled. He charg'd Balaam with putting upon him the basest Affront and Cheat imaginable; I called thee to curse mine Enemies, and thou hast shew'd thyself in League with them, and in their Interests, for thou hast blessed them these three times; tho by appointing the Altars to be built, and the Sacrifice to be rear'd, thou mad'st me believe thou would'st certainly curse them. Hereupon he forbid him his Presence, expell'd him his Country, upbraided him with the Preferments he had design'd to have bestow'd upon him, but now would not, v. 11. *The Lord has kept thee back from Honour.* See what thou get'st by pleasing the Lord, instead of pleasing me thou hast balk'd thy Preferment by it. Thus they who are any ways losers by their Duty, are commonly upbraided with it as Fools, for preferring that before their Interest in the World. Whereas if Balaam had been voluntary and sincere in his Adherence to the Word of the Lord, tho' he lost the Honour Balak design'd him by it, God would have made that Loss up to him abundantly to his Advantage. 2. Balaam made the best of it. (1.) He endeavours to excuse the Disappointment. And a very good Excuse he has for it, that God restrain'd him from saying what he would have said, and constrain'd him to say what he would not; and that this was what Balak ought not to be pleas'd at, not only because he could not help it, but because he had told Balak before what he must depend upon, v. 12, 13. Balak could not say that he had cheated him, since he had given him fair Notice of the Check he found himself under. (2.) He endeavours to atone for it, v. 14. Tho' he cannot do what Balak would have him do; yet, (1.) He will gratify his Curiosity with some Predictions concerning the Nations about. 'Tis natural to us to be pleas'd with Prophecy, and with this he hopes to qualify the angry Prince. (2.) He will satisfy him with an Assurance that whatever this formidable People should do to his People, it should not be till the latter Days, so that he for his Part need not to fear any Mischief, or Molestation from them; the Vision was for a great while to come, but in his Days there should be Peace. (3.) He will put him into a Method of doing Israel a Mischief, without the Ceremonies of Enchantment and Execration. This seems to be implied in that Word, *I will advertise thee*, for it properly signifies, *I will counsel thee*; what the Counsel was is not set down here, because it was given privately, but we are told afterwards what it was, Chap. 31. 16. He counsell'd him to entice the Israelites to Idolatry, Rev. 2. 14. Since he could not have leave from God to curse them, he put them in a way of getting help from the Devil to tempt them. *Flectere si nequeo superos, Acheronta movebo.*

15 ¶ And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open, hath said: 16 He hath said,

which heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the most High, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open: 17 I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a star out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth. 18 And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies, and Israel shall do valiantly. 19 Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city. 20 ¶ And when he looked on Amalek, he took up his parable, and said, Amalek was the first of the nations, but his latter end shall be that he perish for ever. 21 And he looked on the Kenites, and took up his parable, and said, Strong is thy dwelling place, and thou puttest thy nest in a rock, 22 Nevertheless, the Kenite shall be wasted, until Ashur shall carry thee away captive. 23 And he took up his parable, and said, Alas! who shall live when God doth this? 24 And ships shall come from the coast of Chittim, and shall afflict Ashur, and shall afflict Eber, and he also shall perish for ever. 25 And Balaam rose up and went, and returned to his place: and Balak also went his way.

The Office of Prophets was both to bless and to prophecy in the Name of the Lord. Balaam as a Prophet per force had bless'd Israel. Here he foretells future Events. 1. His Preface is much the same with that, v. 3, 4. He personates a true Prophet admirably well, God permitting him and directing him to do so, because whatever he was, the Prophecy itself was a true Prophecy. He boasts, (1.) That his Eyes are open, v. 15. for Prophets were in old Time call'd Seers, 1 Sam. 9. 9. because they must speak what they had seen, and therefore before they open'd their Lips, 'twas necessary they should have their Eyes open. (2.) That he had heard the Words of God, which many do that do not heed them, nor hear God in them. (3.) That he knew the Knowledge of the most High; this is added here. A Man may be full of the Knowledge of God, and yet utterly destitute of the Grace of God; may receive the Truth in the Light of it, and yet be a Stranger to the Love of it. (4.) That he saw the Vision of the Almighty, but not so as to be changed into the same Image. He calls God the Most High, and the Almighty; no Man could speak more honourably of him, nor seem to put a greater Value upon his Acquaintance with him, and yet he had no true Fear of him, Love to him, or Faith in him; so far may a Man go towards Heaven, and yet come short. 2. Here's his Prophecy concerning him that should be the Crown and Glory of his People Israel; who is, (1.) David in the Type, who not now, not quickly, but in Process of Time should smite the corners of Moab, v. 17. and take Possession of Edom, and Mount Seir, and under whom the Forces of Israel should do valiantly, v. 18. This was fulfill'd when David smote Moab, and measur'd them with a Line, so that the Moabites became David's Servants, 2 Sam. 8. 2. And at the same Time the Edomites, likewise, were brought into Obedience to Israel, v. 14. But, (2.) Our Lord Jesus, the promised Messiah, is chiefly pointed at in the Antitype, and of him it is an illustrious Prophecy; 'twas the Will of God that Notice should thus be given of his coming, a great while before, not only to the People of the Jews, but to other Nations, because his Gospel and Kingdom were to extend themselves so far beyond the Borders of the Land of Israel. 'Tis here foretold, 1. That his coming should not be yet of a great while: *I shall see him, but not now.* I do see him, in Vision, but at a great Distance, through the interposing space of Fifteen Hundred Years at least. Or understand it thus: Balaam, a wicked Man, should see Christ, but not see him nigh; not see him as Job, who saw him as his Redeemer, and saw him for himself, Job 19. 25, 27. When he comes in the Clouds every Eye shall see him, but many will see him (as the rich Man in Hell saw Abraham) afar off. 2. That he shall come out of Jacob, and Israel, as a Star; and a Scepter; the former noting his Glory and Lustre as the bright and Morning Star, the latter his Power and Authority; 'tis he that shall have Dominion. Perhaps this Prophecy of Balaam (one of the Children of the East) concerning a Star that should arise out of Jacob, as the Indication of Scepter arising in Israel, being preserv'd by Tradition in that Country, gave Occasion to the Wise Men who were of the East too, upon the sight of an unusual Star over the Land of Judea, to enquire for him that was born King of

of the Jews, Mat. 2. 3. That his Kingdom shall be universal, and victorious over all Opposition; which was typified by David's Victories over Moab and Edom. But the Messiah shall destroy, or as some read it, shall rule over all the Children of Seth, v. 17. i. e. all the Children of Men, which descend from Seth, the Son of Adam; the Descendants of all the rest of Adam's Sons being cut off by the Deluge. Christ shall be King not only of Jacob and Israel, but of all the World; so that all the Children of Seth shall be either govern'd by his Golden Scepter, or dash'd in Pieces by his Iron Rod. He shall set up a universal Rule, Authority and Power of his own, and shall put down all opposing Rule, 1 Cor. 15. 24. He shall unwall all the Children of Seth; so some read it. He shall take down all their Defences and carnal Confidences, so as that they shall either admit his Government, or lye open to his Judgment. 4. That his Israel shall do valiantly. The Subjects of Christ, animated by his might, shall maintain a spiritual War with the Powers of Darkness, and be more than Conquerors. *The People that do know their God shall be strong, and do Exploits;* Dan. 11. 22. 3. Here's his Prophecy concerning the Amalekites and Kenites, Part of whose Country 'tis probably he had now in View. (1.) The Amalekites were now the Chief of the Nations, v. 20. therefore Agag was spoken of, v. 7. as a topping Prince, and they were the first that engag'd Israel, when they came out of Egypt; but the time will come, when that Nation, as great as it looks now, will be totally ruin'd, and rooted out. *His latter end shall be, that he perish for ever,* Here Balaam confirms that Doom of Amalek which Moses had read, Exod. 17. 14, 16. Where God had sworn that he would have perpetual War with Amalek. Note, Those whom God is at War with, will certainly perish for ever; for when God judgeth he will overcome. 2. The Kenites were now the securest of the Nations; their Situation was such, as that Nature was their Engineer, and had strongly fortified them; *thou puttest thy Nest (like the Eagle) in a Rock,* v. 21. Thou thinkest thy self safe, and yet the Kenite shall be wasted, v. 22. and gradually brought to Decay, till they be carried Captive by the Assyrians, which was done at the Captivity of the Ten Tribes. Note, Bodies Politick, like Natural Bodies, tho' of the strongest Constitution, will gradually decay, and come to Ruin at last; even a Nest in a Rock will be no perpetual Security. 4. Here's a Prophecy that looks as far forward as the Greeks and Romans, for theirs is suppos'd to be meant by the Coast of Chittim, v. 24. (1.) The Introduction to this Parable, this Article of his Prophecy is very observable, v. 23. *Alas who shall live when God doth this?* Here he acknowledgeth all the Revolutions of States and Kingdoms to be the Lord's doing, *God doth this;* whoever are the Instruments, he is the supreme Director; but he speaks mournfully concerning them, and hath a very melancholy Prospect of these Events; *Who shall live---*? Either, 1. These Events are so distant, and so far off to come, that 'tis hard to say, *who shall live till they come.* But whoever shall live to see them, there will be amazing Turns. Or, 2. They will be so dismal, and make such Desolations, that scarce any will escape, or be left alive, who shall live when Death rides in Triumph, Rev. 6. 8. They that live then will be as Brands pluck'd out of the Fire, and will have their Lives given them as a Prey. God fit us for the worst of Times! (2.) The Prophecy itself is observable. Both Greece and Italy lye much upon the Sea, and therefore their Armies were sent forth mostly in Ships. Now he seems here to foretel, (1.) That the Forces of the Grecians should humble and bring down the Assyrians, who were united with the Persians, which was fulfill'd when the Eastern Country was overcome, or over-run rather by Alexander. (2.) That theirs and the Roman Forces should afflict the Hebrews, or Jews, who were call'd the Children of Eber; this was fulfill'd in Part when the Grecian Empire was oppressive to the Jewish Nation, but chiefly when the Roman Empire ruin'd it, and put a Period to it. But, (3.) That Chittim, that is, the Roman Empire in which the Grecian was at length swallow'd, should itself perish for ever, when the Stone cut of the Mountain without Hand, shall consume all these Kingdoms, and particularly the Feet of Iron and Clay, Dan. 2. 34. Thus (saith Dr. Lightfoot) Balaam instead of cursing the Church curseth Amalek the first, and Rome the last Enemy of the Church. And so let all thine Enemies perish, O Lord?

CHAP. XXV.

Israel having escaped the Curse of Balaam, here sustains a great deal of Damage and Reproach by the Counsel of Balaam, who it seems before he left Balak, put him into a more effectual Way than that which Balak thought of, to separate between the Israelites and their God. The Lord will not be prevail'd with by Balaam's Charms to ruin them; try if they will not be prevail'd with by the Charms of the Daughters of Moab to ruin themselves. None are more fatally bewitch'd than those that are bewitch'd by their own Lusts. Here's 1. The Sin of Israel; they were entic'd by the Daughters of Moab both to Whoredom and to Idolatry, v. 1, 3. 2. The Punishment of this Sin, by the Hand

of the Magistrate, v. 4, 5. And by the immediate Hand of God, v. 9. 3. The pious Zeal of Phinehas in slaying Zimri and Cozbi, two impudent Sinners, v. 6, 8, 14, 15. 4. God's Commendation of the Zeal of Phinehas, v. 10, 13. 5. Enmity put between the Israelites and the Midianites, their Tempters, as at first between the Woman and the Serpent, v. 16, 18.

AND Israel abode in Shittim, and the people begun to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. 2 And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods: 3 And Israel joined himself unto Baal-Peor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel. 4 And the LORD said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the LORD against the sun, that the fierce anger of the LORD may be turned away from Israel: 5 And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one his men, that were joined unto Baal-Peor.

Here's 1. The Sin of Israel, to which they were enticed by the Daughters of Moab and Midian; they were guilty both of Corporal and Spiritual Whoredom, for Israel joined himself unto Baal-Peor, v. 3. not all, nor the most, but very many were taken in this Snare. Now concerning this, observe, (1.) That Balak by the Advice of Balaam, cast this stumbling Block before the Children of Israel, Rev. 2. 14. Note, Those are our worst Enemies that draw us to Sin, for that's the greatest Mischief any Man can do us. If Balak had drawn out his armed Men against them to fight them, Israel had bravely resisted, and no doubt had been more than Conquerors, but now he sends his beautiful Women among them, and invites them to his idolatrous Feasts, Israel basely yields, and is shamefully overcome; they are smitten with his Whores, that could not be smitten with the Sword. Note, We are in more danger by the Charms of a smiling World, than by the Terrors of a frowning World. (2.) That the Daughters of Moab were their Tempters, and Conquerors. Ever since Eve was first in the Transgression the fairer Sex, though the weaker, has been a Snare to many, yea strong Men have been wounded and slain by the Lips of the strange Women, Prov. 7. 26. Witness Solomon, whose Wives were Snares and Nets to him, Eccle. 7. 26. (3.) That Whoredom and Idolatry went together. They first defiled and debauched their Consciences by committing Lewdness with the Women, and then were easily drawn in Complaisance to them, and in Contempt of the God of Israel, to bow down to their Idols. And the more likely to do so, if as is commonly suppos'd, and seems probable by the joining of them together, the Uncleaness committed was a Part of the Worship and Service perform'd to Baal-Peor. Those that have broke the Fences of Modesty, will never be held by the Bonds of Piety; and those that have dishonour'd themselves by fleshly Lusts, will not stick at dishonouring God by idolatrous Worship; and for that are justly given up yet further to vile Affections. (4.) That by eating of the idolatrous Sacrifices, they joined themselves to Baal-Peor; to whom they were offer'd; which the Apostle urgeth as a Reason why Christians should not eat things offer'd to Idols, because thereby they had Fellowship with the Devils, to whom they were offer'd, 1 Cor. 10. 20. 'Tis call'd eating the Sacrifices of the Dead, Psal. 106. 28. Not only because the Idol itself was a dead Thing, but because the Person represented by it was some great Hero, who since his Death was deified, as Saints in the Romish Church are Canoniz'd. (5.) 'Twas a great Aggravation of the Sin that Israel abode in Shittim, where they had the Land of Canaan in View; and were just ready to enter and take Possession of it. 'Twas the highest degree of Treachery and Ingratitude to be false to their God, whom they had found so faithful to them, and to eat of Idol Sacrifices, when they were ready to be feasted so richly on God's Favours. 2. God's just Displeasure against them for this Sin. Israel's Whoredoms did that which all Balaam's Enchantments could not do, they set God against them, now he was turn'd to be their Enemy, and fought against them. So many of the People, nay, so many of the Princes were guilty, that the Sin became National, and for it God was wrath with the whole Congregation.

1. A Plague immediately broke out; for we read of the slaying of it, v. 8. and of the Number that died of it, v. 9. but no mention of the beginning of it, which therefore must be implied in those Words, v. 3. The Anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel. 'Tis said expressly, Psal. 106. 29. The Plague break in. Note, Epidemical Diseases are the Fruits of God's Anger, and the just Punishments of Epidemical Sins; one Infection follows the other. The Plague no doubt fastned on those that were most guilty, who were soon made to pay

dear for their forbidden Pleasures; and tho' now God doth not always plague such Sinners as he did here, yet that Word of God will be fulfill'd, *If any Man defile the Temple of God, him shall God destroy*, 1 Cor. 3. 17. 2. The Ring-leaders are order'd to be put to Death by the Hand of Publick Justice, which will be the only way to stay the Plague, v. 4. *Take the Heads of the People*, i. e. of that part of the People, that went out of the Camp of Israel into the Country of Moab, to joyn in their Idolatries; *Take them and hang them up before the Sun*, as Sacrifices to God's Justice, and for Terror to the rest of the People. The Judges must first order them to be slain with the Sword, v. 5. and their dead Bodies must be hang'd up, that the stupid Israelites seeing their Leaders and Princes so severely punish'd for their Whoredom and Idolatry, without any Regard to their Quality, might be possess'd with a Sense of the Evil of the Sin, and the Terror of God's Wrath against them. Ring-leaders in Sin, ought to be made Examples of Justice.

6 ¶ And behold, one of the children of Israel came, and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman, in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 7 And when Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose up from amongst the congregation, and took a javelin in his hand. 8 And he went after the man of Israel into the tent, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly: so the plague was stayed from the children of Israel. 9 And those that died in the plague, were twenty and four thousand. 10 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 11 Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, (while he was zealous for my sake among them) that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy. 12 Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace. 13 And he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood, because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel. 14 Now the name of the Israelite that was slain, even that was slain with the Midianitish woman, was Zimri the son of Salu, a prince of the chief house among the Simeonites. 15 And the name of the Midianitish woman that was slain, was Cozbi the daughter of Zur, he was head over the people, and of a chief house in Midian.

Here's a remarkable Contest between Wickedness and Righteousness, which shall be most bold and resolute; and Righteousness carries the Day, as no doubt it will at last. 1. Never was Vice more daring than it was in Zimri; a Prince of a chief House in the Tribe of Simeon. Such a Degree of Impudence in Wickedness was he arriv'd to, that he publicly appear'd leading a Midianitish Whore (and a Whore of Quality too like himself, a Daughter of a chief House in Midian) in the sight of Moses, and all the good People of Israel. He did not think it enough to go out with his Harlot to worship the Gods of Moab, but when he had done that, he brought her with him to dishonour the God of Israel. He not only own'd her publicly as his Friend, and higher in his Favour than any of the Daughters of Israel, but openly went with her into the Tent, v. 8. The Word signifies such a Booth or Place of Retirement as was design'd and fitted up for Lewdness. Thus he declar'd his Sin as Sodom, and was so far from Blushing for it, that he rather prided himself in it, and glory'd in his Shame. All the Circumstances concurr'd to make it exceeding sinful, exceeding shameful. (1.) 'Twas an Affront to the Justice of the Nation, and bid defiance to that: The Judges were order'd to put the Criminals to Death, but he thought himself too big for them to meddle with, and in effect bids them touch him if they durst. He had certainly cast off all fear of God, who stood in no Awe of the Powers which he had ordain'd to be a Terror to evil Doers. (2.) 'Twas an Affront to the Religion of the Nation, and put a Contempt upon that, Moses and the main Body of the Congregation, who kept their Integrity, were weeping at the Door of the Tabernacle; lamenting the Sin committed, and deprecating the Plague begun; they were sanctifying a Fast in a solemn Assembly, weeping between the Porch and the Altar, to turn away the Wrath of

God from the Congregation, then comes Zimri among them with his Whore in his Hand to banter them, and in effect to tell them that he was resolv'd to fill the Measure of Sin, as fast as they emptied it. 2. Never was Virtue more daring than it was in Phinehas. Being aware of the Insolence of Zimri, which 'ris likely all the Congregation took Notice of, in a holy Indignation at the Offenders, he rises up from his Prayers; takes his Sword or Half-pike, follows those impudent Sinners into their Tent, and slabs them both, v. 7, 8. 'Tis not at all difficult to justify Phinehas in what he did; for being now Heir Apparent to the High Priesthood, no doubt he was one of those Judges of Israel whom Moses had order'd by the Divine Appointment to slay all those whom they knew to have join'd themselves to Baal-peor; so that this gives no Countenance at all to private Persons under pretence of Zeal against Sin to put Offenders to Death, who ought to be prosecuted by due Course of Law. The Civil Magistrate is the Avenger to execute Wrath upon him that doth Evil; and no private Person may take his Work out of his Hand.

Two ways God testified his Acceptance of the pious Zeal of Phinehas. 1. He immediately put a stop to the Plague, v. 8. Their weeping and praying prevail'd not, till this Piece of necessary Justice was done. If Magistrates do not take Care to punish Sin, God will; but their Justice will be the best Prevention of his Judgment, as in the Case of Achan, Josh. 7. 13. 2. He put an Honour upon Phinehas: Tho' he did no more than was his Duty to do as a Judge, yet because he did it with extraordinary Zeal against Sin, and for the Honour of God and Israel, and did it when the other Judges out of respect to Zimri's Character as a Prince, were afraid, and declin'd doing it; therefore God shew'd himself particularly well pleas'd with him, and it was counted to him for Righteousness, Psal. 106. 31. There's nothing lost by venturing for God. If Zimri's Relations bore him a Grudge for it, and his Friends might censure him as indiscreet in this violent and hasty Execution, what needed he Care, while God accepted him? In a good thing we should be zealously affected. (1.) Phinehas upon this Occasion, tho' a young Man, is pronounc'd his Country's Patriot, and best Friend, v. 11. He has turn'd away my Wrath from the Children of Israel. So much doth God delight in shewing Mercy, that he is well pleas'd with those that are instrumental in turning away his Wrath. This is the best Service we can do to our People, and we may contribute something towards it by our Prayers, and by our Endeavours in our Places to bring the Wickedness of the Wicked to an End. (2.) The Priesthood is entail'd by Covenant upon his Family: 'Twas design'd him before, but now it was confirm'd to him, and which added much to the Comfort and Honour of it, it was made the Recompence of his Pious Zeal, v. 12, 13. 'Tis here call'd an everlasting Priesthood, because it should continue to the Period of the Old Testament Dispensation, and should then have its Perfection and Perpetuity in the unchangeable Priesthood of Christ, who is consecrated for evermore. By the Covenant of Peace given him, some understand in general a Promise of long Life and Prosperity, and all Good; it seems rather to be meant particularly of the Covenant of Priesthood, for that's call'd the Covenant of Life and Peace, Mal. 2. 5. and was made for the preserving of Peace between God and his People. Observe, how the Reward answer'd the Service, by executing Justice he had made an Attonement for the Children of Israel, v. 13. and therefore he and his shall from henceforward be employ'd in making Attonement by Sacrifice. He was zealous for his God, and therefore he shall have the Covenant of an Everlasting Priesthood. Note, It is requisite that Ministers should be not only for God, but zealous for God. It is requir'd of them, that they do more than others for the Support and Advancement of the Interests of God's Kingdom among Men.

16 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 17 Vex the Midianites, and smite them: 18 For they vex you with their wives, wherewith they have beguiled you, in the matter of Peor, and in the matter of Cozbi, the daughter of a prince of Midian their sister, which was slain in the day of the plague, for Peors sake.

God had punished the Israelites for their Sin with a Plague, as a Father he corrected his own Children with a Rod, but we read not that any of the Midianites died of the Plague, God took another Course with them, and punish'd them with the Sword of an Enemy, not with the Rod of a Father. (1.) Moses, tho' the meekest Man, and far from a Spirit of Revenge, is bid to vex the Midianites and smite them, v. 17. Note, We must set ourselves against that, whatever it is, which is an Occasion of Sin to us, tho' it be a right Eye, or a right Hand that thus offends us, Mat. 5. 29, 30. This is that Holy Indignation and Revenge which Godly Sorrow worketh, 2 Cor. 7. 11. (2.) The Reason given for the meditating of this

this Revenge is, because they vex you with their Wives, v. 18. *Note*, Whatever draws us to Sin should be a Vexation to us, as a Thorn in the Flesh. The Mischief which the Midianites did to Israel in enticing them to Whoredom, must be remember'd and reveng'd with as much Severity, as that which the Amalekites did in fighting with them, when they came out of Egypt, Exod. 17. 14. God will certainly reckon with those that do the Devil's Work in tempting Men to Sin, especially those that make Israel to sin. See further Orders given in this Matter, Chap. 31. 2.

C H A P. XXVI.

This Book is call'd Numbers, from the Numberings of the Children of Israel; which it gives an Account of. Once they were number'd at Mount Sinai, in the first Year after they came out of Egypt, which we had an Account of, Ch. 1. and 2. And now a second Time they were number'd in the Plains of Moab, just before they enter'd Canaan, and that we have an Account of in this Chapter. 1. Orders are given for the doing of it, v. 1-4. 2. A Register of the Families, and Numbers of each Tribe, v. 5-50. and the Sum Total, v. 51. 3. Direction given to divide the Land among them, v. 52-56. 4. The Families and Numbers of the Levites by themselves, v. 57-62. 5. Notice is taken of the fulfilling of the Threatning in the Death of all those that were first number'd, v. 63-65. and to this there seems to have been a special Regard in the taking and keeping of this Account.

AND it came to pass after the plague, that the LORD spake unto Moses, and unto Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, saying, 2 Take the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, from twenty years old and upward, throughout their fathers house, all that are able to go to war in Israel. 3 And Moses and Eleazar the priest spake with them in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho, saying, 4 Take the sum of the people from twenty years old and upward, as the LORD commanded Moses, and the children of Israel, which went forth out of the land of Egypt.

Observe here, 1. That Moses did not number the People, but when God commanded him. David in his Time did it without a Command, and paid dear for it. God was Israel's King, and he would not have this Act of Authority done, but by his express Orders. Moses perhaps by this time had heard of the Blessing, with which Balaam was constrain'd fore against his Will to bless Israel, and particularly the Notice he took of their Numbers, and is sufficiently pleas'd with that general Testimony born to this Instance of their Strength and Honour by an Adversary, tho' he knows not their Numbers exactly, till God now appoints him to take the Sum of them. 2. Eleazar is joyn'd in Commission with him, as Aaron had been before, by which God honour'd Eleazar before the Elders of his People, and confirm'd his Succession. 3. 'Twas presently after the Plague, that this Account was order'd to be taken; to shew, that tho' God had in Justice contend'd with them by that sweeping Pestilence, yet he had not made a full End, nor would he utterly cast them off. God's Israel shall not be ruin'd, tho' it be severely rebuk'd. 4. They were now to go by the same Rule they had gone by in the former Numbering, counting those only that were able to go forth to War, for that was the Service now before them.

5 ¶ Reuben the eldest son of Israel: the children of Reuben, Hanoch, of whom cometh the family of the Hanochites: of Pallu, the family of the Palluites: 6 Of Hefron, the family of the Hefronites: of Carmi, the family of the Carmites. 7 These are the families of the Reubenites: and they that were numbered of them were forty and three thousand and seven hundred and thirty. 8 And the sons of Pallu, Eliab. 9 And the sons of Eliab, Nemuel, and Dathan, and Abiram: this is that Dathan and Abiram, which were famous in the congregation, who strove against Moses, and against Aaron in the company of Korah, when they strove against the LORD. 10 And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up together with Korah, when that company died, what time the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men: and they became a sign. 11 Notwithstanding, the children of Korah died not. 12 ¶ The sons of Simeon after their families: of Nemuel, the family of the Nemuelites: of Jamin, the family of the Jaminites:

of Jachin, the family of the Jachinites: 13 Of Zerah, the family of the Zarhites: of Shaul, the family of the Shaulites. 14 These are the families of the Simeonites: twenty and two thousand and two hundred. 15 ¶ The children of Gad, after their families: of Zephon, the family of the Zephonites: of Haggi, the family of the Haggites: of Shuni, the family of the Shunites: 16 Of Ozni, the family of the Oznites: of Eri, the family of the Erites: 17 Of Arod, the family of the Arodites: of Areli, the family of the Arelites. 18 These are the families of the children of Gad, according to those that were numbered of them, forty thousand and five hundred. 19 ¶ The sons of Judah were Er and Onan: and Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan. 20 And the sons of Judah after their families were: of Shelah, the family of the Shelanites: of Pharaz, the family of the Pharzites: of Zerah, the family of the Zarhites: 21 And the sons of Pharez were: of Hefron, the family of the Hefronites: of Hamul, the family of the Hamulites. 22 These are the families of Judah, according to those that were numbered of them, threescore and sixteen thousand and five hundred. 23 ¶ Of the sons of Issachar, after their families: of Tola, the family of the Tolaites: of Pua, the family of the Punites: 24 Of Jashub, the Jashubites: of Shimron, the family of the Shimronites. 25 These are the families of Issachar, according to those that were numbered of them, threescore and four thousand and three hundred. 26 ¶ Of the sons of Zebulun, after their families: of Sered, the family of the Sardites: of Elon, the family of the Elonites: of Jahleel, the family of the Jahleelites. 27 These are the families of the Zebulunites, according to those that were numbered of them, threescore thousand and five hundred. 28 ¶ The sons of Joseph after their families were Manasseh and Ephraim. 29 Of the sons of Manasseh: of Machir, the family of the Machirites: and Machir begat Gilead: of Gilead cometh the family of the Gileadites. 30 These are the sons of Gilead: of Jeezer, the family of the Jeezerites: of Helek, the family of the Helekites: 31 And of Asriel, the family of the Asrielites: and of Shechem, the family of the Shechemites: 32 And of Shemida, the family of the Shemidaites: and of Hephher, the family of the Hephherites. 33 ¶ And Zelophehad the son of Hephher had no sons, but daughters: and the names of the daughters of Zelophehad, were Mahlah, and Noah, Hoglah, Milchah, and Tirzah. 34 These are the families of Manasseh, and those that were numbered of them, fifty and two thousand and seven hundred. 35 ¶ These are the sons of Ephraim, after their families: of Shuthelah, the family of the Shuthalhites: of Becher, the family of the Bachrites: of Tahan, the family of the Tahanites. 36 And these are the sons of Shuthelah: of Eran, the family of the Eranites: 37 These are the families of the sons of Ephraim, according to those that were numbered of them, thirty and two thousand and five hundred. These are the sons of Joseph after their families: 38 ¶ The sons of Benjamin after their families: of Bela, the family of the Belaites: of Ashbel, the family of the Ashbelites: of Ahiram, the family of the Ahiramites: 39 Of Shupham, the family of the Shuphamites: of Hupham, the family of the Huphamites. 40 And the sons of Bela were Ard and Naaman: of Ard, the family of the Ardites: and of Naaman, the family of the Naamites. 41 These are the sons of Benjamin after their

their families: and they that were numbered of them, were fourty and five thousand and six hundred. 42 ¶ These are the sons of Dan after their families: of Shuham, the family of the Shuhamites. These are the families of Dan after their families. 43 All the families of the Shuhamites, according to those that were numbred of them, were threescore and four thousand and four hundred. 44 ¶ Of the children of Asher after their families: of Jimna, the family of the Jimnites: of Jesui, the family of the Jesuites: of Beriah, the family of the Beriites. 45 Of the sons of Beriah: of Heber, the family of the Heberites: of Malchiel, the family of the Malchielites. 46 And the name of the daughter of Asher, was Sarah. 47 These are the families of the son of Asher, according to those that were numbered of them, who were fifty and three thousand and four hundred. 48 Of the sons of Naphtali after their families: of Jahzeel, the family of the Jahzeelites: of Guni, the family of the Gunites. 49 Of Jezer, the family of the Jezerites: of Shillem, the family of the Shillemites. 50 These are the families of Naphtali, according to their families: and they that were numbered of them, were forty and five thousand and four hundred. 51 These were the numbered of the children of Israel, six hundred thousand, and a thousand seven hundred and thirty.

This is the Register of the Tribes as they were now enroll'd, in the same order that they were number'd, Chap. 1. Observe 1. The Account that is here kept of the Families of each Tribe, which must not be understood of such as we call Families, those that live in a House together, but such as were the Descendants of the several Sons of the Patriarchs, by whose Names in Honour of them their Posterity distinguish'd themselves, and one another. The Families of the Twelve Tribes are thus number'd; of Dan but one; for Dan had but one Son, and yet that Tribe was the most numerous of all, except Judah, v. 42, 43. Its beginning was small, but its latter end greatly increas'd; Zebulun was divided into three Families; Ephraim into four; Issachar into four, Naphtali into four, and Reuben into four; Judah Simeon, and Asher had five Families apiece, Gad and Benjamin seven apiece; and Manasseh eight. Benjamin brought ten Sons into Egypt; Gen. 46. 21. but three of them, it seems, either dyed Childless, or their Families were extinct, for here we find seven only of those Names preserv'd, and that whole Tribe none of the most numerous. For Providence in the building up of Families and Nations, doth not tie itself to Probabilities. *The Barren hath born seven, and she that hath many Children is waxed feeble,* 1 Sam. 2. 5. 2. The Numbers of each Tribe. And here our best Entertainment will be to compare these Numbers with those when they were number'd at Mount Sinai. The Sum total was very near the same; they were now One thousand eight hundred and twenty fewer than they were then; yet seven of the Tribes increas'd in Number. Judah increas'd One thousand nine hundred. Issachar Nine thousand nine hundred. Zebulun Three thousand one hundred. Manasseh Twenty thousand five hundred. Benjamin Ten thousand two hundred. Dan One thousand seven hundred. Asher Eleven thousand nine hundred. But the other five decreas'd more than to ballance that Increase. Reuben decreas'd Two thousand seven hundred and seventy. Simeon Thirty seven thousand one hundred. Gad Five thousand one hundred and fifty. Ephraim Eight thousand. And Naphtali Eight thousand. In which Account we may observe, (1.) That all the three Tribes that were encamp'd under the Standard of Judah, who was the Ancestor of Christ, were increas'd, for his Church shall be edified, and multiplied. (2.) That none of the Tribes entreas'd so much as that of Manasseh, which in the former Account was the smallest of all the Tribes, but Thirty Two thousand two hundred; but here is one of the most considerable; and his Brother Ephraim, which there was numerous, is here one of the least. Jacob had cross'd Hands upon their Heads, and had preferr'd Ephraim before Manasseh, which perhaps the Ephraimites had prided themselves too much in, and had trampled upon their Brethren the Manassites; but when the Lord saw that Manasseh was despis'd, he thus multiplied him exceedingly, for it is his Glory to help the Weakest, and raise up them that are cast down. (3.) That none of the Tribes decreas'd so much as Simeon did, from Fifty nine thousand three hundred, it sunk to Twenty two thousand two hundred, almost to but a third Part of what it was. One whole Family of that Tribe (viz.

Chad, mention'd Exod. 6. 15.) was extinct in the Wilderness. Hence Simeon is not mention'd in Moses's Blessing, Deut. 33. and the Lot of that Tribe in Canaan was inconsiderable, only a Canton out of Judah's Lot, Josh. 19. 9. Some conjecture that most of those Twenty four thousand which were cut off by the Plague for the Iniquity of Peor were of that Tribe, for Zimri, who was a Ring-leader in that Iniquity was a Prince of that Tribe, many of which therefore were influence'd by his Example to follow his pernicious Ways. 3. In the Account of the Tribe of Reuben, mention is made of the Rebellion of Dathan and Abiram, who were of that Tribe, in Confederacy with Korah a Levite, v. 9, 10, 11. Tho' the Story had been largely related but a few Chapters before, yet here it comes in again, as fit to be had in Remembrance, and thought of by Posterity, whenever they look'd into their Pedigree, and pleas'd themselves with the Antiquity of their Families, and the Glory of their Ancestors, that they might call themselves a Seed of Evil Doers. Two Things are here said of them, (1.) That they had been famous in the Congregation, v. 9. Probably they were remarkable for their Ingenuity and Activity, and fitness for Business; that Dathan and Abiram, that might have been advanc'd in due Time under God and Moses, but their ambitious Spirits put them upon striving against God and Moses, and when they quarrell'd with the one they quarrell'd with the other. And what was the Issue? (2.) They that might have been famous were made infamous; they became a Sign, v. 10. They were made Monuments of Divine Justice, God in their Ruin shew'd himself glorious in Holiness; and so they were set up for warning to all others in all Ages, to take heed of treading in the Steps of their Pride and Rebellion. Notice is here taken of the Preservation of the Children of Korah, v. 11. they died not; as the Children of Dathan and Abiram did; doubtless because they kept themselves pure from the Infection, and would not joyn, no nor with their own Father in Rebellion. If we partake not of the Sins of Sinners, we shall not partake of their Plagues. These Sons of Korah were afterwards in their Posterity eminently serviceable to the Church, being employ'd by David as Singers in the House of the Lord; hence many Psalms are said to be for the Sons of Korah, and perhaps they were made to bear his Name so long after, rather than the Name of any other of their Ancestors for warning to themselves, and as an Instance of the Power of God, which brought those choice Fruits, even out of that bitter Root. The Children of Families that have been stigmatiz'd, should endeavour by their eminent Virtues, to roll away the Reproach of their Fathers.

52 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses saying, 53 Unto these the land shall be divided for an inheritance, according to the number of names. 54 To many thou shalt give the more inheritance, and to few thou shalt give the less inheritance: to every one shall his Inheritance be given, according to those that were numbered of him. 55 Notwithstanding, the land shall be divided by lot: according to the Names of the tribes of their fathers they shall inherit. 56 According to the lot shall the possession thereof be divided between many and few.

If any ask why such a particular Account is kept of the Tribes and Families, and Numbers of the People of Israel; here's an Answer for them; as they were multiplied, so they were portion'd not by common Providence, but by Promise, and for the Support of the Honour of Divine Revelation, God will have the fulfilling of the Promise taken Notice of; both in their Increase and in their Inheritance. When Moses had number'd the People, God doth not say, *By these shall the Land be conquer'd*, but taking that for granted he tells him, *Unto these shall the Land be divided*. These that are now register'd as the Sons of Israel shall be admitted (as it were by Copy of Court-Roll) Heirs of the Land of Canaan.

Now in the distributing or quartering of these Tribes; 1. The General Rule of Equity is here prescrib'd to Moses, that to many he should give more, and to few he should give less, (v. 54.) yet, alas, he was so far from giving any to others, that he must not have any himself; but this Direction given to him was intended for Joshua his Successor. 2. The Application of this General Rule was to be determin'd by Lot, v. 55. notwithstanding it seems thus to be left to the Prudence of their Prince, yet the Matter must be finally reserv'd to the Providence of their God, in which they must all acquiesce, how much soever it contradicted their Policies or Inclinations. *According to Lot shall the Possession be divided*. As the God of Nations, so the God of Israel in particular reserves it to himself to appoint the Bounds of our habitation. And thus Christ our Joshua, when he was urg'd to appoint one of his Disciples to his Right Hand, and another to his Left in his Kingdom, acknowledg'd

acknowledg'd the Sovereignty of his Father in the Disposal; *It is not mine to give, Joshua must not dispose of Inheritance in Canaan according to his own Mind, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.*

57 ¶ And these are they that were numbred of the Levites after their families: of Gershon the family of the Gershonites: of Kohath the family of the Kohathites: of Merari, the family of the Merarites. 58 These are the families of the Levites: the family of the Libnites, the family of the Hebronites, the family of the Mahlites, the family of the Mushites the family of the Korathites: and Kohath begat Amram. 59 And the name of Amrams wife was Jochebed the daughter of Levi, whom her mother bare to Levi in Egypt: and she bare unto Amram, Aaron and Moses, and Miriam their sister. 60 And unto Aaron was born Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. 61 And Nadab and Abihu died, when they offered strange fire before the LORD. 62 And those that were numbred of them, were twenty and three thousand, all males from a month old and upward: for they were not numbered among the children of Israel, because there was no inheritance given them among the children of Israel.

Levi was God's Tribe; a Tribe that was to have no Inheritance with the rest in the Land of Canaan, and therefore was not number'd with the rest, but by itself; so it had been number'd in the beginning of this Book at Mount Sinai, and therefore came not under the Sentence pass'd upon all that were then number'd, that none of them should enter Canaan but Caleb and Joshua; for of the Levites that were not number'd with them, nor were to go forth to War, there were Eleazar and Ithamar, and perhaps others, who were above Twenty Years Old then (as appears Numb. 4. 16, 28.) entered Canaan: and yet this Tribe now at its second Numbering was increas'd but One Thousand, and was still one of the smallest Tribes. Mention is made here of the Death of Nadab and Abihu for offering strange Fire, as before of the Sin and Punishment of Korah, because these Things happen'd unto them for Examples.

63 ¶ These are they that were numbred by Moses and Eleazar the priest, who numbred the children of Israel in the plains of Moab, by Jordan near Jericho. 64 But among these there was not a man of them whom Moses and Aaron the priest numbred, when they numbred the children of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai. 65 For the LORD had said of them, They shall surely die in the wilderness: and there was not left a man of them, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.

That which is observable in this Conclusion of the Account is, the Execution of the Sentence pass'd upon the Murmurers, Numb. 14. 29. That not one of those who were number'd from Twenty Years old and upward, (and that the Levites were not, but either from a Month old, or from Thirty Years old to Fifty) should enter Canaan, except Caleb and Joshua. In the Muster now made, particular Directions no doubt were given to those of each Tribe, that were employ'd in taking the Account, to compare those Rolls with the former, and to observe whether there were any now left of those that were numbred at Mount Sinai, and it appear'd that there was not one Man number'd now, that was number'd then, but Caleb and Joshua, v. 64, 65. Herein appear'd, 1. The Righteousness of God, and his Faithfulness to his Threatnings, when once the Decree is gone forth. He swears in his Wrath, and what he had sworn he perform'd. Better all those Carcasses, had they been ten times as many, should fall to the Ground than the Word of God. Though the rising Generation was mix'd with them, and many of the guilty and condemn'd Criminals long surviv'd the Sentence, even to the last Year of the Forty, yet they were cut off by some Means or other before this Muster was made. Those whom God had condemn'd cannot escape, either by losing themselves in a Crowd, or by the delay of Execution. 2. The Goodness of God to this People notwithstanding their Provocations; tho' that murmuring Race was cut off, yet God rais'd up another Generation, which was upon the Matter as numerous as they, that tho' they perished, yet the Name of Israel might not be cut off, lest the Inheri-

tance of the Promise should be lost for want of Heirs. And though the Number fell a little short of what it was at Mount Sinai, yet those now number'd had this Advantage, that they were all middle Aged Men, between Twenty and Sixty, in the Prime of their Time for Service, And during the Thirty eight Years of their Wandring and Wasting in the Wilderness, they had Opportunity of acquainting themselves with the Laws and Ordinances of God, having no Business Civil or Military to divert them from those sacred Studies; and having Moses and Aaron to instruct them, and God's good Spirit, Neh. 9. 20. 3. The Truth of God, in performing his Promise made to Caleb and Joshua. They were to be preserv'd from falling in this common Ruin, and they were so. The Arrows of Death, tho' they fly in the dark, they do not fly at random, even when they fly thickest, but are directed to the Mark intended, and to no other. All that are written among the Living shall have their Lives given them, in the most dangerous Times. Thousands may fall on their Right Hand, and Ten Thousands on their Left, but they shall escape.

C H A P. XXVII.

Here's 1. The Case of Zelophehad's Daughters determin'd, v. 1-11. 2. Notice given to Moses of his Death approaching, v. 12-14. Provision made of a Successor in the Government. 1. By the Prayer of Moses, v. 15-17. 2. By the Appointment of God, v. 18-23.

THEN came the daughters of Zelophehad, the son of Hephher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of Manasseh, the son of Joseph; and these are the names of his daughters, Mahlah, Noah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Tirzah. 2 And they stood before Moses, and before Eleazar the priest, and before the princes, and all the congregation by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying, 3 Our father died in the wilderness, and he was not in the company of them that gathered themselves together against the LORD in the company of Korah: but died in his own sin, and had no sons. 4 Why should the name of our father be done away from among his family, because he hath no son? give unto us therefore a possession among the brethren of our father. 5 And Moses brought their cause before the LORD. 6 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 7 The daughters of Zelophehad speak right: thou shalt surely give them a possession of an inheritance among their fathers brethren, and thou shalt cause the inheritance of their father to pass unto them. 8 And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a man die, and have no son, then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass unto his daughter. 9 And if he have no daughter, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his brethren. 10 And if he have no brethren, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his fathers brethren. 11 And if his father have no brethren, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his kinsman that is next to him of his family, and he shall possess it: and it shall be unto the children of Israel a statute of Judgment, as the LORD commanded Moses.

Mention was made of the Case of these Daughters of Zelophehad, in the Chapter before, v. 33. It should seem by the particular Notice taken of it, that it was a singular Case, and that the like did not at this time occur in all Israel, that the Head of a Family had no Sons but Daughters only; their Case is again debated, Chap. 38. upon another Article of it; and according to the Judgment given in their Case, we find them put in Possession, Josh. 17. 3. One would think their Personal Character was such as added Weight to their Case, and made it to be so often taken Notice of. Here's 1. Their Case stated by themselves, and their Petition upon it presented to the highest Court of Judicature, which consisted of Moses as King, the Princes as Lords, and the Congregation, or Elders of the People, who were chosen their Representatives, as the Commons, v. 2. This August Assembly sat near the Door of the Tabernacle, that in difficult Cases they might consult the Oracle. To them these young Ladies made their Application; for it is the Duty of Magistrates to defend the Fatherless; Ps. 82. 3.

We find not that they had any Advocate to speak for them, but they manag'd their own Cause ingeniously enough, which they could do the better, because it was plain and honest, and spoke for itself.

Now observe, 1. What it is they Petition for: That they might have a Possession in the Land of Canaan among the Brethren of their Fathers, v. 4. What God had said to Moses, Chap. 26. 53. he had faithfully made known to the People, that the Land of Canaan was to be divided among those that were now number'd; these Daughters knew they were not number'd, and therefore by this Rule must expect no Inheritance, and the Family of their Father must be look'd upon as extinct, and written *Childless*, though he had all these Daughters: This they thought hard, and therefore pray'd to be admitted Heirs to their Father, and to have an Inheritance in his Right. If they had had a Brother they would not have applied to Moses (as one did to Christ, *Luk. 12. 13.*) for an Order to inherit with him. But having no Brother they beg for a Possession. Herein they discover'd, (1.) A strong Faith in the Power and Promise of God, concerning the giving of the Land of Canaan to Israel. Though it was yet unconquer'd, untouch'd, and in the full Possession of the Natives, yet they Petition for their share in it as if it were all their own already. See *Psal. 60. 6. 7.* God hath spoken in his Holiness, and then *Gilead is mine, Manasseh is mine.* (2.) An earnest Desire of a Place and Name in the Land of Promise, which was a Type of Heaven; and if they had, as some think, an Eye to that, and by this Claim laid hold on Eternal Life, they were *Five wise Virgins* indeed; and their Example should quicken us with all possible Diligence to make sure our Title to the Heavenly Inheritance, in the Disposal of which by the Covenant of Grace no difference is made between *Male and Female*, *Gal. 3. 28.* (3.) A true Respect and Honour for their Father, whose Name was dear and precious to them now he was gone, and they were therefore solicitous that it should not be done away from among his Family. There is a Debt which Children owe to the Memory of their Parents, requir'd by the Fifth Commandment; *Honour thy Father and Mother.* 2. What their Plea is; That their Father did not die under any Attainder which might be thought to have corrupted his Blood, and forfeited his Estate, but he died in his own Sin, v. 3. not engag'd in any Mutiny or Rebellion against Moses, particularly not in that of Korah, and his Company, nor any way concern'd in the Sins of others, but chargeable only with the common Iniquities of Mankind, for which to his own Master he was to stand or fall, but laid not himself open to any judicial Process before Moses and the Princes. He was never convicted of any thing that might be a Bar to his Childrens Claim. 'Tis a Comfort to Parents when they come to die, if thus tho' they smart themselves for their own Sin, yet they are not conscious to themselves of any of those Iniquities which God visits upon the Children.

2. Their Case determin'd by the Divine Oracle. Moses not daring to give Judgment himself, because tho' their Pretensions seem'd just and reasonable, yet his express Orders were to divide the Land among those that were number'd, which were the Males only; he therefore brings their Cause before the Lord, and waits for his Decision, v. 5. And God himself gives Judgment upon it. He takes Cognizance of the Affairs not only of Nations, but of private Families, and orders them in Judgment, according to the Counsel of his own Will. (1.) The Petition is granted, v. 7. *They speak right, give them a Possession.* Those that seek an Inheritance in the Land of Promise shall have what they seek for, and other things shall be added to them. Those are Claims which God will countenance and crown. (2.) The Point is settled for hereafter. These Daughters of Zelophehad consulted not only their own Comfort, and the Credit of their Family, but the Honour and Happiness of their Sex likewise; for on this particular Occasion a general Law was made, that in case a Man had no Son, his Estate should go to his Daughters, v. 8. Not to the eldest, as the eldest Son, but to them all in Co-partnership, share and share like. Those that in such a Case deprive their Daughters of their Right, purely to keep up the Name of their Family, unless a valuable Consideration be allow'd them, may make the Entail of their Lands surer than the Entail of a Blessing with them. Further Directions are given for the Disposal of Inheritances, v. 9, 10, 11. That if a Man have no Issue at all, his Estate shall go to his Brethren, if no Brethren, then to his Father's Brethren; and if there be no such, then to his next Kinsman; with this the Rules of our Law exactly agree; and though the Jewish Doctors here will have it understood, that if a Man have no Children his Estate shall go to his Father if living, before his Brethren, yet there is nothing of that in the Law, and our common Law has an express Rule against it; That an Estate cannot ascend lineally, so that if a Son purchase Lands in Fee-simple, and without Issue in the Life time of his Father, his Father cannot be his Heir. See how God makes Heirs, and in his Disposal we must acquiesce.

12 ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, Get thee up into this mount Abarim, and see the land which I have given unto the children of Israel. 13 And when thou hast seen it, thou also shalt be gathered unto thy people, as Aaron thy brother was gathered. 14 For ye rebelled against my commandment (in the desert of Zin, in the strife of the congregation) to sanctify me at the water before their eyes: that is the water of Meribah in Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin.

Here 1. God tells Moses of his Faults; his speaking unadvisedly with his Lips at the Waters of Strife, where he did not express so carefully as he ought to have done in regard to the Honour both of God and Israel, v. 14. Though Moses was a Servant of the Lord, a faithful Servant, yet once he rebell'd against God's Commandment, and fail'd in his Duty; and though a very honourable Servant, and highly favoured, yet he shall hear of his Miscarriage, and all the World shall hear of it too again and again; for God will shew his Displeasure against Sin, even in those that are nearest and dearest to him. Those that are in Reputation for Wisdom and Honour have need to be constantly careful of their Words and Ways, lest at any time they say or do that which may be a Diminution either to their Comfort or to their Credit, or both, a great while after. 2. He tells Moses of his Death; his Death was the Punishment of his Sin, and yet Notice is given him of it in such a manner as might best serve to sweeten and mollify the Sentence, and reconcile him to it. 1. Moses must die, but he shall first have the Satisfaction of seeing the Land of Promise, v. 12. God did not intend with this sight of Canaan to tantalize him, or upbraid him with his Folly in doing that which cut him short of it, nor had it any Impression of that kind upon him, but God appointed it, and Moses accepted it as a Favour; his Sight (we have Reason to think) being wonderfully strengthened and enlarged to take such a full and distinct view of it as did abundantly gratify his innocent Curiosity. This sight of Canaan signified his believing Prospect of the better Country, that is the Heavenly, which is very comfortable to dying Saints. 2. Moses must die, but Death doth not cut him off, it only gathers him to his People, brings him to rest with the holy Patriarchs that were gone before him; Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob were his People, the People of his Choice and Love, and to them Death gather'd him. 3. Moses must die, but only as Aaron died before him, v. 13. And Moses had seen how easily and cheerfully Aaron had put off the Priesthood first, and then the Body: Let not Moses therefore be afraid of dying, it was but to be gather'd to his People, as Aaron was gather'd. Thus the Death of our near and dear Relations should be improved by us, (1.) As an Engagement to us to think oft of dying; we are not better than our Fathers or Brethren, if they are gone, we are going; if they are gather'd already, we must be gather'd very shortly. (2.) As an Encouragement to us to think of Death without Terror, and even to please ourselves with the Thoughts of it; 'tis but to die as such and such dy'd, if we live as they liv'd, and their End was Peace; they finished their Course with Joy; why then should we fear any Evil in that melancholly Valley.

15 ¶ And Moses spake unto the LORD, saying, 16 Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, 17 Which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in, that the congregation of the LORD be not as sheep which have no shepherd. 18 And the LORD said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him. 19 And set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation: and give him a charge in their sight. 20 And thou shalt put some of thine honour upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient. 21 And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him, after the judgment of Urim before the LORD: at his word shall they go out, and at his word shall they come in, both he and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation. 22 And Moses did as the LORD commanded him: and he took Joshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation. 23 And he laid

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his hands upon him, and give him a charge, as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses.

Here, 1. *Moses prays for a Successor.* When God had told him he must die, though it appears elsewhere he solicited for a Reprieve for himself, *Deut. 3. 24.* Yet when that could not be obtain'd, he begg'd earnestly that the Work of God might be carried on, though he might not have the Honour of finishing it. Envious Spirits do not love their Successors, but *Moses* was none of those. We should concern ourselves both in our Prayers and in our Endeavours for the rising Generation, that Religion may flourish, and the Interests of God's Kingdom among Men may be maintain'd and advanc'd when we are in our Graves. In this Prayer *Moses* expresseth, (1.) a tender Concern for the People of *Israel*, that the Congregation of the Lord be not as Sheep which have no Shepherd. Our Saviour useth this Comparison in his Compassions for the People, when they wanted good Ministers, *Mat. 9. 6.* Magistrates and Ministers are the Shepherds of a People, if those be wanting, or are not as they should be, People are apt to wander and be scatter'd abroad, are expos'd to Enemies, in danger of wanting Food, and of hurting one another, as Sheep having no Shepherd. (2.) A believing Dependence upon God, as the God of the Spirits of all Flesh. He is both the Former and the Searcher of Spirits, and therefore can either find Men fit, or make them fit to serve his Purposes, for the good of his Church. He Prays to God not to send an Angel, but to set a Man over the Congregation, i. e. to nominate and appoint one whom he would qualify and own, as Ruler of his People *Israel*. Before God gave this Blessing to *Israel*, he stir'd up *Moses* to pray for it: Thus Christ before he sent forth his Apostles, call'd to those about him, to pray the Lord of the Harvest that he would send forth Labourers into his Harvest, *Mat. 9. ult.*

2. God in answer to his Prayer appoints him a Successor, even *Joshua*, who had long since signaliz'd himself for his Courage in fighting *Amalek*, his Humility in ministering to *Moses*, and his Faith and Sincerity in witnessing against the Report of the Evil Spies: This is the Man God pitches upon to succeed *Moses*. A Man in whom is the Spirit, the Spirit of Grace; he is a good Man, fearing God and hating Covetousness, and acting from a Principle. The Spirit of Government, he is fit to do the Work and discharge the Trusts of his Place; a Spirit of Conduct and Courage; and he had also the Spirit of Prophecy, for the Lord often spake unto him, *Josh. 4. 1. 6. 2. 7. 10.* Now here, 1. God directs *Moses* how to secure the Succession to *Joshua*. (1.) He must ordain him; lay thine Hand upon him. This was done in token of *Moses's* transferring the Government to him, as the laying of Hands on the Sacrifice put the Offering in the place and stead of the Offerer; also in token of God's conferring the Blessing of the Spirit upon him, which *Moses* obtain'd by Prayer. 'Tis said, *Deut. 34. 9.* *Joshua* was full of the Spirit of Wisdom, for *Moses* had laid his Hands on him. This Rite of imposing Hands we find us'd in the New Testament in setting apart of Gospel Ministers, noting a solemn Designation of them to the Office, and an earnest Desire that God would qualify them for it, and own them in it. 'Tis the offering of them to Christ and his Church for living Sacrifices. (2.) He must represent him to *Eleazar* and the People; set him before them, that they might know him to be designed of God for this great Trust, and consent to that Designation. (3.) He must give him a Charge. He must be charged with the People of *Israel*, who were deliver'd into his Hand as Sheep into the Hand of a Shepherd, and of whom he must be accountable: He must be strictly charged to do his Duty to them; though they were under his Command, he was under God's Command, and from him must receive Charge. The highest must know there is a higher than they. This Charge must be given him in their sight, that it might be the more affecting to *Joshua*, and that the People seeing the Work and Care of their Prince, might be the more engag'd to assist and encourage him. (4.) He must put some of his Honour upon him. *v. 20.* *Joshua* at the most had but some of the Honour of *Moses*, and in many Instances came short of him; but this seems to be meant of his taking him now, while he liv'd into Partnership with him in the Government, and admitting him to act with Authority as his Assistance. 'Tis an Honour to be employ'd for God and his Church; some of this Honour must be put upon *Joshua*, that the People being us'd to obey him while *Moses* liv'd, they might the more cheerfully do it afterwards. (5.) He must appoint *Eleazar* the High Priest with his Breastplate of Judgment to be his Privy Council, *v. 21.* He shall stand before *Eleazar*, by him to consult the Oracle, ready to receive and observe all the Instructions that should be given him by it. This was a Direction to *Joshua*, though he was full of the Spirit, and had all this Honour put upon him, yet he must do nothing without asking Counsel of God, not leaning to his own Understanding: 'Twas also a great Encouragement to him; to govern *Israel*, and to conquer *Canaan* were two hard Tasks, but God assures him that in both he should be under a Divine Conduct; and in every difficult Case God would advise him to that which should be for the best. *Moses* had recourse to

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the Oracle of God himself, but *Joshua* and the succeeding Judges must use the Ministry of the High Priest, and consult the Judgment of *Urim*, which the Jews say, might not be enquir'd of but by the King, or the Head of the Sanhedrin, or by the Agent, or Representative of the People for them and in their Name. Thus the Government of *Israel* was now purely Divine, for both the Designation and Direction of their Princes was entirely so. At the Word of the Priest, according to the Judgment of *Urim*, *Joshua* and all *Israel* must go out and come in; and no doubt God who thus guided, would preserve both their going out, and their coming in. Those are safe and may be easie that follow God, and in all their ways acknowledge him. 2. *Moses* doth according to these Directions, *v. 22, 23.* He cheerfully ordain'd *Joshua*. 1. Though it was a present lessening to himself, and amounted almost to a Resignation of the Government. He is very willing that the People should look off him, and adore the rising Sun. 2. Though it was a perpetual Slur upon his Family. It had not been so much his Praise, if he had thus resign'd his Honour to a Son of his own, but with his own Hands to ordain *Eleazar* first High Priest, and now *Joshua*, one of another Tribe Chief Ruler, while his own Children had no Preference at all, but were left in the Rank of common Levites, this was such an Instance of Self-denial, and Submission to the Will of God, as was more his Glory than the highest Advancement of his Family could have been, for it confirms his Character of his being the meekest Man upon Earth, and faithful to him that appointed him in all his House. This (saith the excellent Bishop *Patrick*) shews him to have had a Principle which rais'd him above all other Law-givers, who always took care to establish their Families in some share of that Greatness, which they themselves possessed; but hereby it appear'd *Moses* acted not from himself, because he acted not for himself.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Now the People were number'd, Orders given for the dividing of the Land, and a General of the Forces nominated and commission'd, one would have expected that the next Chapter should have begun the History of the Campaign, or at least should have given us an account of the Ordinances of War; no, it contains the Ordinances of Worship, and provides that now they were entering *Canaan*, they should be sure to take their Religion along with them, and not forget that, in the prosecution of their Wars, *v. 1. 2.* The Laws are here repeated and summ'd up concerning the Sacrifices that were to be offer'd, 1. Daily, *v. 3. 8. 2.* Weekly, *v. 9. 10. 3.* Monthly, *v. 11. 15. 4.* Yearly 1. at the Passover, *v. 16. 25. 2.* At Pentecost, *v. 26. 31.* And the next Chapter is concerning the annual solemnities of the seventh Month.

1 AND the LORD spake unto *Moses*, saying, 2 Command the children of *Israel*, and say unto them, My offering, and my bread for my sacrifices made by fire for a sweet savour unto me, shall ye observe to offer unto me in their due season. 3 And thou shalt say unto them, This is the offering made by fire, which ye shall offer unto the LORD: two lambs of the first year without spot, day by day for a continual burnt-offering. 4 The one lamb shalt thou offer in the morning, and the other lamb shalt thou offer at even. 5 And a tenth part of an ephah of flour for a meat-offering, mingled with the fourth part of an hin of beaten oil. 6 It is a continual burnt-offering, which was ordained in mount Sinai for a sweet savour, a Sacrifice made by fire unto the LORD. 7 And the drink-offering thereof shall be the fourth part of an hin for the one lamb: in the holy place shalt thou cause the strong wine to be poured unto the LORD, for a drink-offering. 8 And the other lamb shalt thou offer at even: as the meat-offering of the morning, and as the drink-offering thereof thou shalt offer it, a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.

Here's 1. A general Order given concerning the Offerings of the Lord, which were to be brought in their Season, *v. 2.* These Laws are here given afresh not because the Observance of them was wholly diffus'd, during their Thirty Eight Years wandering in the Wilderness, we cannot think they were so long without any publick Worship, but that at least the daily Lamb was offer'd Morning and Evening, and doubled on the Sabbath day; so Bishop *Patrick* conjectures; but that many of the sacrifices were then omitted is plainly intimated, *Amos 5. 25.* Quoted by *Stephen*, *Act. 7. 42.* Did ye offer un-

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to me sacrifices and offerings in the Wilderness, forty Years, O house of Israel? 'Tis implied, no you did not. But whether the Course of Sacrifices had been interrupted or no, God saw fit now to repeat the Law of Sacrifices. 1. Because this was a new Generation of Men, that were most of them unborn when the former Laws were given; therefore that they might be left without Excuse, they have not only these Laws written, to be read to them, but again repeated from God himself, and put into a less Compass, and a plainer Method. 2. Because they were now entering upon War, and might be tempted to think that while they were engag'd in that, they should be excus'd from offering Sacrifices; *inter Arma silent leges*. No, faith God, *My Bread for my Sacrifices even now shall ye observe to offer, and that in their due season*. They were then concern'd to keep their Peace with God when they were at War with their Enemies. In the Wilderness they were solitary, and quite separate from all other People, and therefore there they needed not so much their distinguishing badges, nor would their Omission of Sacrifices be so scandalous, as when they came into Canaan, when they were mingled with other People. 3. Because Possession was now to be given them of the Land of Promise, that Land flowing with Milk and Honey; where they would have Plenty of all good Things; now (faith God) when you are feasting yourselves, forget not to offer the Bread of your God. Canaan was given them upon this Condition that they should observe God's Statutes, Psal. 105. 44. 45. 2. The particular Law of the Daily Sacrifice, a Lamb in the Morning, and a Lamb in the Evening; which for the Constancy of it as duly as the day came, is call'd a continual Burnt-offering, v. 3. Which intimates that when we are bid to pray always, and to pray without ceasing, 'tis intended that at least every Morning, and every Evening we offer up our solemn Prayers and Praises to God. This is said to be ordain'd in Mount Sinai, (v. 6.) When the other Laws were given. The Institution of it we have, Exod. 29. 38. Nothing is added here in the Repetition of the Law, but that the Wine to be pour'd out in the Drink-Offering is order'd to be strong Wine, v. 7. The richest and most generous and best-bodied Wine they could get. Tho' it was to be pour'd out upon the Altar, and not Drunk, they therefore might be ready to think the worst would serve to be so thrown away, yet God requires the strongest, to teach us, to serve God with the best we have. The Wine must be strong (faith Answorth) because it was a Figure of the Blood of Christ, the Memorial of which is still left to the Church, in Wine; and of the Blood of the Martyrs, which was pour'd out as a Drink-Offering upon the sacrifice and service of our Faith. Phil. 2. 17.

9 ¶ And on the sabbath day two lambs of the first year without spot, and two tenth deals of flour for a meat-offering, mingled with oil, and the drink-offering thereof. 10 This is the burnt-offering of every sabbath, beside the continual burnt-offering, and his drink-offering. 11 ¶ And in the beginnings of your months ye shall offer a burnt-offering unto the LORD: two young bullocks, and one ram, seven lambs of the first year without spot. 12 And three tenth deals of flour for a meat-offering, mingled with oil, for one bullock, and two tenth deals of flour for a meat-offering, mingled with oil, for one ram: 13 And a several tenth deal of flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering unto one lamb, for a burnt-offering of a sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto the LORD. 14 And their drink-offerings shall be half an hin of Wine unto a bullock, and the third part of an hin unto a ram, and a fourth part of an hin unto a lamb: this is the burnt-offering of every month throughout the months of the year. 15 And one kid of the goats for a sin-offering unto the LORD shall be offered, besides the continual burnt-offering and his drink-offering.

The New-Moons and the Sabbaths are often spoken of together as great Solemnities in the Jewish Church, very comfortable to the Saints then, and typical of Gospel Grace. Now we have here the Sacrifices appointed. 1. For the Sabbaths. Every Sabbath day the offering must be doubled, besides the two Lambs offer'd for the daily Burnt-offering there must be two more offer'd, one ('tis probable) added to the Morning Sacrifice, and the other to the Evening, v. 9, 10. This teacheth us to double our Devotions on Sabbath days, for so the Duty of the Day requires. The Sabbath Rest is to be observ'd in order to a more close Application to the Sabbath Work, which ought to fill up Sabbath time. In Ezekiel's Temple-Service, which points at Gospel times, the Sabbath offerings were to be

Six Lambs and a Ram, with their Meat-offerings and Drink-offerings, Ezek. 46. 4, 5. To intimate not only the Continuance, but the Advancement of Sabbath Sanctification in the Days of the Messiah. This is the Burnt-offering of the Sabbath, in his Sabbath, so 'tis in the Original, v. 10. We must do every Sabbath days Work in it's Day, studying to redeem every minute of Sabbath time, as those that believe it precious; and not thinking to put off one Sabbath's Work to another, for sufficient to every Sabbath is the Service thereof. 2. For the New Moons. Some suggest that as the Sabbath was kept with an Eye to the Creation of the World, so the New Moons were sanctified with an Eye to the Divine Providence, which appointeth the Moon for Seasons, guiding the Revolutions of time by it's Changes and governing sublunary Bodies (as many think) by it's Influences: Tho' we observe not any Feast of New Moons, yet we must not forget to give God the Glory of all the precious Things put forth by the Moon, which he hath established for ever, a faithful Witness in Heaven, Psal. 89. 37. The Offerings in the New Moons were very considerable, Two Bullocks, a Ram, and seven Lambs, with the Meat-offerings and Drink-offerings that were to attend them, v. 11, &c. Besides a Sin-offering, v. 15. For when we give Glory to God by confessing his Mercies, we must give Glory to him likewise by confessing our own Sins. And when we rejoice in the Gifts of common Providence, we must make the Sacrifice of Christ, that great Gift of special Grace, the Fountain and Spring-head of our Joy. Some have question'd whether the New Moons were to be reckon'd among their Feasts; but why should they not? When besides the special Sacrifices which were then to be offer'd, they rested from servile Works, Amos 8. 5. Blew the Trumpets, Num. 10. 10. And went to the Prophets to hear the Word, 2 Kin. 4. 23. And the Worship perform'd in the New-Moons is made typical of Gospel Solemnities, Isa. 66. 23.

16 And in the fourteenth day of the first month is the passover of the LORD. 17 And in the fifteenth day of this month is the feast; seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten. 18 In the first day shall be an holy convocation: ye shall do no manner of servile work therein. 19 But ye shall offer a sacrifice made by fire for a burnt-offering unto the LORD, two young bullocks, and one ram, and seven lambs of the first year: they shall be unto you without blemish. 20 And their meat offering shall be of flour mingled with oil: three tenth deals shall ye offer for a bullock, and two tenth deals for a ram. 21 A several tenth deal shalt thou offer for every lamb throughout the seven lambs: 22 And one goat for a sin-offering, to make an atonement for you. 23 Ye shall offer the'e beside the burnt-offering in the morning, which is for a continual burnt-offering. 24 After this manner ye shall offer daily throughout the seven days, the meat of the sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD: it shall be offered beside the continual burnt-offering, and his drink-offering. 25 And on the seventh day ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work. 26 ¶ Also in the day of the first-fruits, when ye bring a new meat-offering unto the LORD, after our weeks be out, ye shall have an holy convocation, ye shall do no servile work. 27 But ye shall offer the burnt-offering for a sweet savour unto the LORD, two young bullocks, one ram, seven lambs of the first year; 28 And their meat-offering of flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals unto one bullock, two tenth deals unto one ram. 29 A several tenth deal unto one lamb, throughout the seven lambs. 30 And one kid of the goats to make an atonement for you. 31 Ye shall offer them besides the continual burnt-offering, and his meat-offering, (they shall be unto you without blemish) and their drink-offerings.

Here's 1. The Appointment of the Passover-Sacrifices, not that which was the chief, the Paschal Lamb, sufficient Instructions had formerly been given concerning that; but those which were to be offer'd upon the seven Days of unleavened Bread which follow'd it, v. 17-25. The first and last of those Seven Days were to be sanctified as Sabbaths, by a Holy Rest, and a Holy Convocation, and on each of the Seven Days they

they were to be very liberal in their Sacrifices, in token of their great and constant Thankfulness for their Deliverance out of Egypt; two Bulls, a Ram, and seven Lambs. A Gospel Conversation in gratitude for Christ our Passover, who was sacrificed, is call'd the keeping of this Feast, 2 Cor. 5. 8. For it is not enough that we purge out the leavened Bread of Malice and Wickedness, but we must offer the Bread of our God, even the Sacrifice of Praise continually, and continue herein unto the End. 2. The Sacrifices are likewise appointed which were to be offer'd at the Feast of Pentecost, here call'd the Day of the First-Fruits, v. 26. In the Feast of unleavened Bread they offer'd a Sheaf of their First-Fruits of Barley, (which with them was first ripe) to the Priest, Lev. 23. 10. As an Introduction to the Harvest; but now about Seven Weeks after they were to bring a New Meat-Offering to the Lord, at the end of Harvest, in Thankfulness to God who had not only given, but prefer'd to their use the kindly Fruits of the Earth, so as that in due time they did enjoy them. 'Twas at this Feast, that the Spirit was pour'd out, Act. 2. 1. And Thousands were converted by the Preaching of the Apostles, and were presented to Christ, to be a kind of First-Fruits of his Creatures. The Sacrifice that was to be offer'd with the Loaves of First-Fruits is appointed, Lev. 23. 18. But over and above, besides that, and besides the daily Offerings, they were to offer two Bulls, one Ram, and seven Lambs, with a Kid for a Sin-Offering, v. 27-30. When God sows plentifully upon us, he expects to reap accordingly from us, Bishop Patrick observes that no Peace-Offerings are appointed in this Chapter, which were chiefly for the Benefit of the Offerers, and therefore in them they were left more to themselves; but Burnt Offerings which were purely for the Honour of God, and Confessions of his Dominion, and which figur'd Evangelical Piety and Devotion, by which the Soul is wholly offer'd up to God in the Flames of holy Love. And Sin-Offerings which were typical of Christ's Sacrifice of himself, by which we and our Services are perfected and sanctified.

CHAP. XXIX.

This Chapter appoints the Offerings that were to be made by Fire unto the Lord, in the Three great Solemnities of the seventh Month. 1. In the Feast of Trumpets on the first Day of that Month, v. 1-6. 2. In the Day of Atonement on the tenth Day, v. 7-11. 3. In the Feast of Tabernacles on the Fifteenth Day, and the seven Days following, v. 12-38. And then the Conclusion of these Ordinances, v. 39, 40.

AND in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, ye shall have an holy convocation, ye shall do no servile work, it is a day of blowing the trumpets unto you. 2 And ye shall offer a burnt-offering for a sweet favour unto the LORD, one young bullock, one ram, and seven lambs of the first year without blemish. 3 And their meat-offering shall be of flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals for a bullock, and two tenth deals for a ram: 4 And one tenth deal for one lamb, throughout the seven lambs: 5 And one kid of the goats for a sin-offering, to make an atonement for you: 6 Beside the burnt-offering of the month, and his meat-offering, and the daily burnt-offerings, and his meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, according unto their manner, for a sweet favour, a sacrifice made by fire unto the LORD. 7 ¶ And ye shall have on the tenth day of this seventh month an holy convocation, and ye shall afflict your souls: ye shall not do any work therein. 8 But ye shall offer a burnt-offering unto the LORD for a sweet favour, one young bullock, one ram, and seven lambs of the first year: they shall be unto you without blemish. 9 And their meat-offering shall be of flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals to a bullock, and two tenth deals to one ram: 10 A several tenth deal for one lamb, throughout the seven lambs: 11 One kid of the goats for a sin-offering, beside the sin-offering of atonement, and the continual burnt-offering, and the meat-offering of it, and their drink-offerings.

There were more Sacred Solemnities in the seventh Month than in any other Month of the Year; not only because it had been the first Month, till the Deliverance of Israel out of Egypt,

which falling into the Month Abib, that was thenceforth made the beginning of the Months in all Ecclesiastical Computations; but because still it continued the first Month in the civil reckonings of the Jubilees, and Years of Release; and also because it was the time of Vacation between Harvest and Seedness, when they had most Leisure to attend the Sanctuary: Which intimates, That though God will dispense with Sacrifices in Consideration of Works of Necessity and Mercy, yet the more Leisure we have from the pressing Occasions of this Life, the more time we should spend in the immediate Service of God.

1. We have here the Appointment of the Sacrifices that were to be offer'd on the first Day of the Month, the Day of blowing the Trumpets; which was as Preparative for the two great Solemnities of holy Mourning on the Day of Atonement, and holy Joy in the Feast of Tabernacles. The Intention of Divine Institutions is then well answer'd, when one Religious Service helps to fit us for another, and all for Heaven. The blowing of the Trumpets was appointed, Lev. 29. 1. Here they are directed what Sacrifices to offer on that day, of which there was not then any mention made. Note, Those who would know the Mind of God in the Scripture, must compare one Part of the Scripture with another, and put those Parts together that have reference to the same thing, for the latter Discoveries of Divine Light explain what was dark, and supply what was defective in the former, that the Man of God may be perfect. The Sacrifices then to be offer'd are particularly order'd here, v. 2. 6. And Care taken that these should not supersede the daily Oblation, and that of the New Moon. 'Tis hereby intimated, that we must not seek Occasions to abate our Zeal in God's Service, or be glad of an Excuse to omit a good Duty, but rather rejoice in an Opportunity of accumulating, and doing more than ordinary in Religion. If we perform Family Worship, we must not think that that will excuse us from our secret Devotions; nor that the Days we go to Church we need not worship God alone and with our Families; but we should always abound in the Work of the Lord. 2. On the Day of Atonement. Besides all the Services of that Day which we had the Institution of Lev. 16. and which one would think requir'd Trouble and Charge enough; here are Burnt-Offerings order'd to be offer'd, v. 8-10. For in our Faith and Repentance those two great Gospel Graces which were signified by that Day's Performances, we must have an Eye to the Glory and Honour of God, which was purely intended in the Burnt Offerings, there was likewise to be a Kid of the Goats for a Sin-Offering, beside the great Sin-Offering of Atonement, v. 11. which intimates that there are so many Defects and Amisles, even in the Exercises and Expressions of our Repentance, that we have need of an Interest in a Sacrifice to expiate the Guilt even of that Part of our holy Things. Though we must not repent that we have repented, yet we must repent that we have not repented better. It likewise spoketh the Imperfection of the Legal Sacrifices, and their Insufficiency to take away Sin, that on the very Day the Sin-Offering of Atonement was offer'd, yet there must be another Sin-Offering. But what the Law could not do in that it was weak, that Christ has done.

12 ¶ And on the fifteenth day of the seventh month ye shall have an holy convocation, ye shall do no servile work, and ye shall keep a feast unto the LORD seven days. 13 And ye shall offer a burnt-offering, a sacrifice made by fire of a sweet favour unto the LORD, thirteen young bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year: they shall be without blemish. 14 And their meat-offering shall be of flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals unto every bullock of the thirteen bullocks, two tenth deals to each ram of the two rams: 15 And a several tenth deal to each lamb of the fourteen lambs: 16 And one kid of the goats for a sin-offering, beside the continual burnt-offering, his meat-offering, and his drink-offering. 17 ¶ And on the second day ye shall offer twelve young bullocks, two rams, fourteen lambs of the first year without spot. 18 And their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number after the manner: 19 And one kid of the goats for a sin-offering, beside the continual burnt-offering, and the meat-offering thereof, and their drink-offerings. 20 ¶ And on the third day, eleven bullocks, two rams, fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish. 21 And their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number after the manner: 22 And one goat for a sin-offering, beside

beside the continual burnt-offering and his meat-offering, and his drink-offering. 23 ¶ And on the fourth day ten bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish. 24 Their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, *shall be* according to their number after the manner: 25 And one kid of the goats for a sin-offering, beside the continual burnt-offering, his meat-offering, and his drink-offering. 26 ¶ And on the fifth day nine bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without spot: 27 And their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, *shall be* according to their number, after the manner: 28 And one goat for a sin-offering, beside the continual burnt-offering, and his meat-offering, and his drink-offering. 29 And on the sixth day eight bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish: 30 And their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, *shall be* according to their number after the manner: 31 And one goat for a sin-offering, beside the continual burnt-offering, his meat-offering, and his drink-offering. 32 ¶ And on the seventh day seven bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish. 33 And their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, *shall be* according to their number after the manner: 34 And one goat for a sin-offering, beside the continual burnt-offering, his meat-offering, and his drink-offering. 35 ¶ On the eighth day ye shall have a solemn assembly: ye shall do no servile work therein. 36 But ye shall offer a burnt-offering, a sacrifice made by fire of a sweet savour unto the LORD, one bullock, one ram, seven lambs of the first year without blemish: 37 Their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, for the bullock, for the ram, and for the lambs, *shall be* according to their number after the manner: 38 And one goat for a sin-offering, beside the continual burnt-offering, and his meat-offering, and his drink-offering. 39 These things ye shall do unto the LORD, in your set feasts, besides your vows, and your free-will-offerings, for your burnt-offerings, and for your meat-offerings, and for your drink-offerings, and for your peace-offerings. 40 And Moses told the children of Israel, according to all that the LORD commanded Moses.

Presently after the Day of Atonement, that Day for Men to afflict their Souls, follow'd the Feast of Tabernacles, in which they were to rejoice before the Lord, for they that *sow in Tears* shall soon reap in Joy. To the former Laws about this Feast which we had, Lev. 23. 34, &c. Here is added Directions about the Offerings made by Fire, which they were to offer unto the Lord during the Seven Days of that Feast, Lev. 23. 36. Observe here, 1. Their Days of rejoicing were to be Days of Sacrifices. A Disposition to be cheerful then doth us no harm, nor is any bad Symptom, when it is so far from disfitting us for, that it encourageth and enlargeth our Hearts in the Duties of God's immediate Service. 2. All the Days of their dwelling in Booths they must offer Sacrifices, while we are here in a Tabernacle State, 'tis our Interest as well as Duty constantly to keep up our Communion with God: Nor will the unsettledness of our outward Condition excuse us in our neglect of the Duties of God's Worship. 3. The Sacrifices for each of the seven Days, though differing in nothing but the number of the Bullocks are severally and particularly appointed, which yet is no vain Repetition; for God would thus teach them to be exact in those Observances, and to keep an Eye of Faith fix'd upon the Institution in every Days Work. It likewise intimates that the Repetition of the same Services if perform'd with an upright Heart, and with a continued Fire of Pious and Devout Affection is no Weariness to God, and therefore we ought not to stuff at it, or to say, *Behold what a Weariness it is to us*. 4. The Number of the Bullocks (which were the most costly Part of the Sacrifice) decreas'd every Day. On the first Day of the Feast they were to offer Thirteen, on the second Day but Twelve,

on the third Eleven, &c. So that on the seventh Day they offer'd Seven. And the last Day, though it was the great Day of the Feast, and celebrated with a holy Convocation, yet they were to offer but one Bullock; and whereas on all the other Days, they offer'd two Rams, and Fourteen Lambs, on this but one Ram and Seven Lambs. Such was the Will of the Law-maker, and that's Reason enough for the Law. Some suggest, that God herein consider'd the Infirmary of the Flesh, which is apt to grudge at the Charge and Expence of Religion; it is therefore order'd to grow less and less, that they might not complain as if God had made them to serve with an Offering, Isa. 43. 23. Or, it is hereby intimated to them, that the Legal Dispensation should wax old, and vanish away at last; and the Multitude of their Sacrifices, should end in one great Sacrifice, infinitely more worthy than them all. 'Twas on the last Day of this Feast, after all these Sacrifices had been offer'd that our Lord Jesus stood and cried to those who still thirsted after Righteousness, (being sensible of the Insufficiency of these Sacrifices to justify them) to come unto him and drink, Joh. 7. 37. 5. The Meat-Offerings and Drink-Offerings attended all the Sacrifices, according to their number, after the manner. Be there never so much Flesh, 'tis no Feast without Bread and Drink, therefore these must never be omitted at God's Altar, which was his Table. We must not think that doing much in Religion will be accepted, if we do not do it well, and after the manner that God hath appointed. 6. Every Day there must be a Sin-offering offer'd, as we observ'd in the other Feasts. Our Burnt-Offerings of Praise cannot be accepted of God, unless we have an Interest in the great Sacrifice of Propitiation, which Christ offer'd, when for us he made himself a Sin-Offering. 7. Even when all these Sacrifices were offer'd, yet the continual Burnt-Offering must not be omitted, either Morning or Evening, but each Day that must be offer'd, first in the Morning, and last in the Evening. No extraordinary Services should jumble out our stated Devotions.

Lastly, Though all these Sacrifices were requir'd to be offer'd by the Body of the Congregation, at the common Charge, yet besides these, particular Persons were to glorify God with their Vows and their free-will-Offerings, v. 34. When God command'd that this they must do, he left room for the Generosity of their Devotion, a great deal more they might do; not inventing other Worships but abounding in these, as 2 Chron. 30. 23, 34. Large Directions had been given in Leviticus, concerning the Offerings of all sorts that should be brought by particular Persons; according to the Providences of God concerning them, and the Graces of God in them. Tho' every Israelite had an Interest in these common Sacrifices, yet he must not think that these will serve, instead of his Vows and his Free-will Offerings. Thus our Ministers praying with us and for us, will not excuse us from praying for ourselves.

CHAP. XXX.

In this Chapter we have a Law concerning Vows, which had been mention'd in the close of the foregoing Chapter. 1. Here's a general Rule laid down, that all Vows must be carefully perform'd, v. 1. 2. 2. Some particular Exceptions to this Rule. 1. That the Vows of Daughters should not be binding, unless allow'd by the Father, v. 3, 5. Nor 2. The Vows of Wives, unless allow'd by the Husband, v. 6, -16.

1 AND Moses spake unto the heads of the tribes concerning the children of Israel, saying, This is the thing which the LORD hath commanded. 2 If a man vow a vow unto the LORD, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond, he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.

This Law was deliver'd to the Heads of the Tribes, that they might instruct those who were under their Charge, explain the Law to them, give them necessary Cautions upon it, and call them to Account, if there were occasion for the Breach of their Vows. Perhaps the Heads of the Tribes had upon some Emergency of this kind consulted Moses, and desir'd by him to know the Mind of God, and here they are told it. This is the Thing which the Lord has commanded concerning Vows, and 'tis a command still in force.

1. The Case suppos'd is, that a Person Vows a Vow unto the Lord, making God a Party to the Promise, and designing his Honour and Glory in it. The matter of the Vow is suppos'd to be something Lawful: No Man can be by his own Promise bound to that, which he is already by the Divine Precept bound from. Yet 'tis suppos'd to be something, which in such and such Measures and Degrees was not a necessary Duty antecedent to the Vow. A Person might Vow to bring such and such Sacrifices at certain Times; to give such a Sum, or such a Proportion in Alms; to forbear such Meats and Drinks, which the Law allow'd; to fast and afflict the Soul (which is instant in v. 13.) at other Times besides the Day of Atonement. And many the

the like, such Vows might be made either in an extraordinary heat of Holy Zeal, or in Humiliation for some Sin committed, or, for the Prevention of Sin, in pursuit of some Mercy desired, or in gratitude for some Mercy received. 'Tis of great use to make such Vows as these, provided they be made in Sincerity, and with due Caution. Vows (say the Jewish Doctors) are the *Hedge of Separation*, i. e. a Fence to Religion. He that Vows, is here said to *bind his Soul with a Bond*. 'Tis a Vow to God, who is a Spirit, and to him the Soul with all it's Powers must be oblig'd. A Promise to Man is a Bond upon the Estate, but a Promise to God is a Bond upon the Soul. Our Sacramental Vows by which we are bound to no more than what was before our Duty, and which neither Father nor Husband can disannul are Bonds upon the Soul, and by them we must feel ourselves bound out from all Sin, and bound up to the whole Will of God. Our occasional Vows concerning that which before was in our own Power, Acts 5. 4. When they are made, are Bonds upon the Soul likewise.

2. The Command given is, that these Vows be conscientiously perform'd. *He shall not break his Word*, tho' afterwards he may change his Mind, but he shall do according to what he has said. *Marg. He shall not prophane his Word*. Vowing is an Ordinance of God, if we Vow in Hypocrisy we prophane that Ordinance; 'tis plainly determin'd, *Better not Vow, than Vow and not Pay*, Ecclef. 5. 6. *Be not deceived, God is not mocked*. His Promises to us are *Yea and Amen*, let not ours to him be *Yea and Nay*.

3 If a woman also vow a vow unto the LORD, and bind her self by a bond, being in her fathers house, in her youth: 4 And her father hear her vow, and her bond wherewith she hath bound her soul, and her father should hold his peace at her: then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand. 5 But if her father disallow her in the day that he heareth: not any of her vows, or of her bonds, wherewith she hath bound her soul, shall stand: and the LORD shall forgive her, because her father disallowed her. 6 And if she had at all an husband when she vowed, or uttered ought out of her lips wherewith she bound her soul; 7 And her husband heard it, and held his peace at her in the day that he heard it: then her vows shall stand, and her bonds wherewith she bound her soul shall stand. 8 But if her husband disallow her on the day that he heard it, then he shall make her vow which she vowed, and that which she uttered with her lips, wherewith she bound her soul, of none effect, and the LORD shall forgive her. 9 But every vow of a widow, and of her that is divorced, wherewith they have bound their souls, shall stand against her. 10 And if she vowed in her husbands house, or bound her soul by a bond with an oath; 11 And her husband heard it, and held his peace at her, and disallowed her not: then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she bound her soul, shall stand. 12 But if her husband hath utterly made them void on the day he heard them, then whatsoever proceeded out of her lips concerning her vows, or concerning the bond of her soul, shall not stand: her husband hath made them void, and the LORD shall forgive her. 13 Every vow, and every binding oath to afflict the soul, her husband may establish it, or her husband may make it void. 14 But if her husband altogether hold his peace at her, from day to day, then he establisheth all her vows, or all her bonds which are upon her: he confirmeth them, because he held his peace at her, in the day that he heard them. 15 But if he shall any ways make them void, after that he hath heard them, then he shall bear her iniquity. 16 These are the statutes which the LORD commanded Moses, between a man and his wife, between the father and his daughter, being yet in her youth in her fathers house.

It is here taken for granted that all such Persons as are at their own Dispose (*Sui Juris* as we say) and are likewise of sound Understanding and Memory whatever they Vow that is lawful

and possible, they are bound to perform it; but if the Person Vowing be under the Dominion and at the Dispose of another the Case is different.

Two Cases much alike are here put, and determin'd. 1. The Case of a Daughter in her Father's House, and some think, probably enough, that it extends to a Son likewise while he is at home with his Father, and under Tutors and Governours. Whether the Exception may thus be stretch'd I cannot say: *Non est distinguendum ubi Lex non distinguit*. The Rule is general, *If a Man Vow* he must pay. But for a Daughter 'tis express, her Vow is ambulatory, and in suspense till her Father knows it, and ('tis suppos'd) knows it from her; for when it comes to his Knowledge, it is in his Power either to ratify or nullify it. But in favour of the Vow, 1. Even his Silence shall suffice to ratify it, v. 4. If he hold his Peace her Vows shall stand. Silence gives consent. *Qui tacet consentire videtur*. Hereby he allows his Daughter the Liberty she has assum'd, and as long as he saith nothing against her Vows she shall be bound by it. But, 2. His Protestation against it shall perfectly disannul it. Because it is possible such Vows may be prejudicial to the Affairs of the Family, break the Fathers Measures, perplex the Provision made for his Table (if the Vow related to Meats) or lessen the Provision made for his Children, if the Vow would be more expensive than his Estate would bear; however 'twas certain it was an Infringement of his Authority over his Child, and therefore if he disallow it she is discharg'd, and the Lord shall forgive her, i. e. She shall not be charg'd with the Guilt of violating her Vow; she shew'd her good Will in making the Vow, and if her Intentions therein were sincere (she shall be accepted; and so obey her Father shall be accounted better than Sacrifice. This shews what a mighty deference Children owe to their Parents, and how much they ought to Honour them, and be obedient to them. It is for the Interest of the Publick that the Paternal Authority be supported, for when Children are Countenanc'd in their Disobedience to their Parents, (as they were by the Tradition of the Elders, Matt. 15. 5, 6.) They soon become in other things Children of Belial. If this Law be not to be extended to Childrens Marrying without their Parents consent, so far as to put it in Parents Power to null the Marriage and dissolve the Obligation, (as some have thought it doth) yet certainly it proves the sinfulness of it; and obligeth the Children that have thus done foolishly to repent and humble themselves before God and their Parents.

2. The Case of a Wife is much the same. As for a Woman that is a Widow, or divorc'd, she has neither Father nor Husband to controul her, so that whatever Vows she binds her Soul with, they shall stand against her, v. 9. 'tis at her Peril if she run back; but a Wife who has nothing that she can strictly call her own, but with her Husbands allowance, without that, cannot make any such Vow.

1. The Law is plain in Case of a Wife that continues so long after the Vow. If her Husband allow her Vow, tho' only by silence, it stands, v. 6, 7. If he disallow it, since her Obligation to that which she had vow'd arose purely from her own Act, and not from any Prior Command of God, her Obligation to her Husband shall take place of it, for to him she ought to be in Subjection, as unto the Lord; and now 'tis so far from being her Duty to fulfil her Vow, that it would be her Sin to disobey her Husband, whose Consent perhaps she ought to have ask'd before she made the Vow; therefore she needs forgiveness, v. 8.

2. The Law is the same in Case of a Wife that soon after becomes a Widow, or is put away. Tho' if she return to her Father's House, she doth not therefore so come again under his Authority, as that he has Power to disannul her Vows, v. 9. Yet if the Vow were made while she was in the House of her Husband, and her Husband disallow'd it, 'twas made void and of none effect for ever, and she doth not return under the Law of her Vow, when she is look'd from the Law of her Husband. This seems to be the distinct meaning of v. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14. Which otherwise would be but a Repetition of v. 6, 7, 8. But it is added, v. 15. That if the Husband make void the Vows of his Wife, he shall bear her iniquity, i. e. If the thing she had vow'd were really good, for the Honour of God and the Prosperity of her own Soul, and the Husband disallow it out of Covetousness, or for a Humour, or to shew his Authority, tho' she be discharg'd from the obligation of her Vow, yet he will have a great deal to answer for her.

Now here it is very observable how careful the Divine Law consults the good order of Families, and preserves the Power of Superior Relations, and the Duty and Reverence of Inferiors. 'Tis fit every Man should bear Rule in his own House, and have his Wife and Children in subjection with all Gravity; and rather than this great rule should be broken, or any Encouragement given to Inferior Relations to break those Bonds asunder, God himself would quit his Right, and release the Obligation even of a solemn Vow; so much doth Religion strengthen the Ties of all Relations, and secure the Welfare of all Societies, and in it the Families of the Earth are blessed.

C H A P. XXXI.

This Chapter belongs to the Book of the Wars of the Lord, into which 'tis probable it was inserted. 'Tis the History of a Holy War, a War with Midian. Here's (1.) A Divine Command for the War, v. 1. 2. (2.) The undertaking of the War, v. 3.-6. (3.) The glorious Success of it, v. 7.-12. (4.) Their Triumphant Return from the War. 1. The Respect Moses paid the Soldiers; v. 13. 2. The Rebuke he gave them for sparing of the Women, v. 14. 18. 3. The Directions he gave them for the purifying of themselves, and their Effects, v. 19.-24. 4. The Distribution of the Spoil they had taken; one half to the Soldiers, the other to the Congregation, and a Tribute to the Lord out of each, v. 25.-47. 5. The free-will-Offering of the Officers, v. 48.-54.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2. *Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites: afterward shalt thou be gathered unto thy people.* 3. *And Moses spake unto the people saying, Arm some of your selves unto the war, and let them go against the Midianites, and avenge the LORD of Midian.* 4. *Of every tribe a thousand throughout all the Tribes of Israel, shall ye send to the war.* 5. *So there were delivered out of the thousands of Israel, a thousand of every Tribe, twelve thousand armed for war.* 6. *And Moses sent them to the war, a thousand of every Tribe; them and Phineas, the son of Eleazar the priest; to the war with the holy instruments, and the trumpets to blow in his hand.*

Here, 1. The Lord of Hosts gives orders to Moses to make War upon the Midianites, and his Commission no doubt justified this War, tho' it will not serve to justify the like, without such Commission. The Midianites were the Posterity of Abraham by Keturah, Gen. 25. 2. Some of them settled South of Canaan, among whom Jethro liv'd, and they retain'd the Worship of the true God; but these were settled East of Canaan, and were fallen into Idolatry, Neighbours to and in Confederacy with the Moabites. Their Land was not design'd to be given to Israel, nor had Israel meddled with them, if they had not made themselves obnoxious to their Resentments, by sending their ill Women among them to draw them to Whoredom and Idolatry. This was the Provocation, this was the Quarrel: For this (saith God) *avenge Israel of the Midianites, v. 2. (1.)* God would have the Midianites chastis'd, an inroad made upon that Part of their Country which lay next to the Camp of Israel, and which was concern'd in that Mischief, probably more than the Moabites, who therefore were let alone. God will have us to reckon those our worst Enemies that draw us to sin, and to avoid them; and since every Man is tempted when he is drawn aside of his own Lusts, and those are the Midianites which ensnare us with thier Wiles, on them we should *avenge ourselves*; not only make no League with them, but make War upon them, by living a Life of Mortification. God had taken Vengeance on his own People for yielding to the Midianites Temptations, now the Midianites must be reckon'd with, that gave the Temptation, for the Deceived and the Deceiver are his (Job 12. 16.) both accountable to his Tribunal; and tho' Judgment begin at the House of God, it shall not end there, 1 Pet. 4. 17. There is a Day coming, when Vengeance will be taken on those that have introduc'd Errors and Corruptions into the Church, and the Devil that deceived Men will be cast into the Lake of Fire. Israel's Quarrel with Amalek that fought against them was not aveng'd, till long after, but their Quarrel with Midian that debauch'd them was speedily aveng'd, for they were look'd upon, as much the more dangerous and malicious Enemies. (2.) God would have it done by Moses, in his Life-time; that he who had so deeply resented that Injury, might have the Satisfaction of seeing it aveng'd. See this Execution done upon the Enemies of God and Israel, and afterwards thou shalt be gather'd to thy People. This was the only Piece of Service of this kind that Moses must farther do, and then he was accomplish as a Heir of his Day, and shall have his Quietus: Hitherto his usefulness must come and no further; the Wars of Canaan must be carried on by another Hand. Note, God sometimes removes useful Men, when they think they could ill be spar'd; but this ought to satisfy us, that they are never remov'd till they have done the Work which was appointed them.

2. Moses gives Orders to the People to prepare for this Expedition, v. 3. He would not have the whole Body of the Camp to stir, but they must arm some of themselves to the War, such as were either most fit, or most forward, and avenge the Lord of Midian. God said *Avenge Israel, Moses said avenge the Lord*, for the Interests of God and Israel are united, and the Cause of both is one and the same. And if God in what he doth, shews himself jealous for the Honour of Israel, sure Israel

in what they do, ought to shew themselves jealous for the Glory of God. Then only we can justify the avenging of ourselves, when it is the Vengeance of the Lord that we engage in: Nay for this Reason we are forbidden to avenge ourselves, because God has said, *Vengeance is mine, I will repay.*

3. A Detachment is drawn out accordingly, for this Service, a Thousand out of every Tribe, Twelve Thousand in all; a small number in Comparison with what they could have sent, and 'tis likely small in Comparison with the number of the Enemies they were sent against. But God would teach them, that 'tis all one to him to save by many, or by few, 1 Sam. 14. 6.

4. Phineas the son of Eleazar is sent along with them. 'Tis strange, that no mention is made of Joshua in this great Action. If he was General of these Forces, why do we not find him leading them out? If he tarried at Home, why do we not find him meeting them with Moses at their Return? 'Tis probable each Tribe having a Captain of it's own thousand, there was no General, but they proceeded in the Order of their March through the Wilderness, Judah first, and the rest in their Posts, under the Command of their respective Captains, spoken of v. 48. But the War being a Holy War, Phineas was their common Head, not to supply the Place of a General, but by the Oracle of God to determine the Resolves of their Councils of War, in which the Captains of Thousands would all acquiesce, and according to which they would act in Conjunction. He therefore took with him the Holy Instruments or Vessels, probably the Breast Plate of Judgment, by which God might be consulted in any Emergency. Tho' he was not yet the High Priest, yet he might be delegated *pro hac vice* to bear the Urim and Thummim, as 1 Sam. 23. 6. And there was a particular Reason for sending Phineas to preside in this Expedition; he had already signalized himself for his Zeal against the Midianites, and their cursed Arts to ensnare Israel, when he slew Cozbi a Daughter of a Chief House in Midian, for her Impudence in the Matter of Peor, Chap. 25. 15. He that had so well us'd the Sword of Justice against a particular Criminal, was best qualified to guide the Sword of War against the whole Nation. Thou hast been faithful in a few Things, I will make thee Ruler over many Things.

7. And they warred against the Midianites, as the LORD commanded Moses, and they slew all the males. 8. And they slew the Kings of Midian, beside the rest of them that were slain, namely, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, five kings of Midian: Balaam also the son of Beor, they slew with the sword. 9. And the children of Israel took all the women of Midian captives, and their little ones, and took the spoil of all their cattle, and all their flocks, and all their goods. 10. And they burnt all their cities wherein they dwelt, and all their goodly castles with fire. 11. And they took all the spoil, and all the prey, both of men and of beasts. 12. And they brought the captives, and the prey, and the spoil unto Moses and Eleazar the priest, and unto the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the camp, at the plains of Moab, which are by Jordan near Jericho.

Here's 1. The Descent which this little Army of Israelites made under the Divine Commission, Conduct, and Command upon the Country of Midian. They warred against the Midianites. 'Tis very probable they first publish'd their Manifesto, shewing the Reasons of the War, and requiring them to give up the Ring-leaders of the Mischief to Justice; for such afterwards was the Law. Deut. 20. 10. and such the Practice, Judg. 10. 13. But the Midianites justifying what they had done, and standing by those that had done it, the Israelites attack'd them with Fire and Sword, and all the pious fury which their Zeal for God, and their People inspir'd 'em with.

2. The Execution (the Military Execution) they did in this Descent. (1.) They slew all the Males, v. 7. i. e. all they met with as far as they went, they put them all to the Sword, and gave no Quarter. But that they did not slay all the Males of the Nation is certain, for we find the Midianites a powerful and formidable Enemy to Israel in the Days of Gideon; and that they were the Midianites of this Country, for they are reckon'd with the Children of the East, Judg. 6. 3. (2.) They slew the Kings of Midian, the same that are call'd Elders of Midian, Chap. 22. 4. and Dukes of Sihon, Josh. 13. 21. Five of these Princes are here nam'd, one of which is Zur whose Daughter Cozbi was, Chap. 25. 15. (3.) They slew Balaam. Many Conjectures there are, what brought Balaam among the Midianites at this time; 'tis probable the Midianites having Intelligence of the March of this Army of Israelites against them, hir'd Balaam to come and assist them with his Enchantments; that if he could not prevail to act offensively in their Favours, by cursing the Armies of Israel, yet he might act defensively, by blessing

bleſſing the Country of Midian. Whatever was the Occaſion of his being there, God's over-ruing Providence brought him thither, and there his juſt Vengeance found him. Had he himſelf believ'd what he ſaid of the Happy State of *Iſrael*, he would not have herded himſelf thus with the Enemies of *Iſrael*, but juſtly doth he die the Death of the Wicked, tho' he pretended to deſire that of the Righteous, and go down ſlain to the Pit with the uncircumciſed, who rebelled thus againſt the Convictions of his own Conſcience. The Midianites Wives were Balaam's Projeſts, 'twas therefore juſt he ſhould periſh with them; *Hof. 4. 5.* Now was his Folly made maniſt to all Men, who foretold the fate of others, but foreſaw not his own. (4.) They took all the Women and Children Captives, v. 9. (5.) They burnt their Cities and goodly Caſtles, v. 10. not deſigning to inhabit them themſelves, (that Country was out of their Line) they thus prevented thoſe who had made their Eſcape, from ſheltering themſelves in their own Country, and ſettling there again. Some underſtand it of their Idol-Temples; 'twas fit they ſhould ſhare in this Vengeance, (6.) They plunder'd the Country, and carried off all the Cattle, and valuable Goods, and ſo return'd to the Camp of *Iſrael* laden with a very rich Booty. v. 9, 11, 12. Thus (as when they came out of Egypt) they were enrich'd with the Spoils of their Enemies, and furniſh'd with Stocks for the good Land into which God was bringing them.

13 ¶ And Moſes and Eleazar the prieſt, and all the princes of the congregation went forth to meet them without the camp. 14 And Moſes was wroth with the officers of the hoſt, with the captains over thouſands, and captains over hundreds, which came from the battle. 15 And Moſes ſaid unto them, Have ye ſaved all the women alive? 16 Behold, theſe cauſed the children of *Iſrael*, through the counſel of Balaam, to commit treſpaſs againſt the LORD in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among [the congregation of the LORD. 17 Now therefore kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known man, by lying with him. 18 But all the women children that have not known a man by lying with him, keep alive for your ſelves: 19 And do ye abide without the camp ſeven days: whoſoever hath killed any perſon, and whoſoever hath touched any ſlain, purifie both your ſelves and your captives on the third day, and on the ſeventh day. 20 And purifie all your raiment, and all that is made of ſkins, and all work of goats hair, and all things made of wood. 21 ¶ And Eleazar the prieſt ſaid unto the men of war which went to the battle, This is the ordinance which the LORD commanded Moſes. 22 Only the gold and the ſilver, the braſs, the iron, the tin, and the lead. 23 Every thing that may abide the fire, ye ſhall make it go through the fire, and it ſhall be clean; nevertheless it ſhall be purified with the water of ſeparation: and all that abideth not the fire, ye ſhall make go through the water. 24 And ye ſhall waſh your clothes on the ſeventh day, and ye ſhall be clean, and afterwards ye ſhall come into the camp.

We have here the Triumphant Return of the Army of *Iſrael*, from the War with *Midian*. And here,

1. They were met with great Reſpect, v. 13. Moſes himſelf, notwithstanding his Age and Gravity, walk'd out of the Camp to congratulate their Victory, and to grace the Solemnity of their Triumphs. Publick Succeſſes ſhould be publickly acknowledg'd, to the Glory of God, and the Encouragement of thoſe that have jeopard'd their Lives in their Countries Cauſe.

2. They were ſeverely reprov'd for ſaving the Woman alive. 'Tis very likely Moſes had commanded them to kill the Women, at leaſt that was implied in the general Order, to avenge *Iſrael*, of the *Midianites*; the Execution having reference to that Crime, their drawing them in to the Worſhip of *Peor*, 'twas eaſie to conclude that the Women who were the principal Criminals muſt not be ſpar'd. What ſaith Moſes have ye ſav'd the Women alive? v. 15. He was mov'd with a Holy Indignation at the ſight of them. Theſe were they that cauſed the Children of *Iſrael* to commit the Treſpaſs; and therefore, (1.) 'Tis juſt they ſhould die. The Law in Caſe of Whoredom was, The Adulterer and Adultereſs ſhall ſurely be put to Death. God had put to Death the Adulterers of *Iſrael* by the Plague, and now 'twas fit the Adultereſſes of *Midian*, eſpecially ſince they had been the Tempters, ſhould be put to Death by the Sword. (2.) 'Tis dangerous to let them live; They will be ſtill tempting the *Iſraelites* to Uncleanneſs,

and ſo your Captives will be your Conquerors, and a ſecond time your Deſtroyers. Severe Orders are therefore given that the grown Women ſhould be ſlain in cold Blood, and only the female Children ſpar'd.

3. They were oblig'd to purifie themſelves, according to the Ceremony of the Law, and to abide without the Camp ſeven Days, till their Purification was accompliſh'd. For, (1.) They had had their Hands in Blood, by which though they had not contracted any moral Guilt, the War being juſt and lawful, yet they were brought under a Ceremonial Uncleanneſs, which render'd them unfit to come near the Tabernacle till they were purified. Thus God would preſerve in their Minds a Dread and Detestation of Murder. David muſt not build the Temple becauſe he had been a Man of War and had ſhed Blood, 1 Chron. 28. 3. (3.) They could not but have touched dead Bodies, by which they were polluted, and that requir'd they ſhould be purified with the Water of Separation, v. 19, 20, 24.

4. They muſt likewiſe purifie the Spoil they had taken; the Captives, v. 19. and all the Goods, v. 21, 22, 23. What would bear the Fire muſt paſs through the Fire, and what would not, muſt be waſhed with Water. Theſe things had been uſ'd by *Midianites*, and being now come into the Poſſeſſion of *Iſraelites*, 'twas fit they ſhould be ſanctified to the Service of that Holy Nation, and the Honour of their Holy God. To us now every thing is ſanctified by the Word and Prayer, if we are ſanctified by the Spirit, who is compar'd both to Fire and Water. To the Pure all things are pure.

25 ¶ And the LORD ſpoke unto Moſes ſaying, 26 Take the ſum of the prey that was taken, both of man and of beaſt, thou and Eleazar the prieſt, and the chief fathers of the congregation: 27 And divide the prey into two parts; between them that took the war upon them, who went out to battle, and between all the congregation. 28 And levie a tribute unto the LORD, of the men of war which went out to battle: one ſoul of five hundred, both of the perſons, and of the beeves, and of the aſſes, and of the ſheep. 29 Take it of their half, and give it unto Eleazar the prieſt, for an heave-offering of the LORD. 30 And of the children of *Iſrael* half, thou ſhalt take one portion of fifty, of the perſons, of the beeves, of the aſſes, and of the flocks, of all manner of beaſts, and give them unto the Levites, which keep the charge of the tabernacle of the LORD. 31 And Moſes and Eleazar the prieſt did as the LORD commanded Moſes. 32 And the booty, being the reſt of the prey which the men of war had caught, was ſix hundred thouſand, and ſeventy thouſand, and five thouſand ſheep. 33 And threeſcore and twelve thouſand beeves, 34 And threeſcore and one thouſand aſſes, 35 And thirty and two thouſand perſons in all, of women that had not known man, by lying with them. 36 And the half, which was the portion of them that went out to war, was in number three hundred thouſand, and ſeven and thirty thouſand and five hundred ſheep; 37 And the LORDS tribute of the ſheep was ſix hundred and threeſcore and fifteen. 38 And the beeves were thirty and ſix thouſand, of which the LORDS tribute was threeſcore and twelve. 39 And the aſſes were thirty thouſand and five hundred, of which the LORDS tribute was threeſcore and one. 40 And the perſons were ſixteen thouſand, of which the LORDS tribute was thirty and two perſons. 41 And Moſes gave the tribute which was the LORDS heave-offering, unto Eleazar the prieſt, as the LORD commanded Moſes. 42 And of the children of *Iſrael* half, which Moſes divided from the men that warred: 43 (Now the half that pertained unto the congregation, was three hundred thouſand, and thirty thouſand, and ſeven thouſand, and five hundred ſheep: 44 And thirty and ſix thouſand beeves: 45 And thirty thouſand aſſes and five hundred: 46 And ſixteen thouſand perſons :) 47 Even of the children of *Iſrael* half, Moſes took one portion of fifty, both of man and of beaſt, and gave them unto the Levites

Levites which kept the charge of the tabernacle of the LORD, as the LORD commanded Moses.

We have here the Distribution of the Spoil which was taken in this Expedition against Midian. God himself directed how it should be done, and Moses and Eleazar did according to the Directions. And thus unhappy Contentions among themselves were prevented, and the Victory was made to turn to the common Benefit. 'Twas fit he that gave them the Prey should order the Disposal of it: All we have is from God, and therefore must be subject to his Will.

1. The Prey is order'd to be divided into two Parts; One for the Twelve Thousand Men that undertook the War, the other for the Congregation. The Prey that was divided seems to have been only the Captives and the Cattle; as for the Plate, and Jewels, and other Goods, every Man kept what he took, as is intimated, v. 50-53. That only was distributed which would be of use for the stocking of that good Land into which they were going. Now observe, 1. That the one half of the Prey was given to the whole Congregation, Moses allotting to each Tribe its share, and then leaving it to the Heads of the Tribes to divide their respective Shares among themselves, according to their Families. The War was undertaken on the behalf of the whole Congregation, they would all have been ready to go to the Help of the Lord against the Mighty, if they had been so order'd, and they did help, 'tis likely, by their Prayers, and therefore God appoints that they that *tarried at home should divide the Spoil*, Pf. 68. 12. David in his time made it a Statute and an Ordinance for Israel, that as his part is that *goeth down to the Battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the Stuff*, 1 Sam. 30. 24, 25. Those that are employ'd in publick Trusts, must not think to benefit themselves only by their Toils and Hazards, but must aim at the Advantage of the Community. 2. That yet the Twelve Thousand that went to the Battle had as much for their Share as the whole Congregation, which were Fifty times as many, had for theirs; so that the particular Persons of the Soldiery had a much better Share than any of their Brethren that *tarried at home*: And good Reason they should. The greater Pains we take, and the greater Hazards we run in the Service of God and our Generation, the greater will our Recompence be at last; for God is not *unrighteous to forget the Work and Labour of Love*.

2. God was to have a Tribute out of it. As an acknowledgment of his Sovereignty over them in general, and that he was their King, to whom *Tribute was due*; and particularly of his Interest in this War and the Gains of it, he having given them their Success; and that the Priests, the Lord's Receivers might have something added to the Provision made for their Maintenance. Note, Whatever we have God must have his Dues out of it. And here (as before) the Soldiers are favour'd above the rest of the Congregation, for out of the Peoples Share God requir'd one in Fifty, but out of the Soldiers Share only one in Five Hundred; because the People got theirs easily, without any Peril or Fatigue. The less we have Opportunity of honouring God with our *personal Services*, the more 'tis expected we honour him with our *Substance*. The Tribute out of the Soldiers half was given to the Priests, v. 29. That out of the Peoples half was given to the Levites, v. 30. For the Priest were taken from among the Levites as those Soldiers from among the People, for special Service, and hazardous, and their Pay was accordingly.

48 ¶ And the officers which were over thousands of the host, the captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds came near unto Moses, 49 And they said unto Moses, Thy servants have taken the sum of the men of war which are under our charge, and there lacketh not one man of us. 50 We have therefore brought an oblation for the LORD, what every man hath gotten of jewels of gold, chains, and bracelets, rings, ear-rings, and tablets to make an atonement for our souls before the LORD. 51 And Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold of them: even all wrought jewels. 52 And all the gold of the offering that they offered up to the LORD, of the captains of thousands, and of the captains of hundreds, was sixteen thousand seven hundred and fifty shekels. 53 (For the men of war had taken spoil, every man for himself.) 54 And Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold of the captains of thousands, and of hundreds, and brought it into the tabernacle of the congregation for a memorial for the children of Israel before the LORD.

Here's a great Example of Piety and Devotion in the Officers of the Army; The Colonels, that are call'd *Captains of Thousands*,

and the inferior Officers that were *Captains of Hundreds*; they came to Moses as their General and Commander in chief, and tho' he was now going off the Stage very humbly and respectfully address'd themselves to him, calling themselves *his Servants*; The Honours they had won did not puff them up, so as to make them forget their Duty to him. Observe in their Address to him.

1. The pious Notice they take of God's wonderful Goodness to them in this late Expedition, in preserving not only their own Lives, but the Lives of all the Men of War that they had under their Charge; so that upon the Review of their Muster-Roll it appear'd there was not one missing, v. 49. This was very extraordinary, and perhaps cannot be parallel'd in any History. So many Thousand Lives jeopard'd in the High Places of the Field, and not one lost, either by the Sword of the Enemy, or by any Disease or Disaster. This was *the Lord's doing*, and cannot but be *marvellous in the Eyes* of those that consider how the Lives of all Men, especially Soldiers, are *continually in their Hands*. 'Tis an Evidence of the Tenderness these Commanders had over their Soldiers, and that their Lives were very precious to them, that they look'd upon it as a Mercy to themselves, that none of those under their Charge miscarried. Of all that were given them they had lost none; so precious also is the Blood of Christ's Subjects and Soldiers unto him, Pf. 72. 14.

2. The pious Acknowledgment they make for this Favour, v. 50. *Therefore we have brought an Oblation to the Lord*. The Oblation they brought was out of that which every Man had gotten, and it was gotten honestly by a Divine Warrant. Thus every Man should lay by, according as God hath prosper'd him, 1 Cor. 16. 1. For where God sows plentifully in the Gifts of his Bounty, he expects to reap accordingly in the Fruits of our Piety and Charity. The Tabernacle first, and the Temple afterward, were beautified and enrich'd with the Spoils taken from the Enemies of Israel; as by David, 2 Sam. 8. 11, 12, and his Captains, 1 Chr. 26. 26, 27. We should never take any thing to ourselves in War or Trade, which we cannot in Faith consecrate a Part of to God, who *hates Robbery for Burnt-Offerings*; but when God has remarkably preserv'd and succeeded us, he expects we should make some particular Return of Gratitude to him.

1. As to this Oblation. 1. The Captains offer'd it to make an Atonement for their Souls, v. 50. Instead of coming to Moses to demand of God a Recompence for the good Service they had done in avenging the Lord of Midian, or to set up the Trophies of their Victory for the immortalizing of their own Names, they bring an Oblation to make Atonement for their Souls, being conscious to themselves, as the best Men must be even in their best Services, that they had been defective in their Duty, not only in that Instance for which they were reprov'd, v. 14, but in many others. *For there is not a just Man upon Earth that doth good and sins not*. 2. Moses accepted it, and laid it up in the Tabernacle as a Memorial for the children of Israel, v. 54. i. e. A Monument of God's Goodness to them, that they might be encourag'd to trust in him in their further Wars; and a Monument of their Gratitude to God; (Sacrifices are said to be *Memorials*;) that he being well pleas'd with this thankful Acknowledgment of Favours bestow'd, might continue and repeat his Mercies to them.

CHAP. XXXII.

In this Chapter we have, (1.) The humble Request of the Tribes of Reuben and Gad, for an Inheritance on that side Jordan, where Israel now lay encamp'd, v. 1-5. (2.) Moses's mis-interpreting of their Request, v. 6, 15. (3.) Their Explication of it, and stating it right, v. 16, 19. (4.) The Grant of their Petition under the Provisos and Limitations, which they themselves propos'd, v. 20-42.

NOW the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of cattle: and when they saw the land of Jazer, and the land of Gilead, that behold, the place was a place for cattle: 2 The children of Gad, and the children of Reuben, came and spake unto Moses, and to Eleazar the priest, and unto the princes of the congregation, saying, 3 Ataroth and Dibon, and Jazer, and Nimrah, and Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Shebam, and Nebo, and Beon, 4 Even the country which the LORD smote before the congregation of Israel, is a land for cattle, and thy servants have cattle. 5 Wherefore, said they, if we have found grace in thy sight, let this land be given unto thy servants for a possession, and bring us not over Jordan. 6 ¶ And Moses said unto the children of Gad, and to the children of Reuben, Shall your brethren go to war, and shall

ye sit here? 7 And wherefore discourage ye the heart of the children of Israel, from going over into the land which the LORD hath given them? 8 Thus did your fathers, when I sent them from Kadesh-Barnea to see the land. 9 For when they went up unto the valley of Eshcol, and saw the land, they discouraged the heart of the children of Israel, that they should not go into the land which the LORD had given them. 10 And the LORDS anger was kindled the same time, and he sware, saying, 11 Surely none of the men that came out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, because they have not wholly followed me: 12 Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, the Kenezite, and Joshua the son of Nun: for they have wholly followed the LORD. 13 And the LORDS anger was kindled against Israel, and he made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation that had done evil in the sight of the LORD, was consumed. 14 And behold, ye are risen up in your fathers stead, an increase of sinful men, to augment yet the fierce anger of the LORD toward Israel. 15 For if ye turn away from after him, he will yet again leave them in the wilderness, and ye shall destroy all this people.

Israel's Tents were now pitch'd in the Plains of Moab, where they continued many Months, looking back upon the Conquests they had already made of the Land of Sihon and Og, and looking forward to Canaan, which they hoped in a little time to make themselves Masters of. While they made this Stand, and were at a Pause, this great Affair of the Disposal of the Conquest they had already made was here concerted and settled; not by any particular Order or Appointment of God, but at the special Instance and Request of two of the Tribes, which Moses, after a long Debate that arose upon it, consented to. For even then, when so much was done by the extraordinary Appearances of Divine Providence, yet many Things were left to the Conduct of Humane Prudence: For God, in governing both the World and the Church, makes Use of the Reason of Men, and serves his own Purposes by it.

1. Here's a Motion made by the Reubenites and Gadites, that the Land they had lately possess'd themselves of, and which, in the Right of Conquest belong'd to Israel, in common, might be assign'd to them in particular for their Inheritance; upon the general Idea they had of the Land of Promise, they suppos'd this would be about their Proportion. Reuben and Gad were encamp'd under the same Standard, and so had the better Opportunity of comparing Notes, and agreeing this Matter between themselves. In the first Verse the Children of Reuben are nam'd first, but afterwards the Children of Gad are, v. 2, 25, 31. Either because the Gadites made the first Motion, and were most forward for it, or because they were the better Spokesmen, and had more of the Art of Management; Reuben's Tribe still lying under Jacob's Sentence, *he shall not excel*. Two Things common in the World induc'd these Tribes to make this Choice, and this Motion upon it, the Lust of the Eye, and the Pride of Life, 1 Joh. 2. 16. (1.) The Lust of the Eye. This Land they covet'd was not only beautiful for Situation, and pleasant to the Eye, but it was good for Food, Food for Cattle; and they had a great multitude of Cattle, above the rest of the Tribes. This suppos'd, because they brought more out of Egypt than the rest did; that was Forty Years before, and Stocks of Cattle increase and decrease in less time than that; therefore I rather think they had been better Husbands of their Cattle in the Wilderness, had attended them better, had taken more care of the Breed, and not been so profuse as their Neighbours in eating the Lambs out of the Flock, and the Calves out of the midst of the Stall. Now they having these large Stocks, covered Land proportionable. Many Scriptures speak of Bashan and Gilead as Places famous for Cattle; they had been so already, and therefore these Tribes hoped they would be so to them, and whatever comes of it here, they desire to take their Lot. Judicious Calvin thinks there was much amiss in the Principle they went upon, and that they consult'd their own private Convenience more than the Publick Good; that they had such a Regard to the Honour and Interest of Israel, and the promise made to Abraham of the Land of Canaan, (strictly so call'd) as they ought to have had. And still it is too true, that many seek

their own Things, more than the Things of Jesus Christ, Phil. 2. 21. And that many are influenc'd by their secular Interest and Advantage to take up short of the Heavenly Canaan. Their Spirits agree too well with this World, and with the Things that are seen that are Temporal, and they say, *It is good to be here, and so lose what is hereafter for want of seeking it*. Let thus chose by the sight of Eye, and smarted for his Choice. Would we chuse our Portion aright, we must look above the Things that are seen. (2.) Perhaps there was something of the Pride of Life in it. Reuben was the First-born of Israel, but he had lost his Birth-right, divers of the Tribes, and Judah especially had top'd him, so that he could not expect the best Lot in Canaan; and therefore to save the Shadow of a Birth-right when he had forfeited the Substance, he here catches at the first Lot, tho' it was out of Canaan, and far off from the Tabernacle. Thus Esau sold his Birth-right, and yet got to be serv'd first with an Inheritance in Mount Seir. The Tribe of Gad descend'd from the First-born of Zilpah, and were like Pretenders with the Reubenites; and Manasseh too was a First-born, but knew he must be eclips'd by Ephraim his younger Brother, and therefore he also covet'd to get Precedency.

2. Moses's Dislike of this Motion, and the severe Rebuke he gives to it, as a faithful Prince and Prophet.

1. It must be confess'd that *prim a facie* the Thing look'd ill, especially the closing Words of their Petition, v. 5. *Bring us not over Jordan*. (1.) It seem'd to proceed from an ill Principle; a Contempt of the Land of Promise, which Moses himself was so desirous of a sight of. A Distrust of the Power of God to dispossess the Canaanites; as if a Lot in a Land they knew not, and which was already conquer'd, was more desirable than a Lot in a Land they knew not, and which was yet to be conquer'd; One Bird in the Hand worth Two in the Bush. There seem'd to be Covetousness in it, for that which they insist'd on was, that 'twas convenient for their Cattle. It argu'd likewise a Neglect of their Brethren, as if they car'd not what became of Israel, while they themselves were well provided for. (2.) It might have been of ill Consequence. The People might have taken ill Hints from it, and have suggested that they were few enough when they had their whole Number to deal with the Canaanites, but how unequal would the Match be if they should drop two Tribes and a half (above a fifth Part of their strength) on this side Jordan. It would likewise be an ill Precedent, if they must have the Land thus granted them as soon as it was conquer'd, other Tribes might make the same Pretensions and Claims, and so the Regular Disposition of the Land by Lot would be anticipated.

Moses is therefore very warm upon them, which is to be imputed to his pious Zeal against Sin, and not to any Peevishness, the Effect of old Age, for his Meekness *abated not*, any more than his natural Force.

1. He shews them what he apprehended to be Evil in this Motion, that it would discourage the Heart of their Brethren, v. 6, 7. What, saith he, with a holy Indignation at their selfishness, *shall your Brethren go to War, and expose themselves to all the Hardships and Hazards of the Field, and shall ye sit here at your Ease?* No, do not mistake yourselves, you shall never be indulg'd by me in this Sloth and Cowardise. It ill becomes any of God's Israel to sit down unconcern'd in the difficult and perilous Concernments of their Brethren, whether Publick or Personal.

2. He minds them of the fatal Consequences of the Unbelief and Faint-heartedness of their Fathers when they were, as these here, just ready to enter Canaan. He recites the Story very particularly, v. 8-13. Thus did your Fathers, whose Punishment should be a Warning to you; to take heed of sinning after the Similitude of their Transgression.

3. He gives them fair Warning of the Mischief that would be likely to follow upon this Separation they were about to make from the Camp of Israel; they would be in danger of bringing Warth upon the whole Congregation, and hurrying them all back again into the Wilderness, v. 14, 15. *Ye are risen up in your Fathers stead to despise the pleasant Land, and reject it as they did, when we hope you were risen up in their stead to possess it*. 'Twas an Encouragement to Moses to see what an increase of Men they were, but a Discouragement to see that they were withal an increase of sinful Men, treading in the Steps of their Fathers Impiety. 'Tis sad to see the rising Generations in Families and Countries seldom better, and often worse than that which went before it, And what comes of it? Why, it augments the fierce Anger of the Lord, not only continues that Fire, but increaseth it, and fills the Measure often till it overflow in a Deluge of Desolation. Note, If Men did consider, as they ought, what would be in the end of Sin, they would be afraid of the Beginnings of it.

And

16 ¶ And they came near unto him, and said, We will build sheepfolds here for our cattle, and cities for our little ones. 17 But we ourselves will go ready arm'd before the children of Israel, until we have brought them unto their place: and our little ones shall dwell in the fenced cities, because of the inhabitants of the land. 18 We will not return unto our houses, until the children of Israel have inherited every man his inheritance: 19 For we will not inherit with them on yonder side Jordan; or forward, because our inheritance is fallen to us on this side Jordan eastward. 20 ¶ And Moses said unto them, if ye will do this thing, if ye will go armed before the LORD to war, 21 And will go all of you armed over Jordan before the LORD, until he hath driven out his enemies from before him, 22 And the land be subdued before the LORD: then afterward ye shall return, and be guiltless before the LORD, and before Israel; and this land shall be your possession before the LORD. 23 But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out. 24 Build ye cities for your little ones, and folds for your sheep, and do that which hath proceeded out of your mouth. 25 And the children of Gad, and the children of Reuben spake unto Moses, saying, Thy servants will do as my lord commandeth. 26 Our little ones, our wives, our flocks, and all our cattle shall be there in the cities of Gilead. 27 But thy servants will pass over, every man armed for war, before the LORD to battle, as my lord saith.

We have here the accommodating of the Matter between Moses and the two Tribes, about their Settlement on this side Jordan. Probably the Petitioners withdrew and considered with themselves what Answer they should return to the severe Reproof Moses had given them: and after some Consultation they return with this Proposal, that their Men of War should go and assist their Brethren in the Conquest of Canaan, and they would leave their Families and Flocks behind them in this Land: And thus they might have their Request, and no Harm done.

Now it is uncertain whether they designed this, as first, when they brought their Petition or no. (1.) If they did, 'tis an Instance how often that which is honestly meant, is unhappily misinterpreted: Yet Moses herein was excusable, for he had Reason to suspect the worst by them, and the Rebuke he gave them was from the Abundance of his Care to prevent Sin. (2.) But if they did not, 'tis an Instance of the Effect of Plain dealing; Moses by shewing them their Sin, and the Danger of it, brought them to their Duty without Murmuring or Disputing. They object not that their Brethren were enough to deal with the Canaanites, without their Help, especially since they were sure of God's fighting for them, but engage themselves to stand by them.

1. Their Proposal is very fair and generous, and such as instead of discouraging, would rather encourage their Brethren. (1.) That their Men of War, who were fit for Service, would go ready arm'd before the Children of Israel into the Land of Canaan; so far would they be from deserting them, that, if it were thought fit, they would lead them on, and be foremost in all dangerous Enterprizes. So far were they from either distrustful, or despising the Conquest of Canaan, that they would assist in it with the utmost Readiness and Resolution. (2.) That they would leave their Families and Cattle behind them, who would have been but the Incumbrance of their Camp, and so they would be the more serviceable to their Brethren, v. 16. (3.) That they would not return to their Possessions till the Conquest of Canaan was completed, v. 18. Their Brethren should have their best Help, as long as they needed it. (4.) That yet they would not expect any Share of the Land that was yet to be conquer'd, v. 19. We will not desire to inherit with them, nor under Colour of assisting them in the War, put in for a Share with them in the Land, so we will be content with our Inheritance on this side Jordan, and there will be so much the more on yonder side for them.

2. Moses thereupon grants their Request, upon Consideration they would stick to their Proposals. (1.) He insists much upon it that they should never lay down their Arms till their Brethren laid down theirs. They promis'd to go arm'd before

the Children of Israel, v. 17. Nay, saith Moses, ye shall go arm'd before the Lord, v. 20, 21. 'Tis God's Cause more than your Brethren's, and to him you must have an Eye, not to them only. Before the Lord, i. e. before the Ark of the Lord, the Token of his Presence, which it should seem they carried about with them in the Wars of Canaan, and immediately before which these two Tribes were posted, as we find in the Order of their March, Numb. 2. 10, 17. (2.) Upon this Condition he grants them this Land for their Possession, and tells them they should be guiltless before the Lord, and before Israel, v. 22. They should have the Land, and neither Sin nor Blame cleaving to it; neither Sin before God, nor Blame before Israel; and whatever Possessions we have, 'tis desirable thus to come guiltless to them. But (3.) He warns them of the Danger of breaking their Word, if you fail, you sin against the Lord, (v. 23.) And not against your Brethren only, and be sure your Sin will find you out, i. e. God will certainly reckon with you for it, tho' you may make a slight Matter of it. Note, Sin will, without doubt, find out the Sinner sooner or later. It concerns us therefore to find our Sins out that we may repent of them, and forsake them, lest our Sins find us out to our Ruin and Confusion.

3. They unanimously agree to the Proviso's and Conditions of the Grant, and do as it were give Bond for Performance by a solemn Promise, v. 25. Thy servants will do as my Lord commanded. Their Brethren had all contributed their Assistance to the Conquest of this Country, which they desired for a Possession, and therefore they own'd themselves obliged in Justice to help them in the Conquest of that which was to be their Possession. Having receiv'd Kindness, we ought to return it, tho' it was not so condition'd when we receiv'd it. We may suppose this Promise was understood on both sides, so as not to oblige all that were number'd of these Tribes to go over arm'd, but those only that were fittest for the Expedition who would be most serviceable, while it was necessary some should be left to till the Ground, and guard the Country; and accordingly we find that about Forty Thousand of the two Tribes and a half went over arm'd, Jos. 4. 13. Whereas their whole Number was about an Hundred Thousand.

28 So concerning them Moses commanded Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the chief fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel: 29 And Moses said unto them, If the children of Gad, and the children of Reuben will pass with you over Jordan, every man armed to battle before the LORD, and the land shall be subdued before you, then ye shall give them the land of Gilead for a possession: 30 But if they will not pass over with you armed, they shall have possessions among you in the land of Canaan. 31 And the children of Gad, and the children of Reuben answered, saying, As the LORD hath said unto thy servant, so will we do. 32 We will pass over armed before the LORD in the land of Canaan, that the possession of our inheritance on this side Jordan may be ours: 33 And Moses gave unto them, even to the children of Gad, and to the children of Reuben; and to the half tribe of Manasseh the son of Joseph, the kingdom of Sihon, king of the Amorites, and the kingdom of Og, king of Bashan, the land with the cities thereof in the coasts, even the cities of the Country round about. 34 ¶ And the children of Gad built Dibon, and Ataroth, and Aroer, 35 And Ataroth, Shophan, and Jaazer, and Jogbehah, 36 And Bethnimrah, and Beth-haran, fenced cities: and folds for sheep. 37 And the children of Reuben built Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Kirjathaim, 38 And Nebo, and Baal-meon, (their names being changed) and Shibmah: and gave other names unto the cities which they builded. 39 And the children of Machir the son of Manasseh went to Gilead and took it, and dispossessed the Amorite which was in it. 40 And Moses gave Gilead unto Machir the son of Manasseh, and he dwelt therein. 41 And Jair the son of Manasseh went and took the small towns thereof, and called them Havoth-Jair. 42 And Nobah went and took Kenath, and the villages thereof, and called it Nobah, after his own name.

Here 1. *Moses settles this Matter with Eleazer and with Joshua, who was to be his Successor, knowing that he himself must not live to see it perfected, v. 28, 29, 30. He gives them an Estate upon Condition, leaving it to Joshua, if they fulfill'd the Condition to declare the Estate absolute. If they will not go over with you, he doth not say, you shall give them no Inheritance at all, but you shall not give them this Inheritance which they covet. If their Militia will not come over with you, compel the whole Tribes to come over, and let them take their lot with their Brethren, and fare as they fare; they shall have Possessions in Canaan, and let them not expect that the Lot will favour them. Hereupon they repeat their promise to stick to their Brethren, v. 31, 32.*

2. *Moses settles them in the Land they desir'd. He gave it them for a Possession, v. 33. Here is the first Mention of the Half Tribe of Manasseh coming in with them for a Share; probably they had not join'd with them in the Petition, but the Land, when it came to be apportion'd, proving to be too much for them, this half Tribe had a Lot among them, either at their Request, or by Divine Direction, or because they had signaliz'd themselves in the Conquest of this Country; for the Children of Machir, a stout and warlike Family, had taken Gilead, and dispossessed the Amorites, v. 39. Let them win it, and wear it; get it, and take it. And they being celebrated for their Courage and Bravery, 'twas for the common Safety to put them in this Frontier Country. Concerning the Settlement of these Tribes here observe, (1.) That they built the Cities, i. e. repair'd them, because either they had been damag'd by the war, or the Amorites had suffer'd them to go to decay. (2.) That they chang'd the Names of them, v. 38. Either to shew their Authority, that the change of the Names might signify the change of their Owners, or because their Names were Idolatrous, and carried in them a Respect to the Dunghil Deities that were there worshipped. Nebo and Baal were Names of their Gods, which they were forbidden to make mention of, Exod. 23. 13. And which by changing the Names of these Cities they endeavour'd to bury in Oblivion; and God promiseth to take away the Names of Baalim out of the Mouths of his People, Hos. 2. 17.*

Lastly, 'Tis observable that these Tribes as they were now first plac'd before the other Tribes, so long after they were displac'd before the other Tribes. We find that they were carried Captive into Assyria some Years before the other Tribes, 2 Kings. 19. Such a Proportion doth Providence sometimes observe, in ballancing Prosperity and Adversity; he sets the one over against the other. 2 Kings. 15-29

C H A P. XXXIII.

In this Chapter we have (1.) A particular Account of the Removes and Encampments of the children of Israel from their Escape out of Egypt to their Entrance into Canaan; Forty two in all; with some Remarkable Events that happen'd at some of those Places, v. 1.-49. (2.) A strict Command given them to drive out all the Inhabitants of the Land of Canaan, which they were now going to Conquer and take Possession of, v. 50.-56. So that the former Part of the Chapter looks back upon their March through the Wilderness, the latter looks forward to their Settlement in Canaan.

1 **T**Hese are the journeys of the children of Israel, which went forth out of the land of Egypt, with their Armies, under the hand of Moses and Aaron. 2 And Moses wrote their goings out, according to their journeys, by the commandment of the LORD: and these are their journeys according to their goings out. 3 And they departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month: on the morrow after the passover the children of Israel went out with an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians. 4 (For the Egyptians buried all their first-born, which the LORD had smitten among them: upon their gods also the LORD executed judgments). 5 And the children of Israel removed from Rameses, and pitched in Succoth. 6 And they departed from Succoth, and pitched in Etham, which is the edge of the wilderness. 7 And they removed from Etham, and turned again unto Pihahiroth, which is before Baalzephon, and they pitched before Migdol. 8 And they departed from before Pihahiroth, and passed through the midst of the sea, into the wilderness, and went three days journey in the wilderness of Etham, and pitched in Marah. 9 And they removed from Marah, and came unto Elim; and in Elim were

twelve fountains of water, and threescore and ten palm-trees, and they pitched there. 10 And they removed from Elim, and encamped by the Red-sea. 11 And they removed from the Red-sea, and encamped in the wilderness of Sin. 12 And they took their journey out of the wilderness of Sin, and encamped in Dophkah. 13 And they departed from Dophkah, and encamped in Alush. 14 And they removed from Alush, and encamped at Rephidim, where was no water for the People to drink. 15 And they departed from Rephidim, and pitched in the wilderness of Sinai. 16 And they removed from the desert of Sinai, and pitched at Kibroth-Hattaavah. 17 And they departed from Kibroth-Hattaavah, and encamped at Hazeroth. 18 And they departed from Hazeroth, and pitched in Rithmah. 19 And they departed from Rithmah, and pitched at Rimmon-Parez. 20 And they departed from Rimmon-Parez, and pitched in Libnah. 21 And they removed from Libnah, and pitched at Rissah. 22 And they journeyed from Rissah, and pitched in Kehelathah. 23 And they went from Kehelathah, and pitched in mount Shapher. 24 And they removed from mount Shapher, and encamped in Haradah. 25 And they removed from Haradah, and pitched in Makheloth. 26 And they removed from Makheloth, and encamped at Tahath. 27 And they departed from Tahath, and pitched in Tarah. 28 And they removed from Tarah, and pitched in Mithach. 29 And they went from Mithach, and pitched in Hashmonah. 30 And they departed from Hashmonah, and encamped at Moseroth. 31 And they departed from Moseroth, and pitched in Bene-Jaakan. 32 And they removed from Bene-Jaakan, and encamped at Hor-hagidgad. 33 And they went from Hor-hagidgad, and pitched at Jotbathah. 34 And they removed from Jotbathah, and encamped at Ebronah. 35 And they departed from Ebronah, and encamped at Ezion-gaber. 36 And they removed from Ezion-gaber, and pitched in the wilderness of Zin, which is Kadesh. 37 And they removed from Kadesh, and pitched in mount Hor, in the edge of the land of Edom. 38 And Aaron the priest went up into mount Hor, at the commandment of the LORD, and died there in the fortieth year, after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the first day of the fifth month. 39 And Aaron was an hundred and twenty and three years old, when he died in mount Hor. 40 And king Arad the Canaanite (which dwelt in the south, in the land of Canaan) heard of the coming of the children of Israel. 41 And they departed from mount Hor, and pitched in Zalmonah. 42 And they departed from Zalmonah, and pitched in Punon. 43 And they departed from Punon, and pitched in Oboth. 44 And they departed from Oboth, and pitched in Ije-Abarim, in the border of Moab. 45 And they departed from Iim, and pitched in Dibon-Gad. 46 And they removed from Dibon-Gad, and encamped in Almon-Diblathaim. 47 And they removed from Almon-Diblathaim, and pitched in the mountains of Abarim before Nebo. 48 And they departed from the mountains of Abarim, and pitched in the plains of Moab, by Jordan near Jericho. 49 And they pitched by Jordan from Beth-Jesimoth, even unto Abel-Shittim, in the plains of Moab.

This a Review, and brief Rehearsal of the Travels of the Children of Israel through the Wilderness; 'twas a Memorable History, and well worthy to be thus abridg'd, and the Abridgment thus preserv'd to the Honour of God that led them, and

for the Encouragement of the Generations that follow'd. Observe here,

1. How the Account was kept, *v. 2.* *Moses wrote their goings out.* When they began this tedious March, God order'd them to keep a Journal, or Diary, and to insert in it all the remarkable Occurrences of their Way, that it might be a Satisfaction to himself in the Review, and an Instruction to others, when it should be publish'd. It may be of good Use for private Christians, but especially for those in publick Stations, to preserve in Writing an Account of the Providences of God concerning them, the constant Series of Mercies they have experienc'd, especially those Turns and Changes which have made some Days of their Lives more remarkable. Our Memories are deceitful, and need this Help, that we may *Remember all the Way which the Lord our God has led us in this Wilderness,* Deut. 8. 2.

2. What the Account itself was. It began with their Departure out of Egypt, continued with their March through the Wilderness, and ended in the plains of Moab, where they now lay encamp'd.

1. Some Things are observ'd here concerning their Departure out of Egypt, which they are minded of upon all Occasions, as a Work of Wonder never to be forgotten. (1.) That they went forth with their Armies, *v. 1.* Rank and File, as an Army with Banners. (2.) Under the Hand of Moses and Aaron, their Guides, Overseers and Rulers under God. (3.) With a high Hand, because God's Hand was high that wrought for them, and in the sight of all the Egyptians, *v. 3.* They did not steal away Clandestinely, (*Isa. 52. 12.*) But in Defiance of their Enemies, to whom God had made such a burthenstone, that they neither could, nor would, nor durst oppose them. (4.) They went forth while the Egyptians were burying, or at least preparing to bury their first-born, *v. 4.* They had a Mind good enough (or ill enough rather) still to have detain'd the Israelites their Prisoners, but God found them other Work to do. They would have God's First-born buried alive, but God set them a burying their own First-born. (5.) To all the Plagues of Egypt 'tis added here, that on their gods also the Lord executed Judgments. Their Idols which they worshipped, 'tis probable were broken down, as Dagon afterwards before the Ark, so that they could not consult them about this great Affair. To this perhaps there is Reference, *Isa. 19. 1.* *The Idols of Egypt shall be mov'd at his Presence.*

2. Concerning their Travels towards Canaan.

Observe 1. They were continually upon the Remove. When they had pitched a little while in one Place they departed from that to another. Such is our State in this World; we have here no continuing City. 2. Most of their Way lay through a Wilderness uninhabited, untrack'd, unfurnish'd even with the Necessaries of Humane Life, which magnifies the Wisdom and Power of God, by whose wonderful Conduct and Bounty the Thousands of Israel not only subsisted for Forty Years in that desolate Place, but came out at least as Numerous and Vigorous as they went in. At first they pitched in the Edge of the Wilderness, *v. 6.* But afterwards in the Heart of it; by lesser Difficulties God prepares his People for greater. We find them in the Wilderness of Etham, *v. 8.* of Sin, *v. 11.* of Sinai, *v. 15.* Our Removes in this World are but from one Wilderness to another. 3. That they were led to and fro, forward and backward, as in a Maze or Labyrinth, and yet were all the while under the Direction of the Pillar of Cloud and Fire. He led them about, Deut. 32. 10. and yet led them the right way, *Psal. 107. 7.* The Way God takes in bringing his People to himself, is always the best Way, tho' it doth not always seem to us the next Way. 4. Some Events are mention'd in this Journal, as their want of Water at Rephidim, *v. 14.* The Death of Aaron, *v. 38, 39.* The Insult of Arah, *v. 40.* and the very Name of Kibroth-hattavah, the Grave of Lusters, *v. 16.* has a Story depending upon it. Thus we ought to keep in Mind the Providences of God concerning us and our Families, us and our Land; and the many Instances of that Divine Care which has led us, and fed us, and kept us all our Days hitherto. Shittim the Place were the People sinned in the Matter of Peor, Chap. 25. 1. is here called Abel-Shittim; Abel signifies Mourning, (as *Gen. 50. 11.*) and probably this Place was so called from the Mourning of the good People of Israel for that Sin, and God's Wrath against them for it. 'Twas so great a Mourning that it gave a Name to the Place.

50 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses in the plains of Moab, by Jordan near Jericho, saying, 51 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye are pass'd over Jordan into the land of Canaan: 52 Then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places. 53 And ye shall dispossess the inhabi-

tants of the land, and dwell therein: for I have given you the land to possess it. 54 And ye shall divide the land by lot for an inheritance among your families, and to the more ye shall give the more inheritance, and to the fewer ye shall give the less inheritance: every mans inheritance shall be in the place where his lot falleth; according to the tribes of your fathers ye shall inherit. 55 But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell. 56 Moreover, it shall come to pass, that I shall do unto you, as I thought to do unto them.

While the Children of Israel were in the Wilderness, their total Separation from all other People kept them out of the Way of Temptation to Idolatry, and perhaps that was one thing intended in their long Confinement to the Wilderness, that thereby the Idols of Egypt might be forgotten, and the People air'd (as it were) and purified from that Infection, and the Generation that enter'd Canaan might be such as never knew those Depths of Satan. But now they were to pass over Jordan, they were entering again into that Temptation, and therefore,

1. They are here strictly charg'd utterly to destroy all the Remnants of Idolatry; they must not only drive out the Inhabitants of the Land, that they might possess their Country, but they must deface all their idolatrous Pictures, and Images, and pull down all their High Places, *v. 52.* They must not preserve any of them, no not as Monuments of Antiquity, to gratify the Curious, or as Ornaments of their Houses, or Toys for their Children to play with, but they must destroy all. Both in Token of their Abhorrence and Detestation of Idolatry, and to prevent their being tempted either to worship those Images, and the false Gods represented by them, or to worship the God of Israel by such Images or Representations.

2. They are assur'd, that if they did so, God would by degrees put them in full Possession of the Land of Promise, *v. 53, 54.* If they would keep themselves pure from the Idols of Canaan, God would enrich them with the Wealth of Canaan. Learn not their Way, and then fear not their Power.

3. They are threaten'd, that if they spar'd either the Idols or the Idolaters, they should be beaten with their own Rod, and their Sin would certainly be their Punishment. (1.) They would foster Snakes in their own Bosoms, *v. 55.* The Remnant of the Canaanites, if they made any League with them, tho' it were but a Cessation of Arms, would be Pricks in their Eyes, and Thorns in their Sides, i. e. they would be upon all Occasions vexatious to them, insulting them, robbing them, and to the utmost of their Power, making Mischief among them. We must expect Trouble and Affliction from that, whatever it is, which we sinfully indulge; that which we are willing should tempt us, we shall find will vex us. (2.) The righteous God would turn that Wheel upon the Israelites which was to have crush'd the Canaanites, *v. 56.* I shall do so you as I thought to do unto them. 'Twas intended that the Canaanites should be dispossest, but if the Israelites fell in with them, and learn'd their Way, they should be dispossest, for God's Displeasure would justly be greater against them than the Canaanites themselves. Let us hear this and fear. If we do not drive Sin out, Sin will drive us out; if we be not the Death of our Lusts, our Lusts will be the Death of our Souls.

CHAP. XXXIV.

In this Chapter God directs Moses, and he is to direct Israel.

1. Concerning the Bounds and Borders of the Land of Canaan, *v. 1-15.* 2. Concerning the Division and Distribution of it to the Tribes of Israel, *v. 16, 24.*

1 AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Command the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land of Canaan (this is the land that shall fall unto you for an inheritance, even the land of Canaan, with the coasts thereof) 3 Then your south quarter shall be from the wilderness of Zin, along by the coast of Edom, and your south border

border shall be the utmost coast of the salt-sea eastward. 4 And your border shall turn from the ascent south to the ascent of Akrabbim, and pass on to Zin: and the going forth thereof shall be from the south to Kadesh Barnea, and shall go on to Hazar-Adda, and pass on to Azmon. 5 And the border shall fetch a compass from Azmon unto the river of Egypt, and the goings out of it shall be at the sea. 6 And as for the western border, you shall even have the great sea for a border: this shall be your west border. 7 And this shall be your north border: from the great sea, you shall point for you out mount Hor. 8 From mount Hor, ye shall point out your border unto the entrance of Hamath: and the goings forth of the border shall be to Zedad. 9 ¶ And the border shall go on to Ziphron, and the goings out of it shall be at Hazar-Enan: this shall be your north border. 10 And ye shall point out your east border, from Hazar-Enan to Shepham. 11 And the coast shall go down from Shepham to Riblah, on the east side of Ain: and the border shall descend, and shall reach unto the side of the sea of Chinnereth eastward. 12 And the border shall go down to Jordan, and the goings out of it shall be at the salt-sea: this shall be your land with the coast thereof round about. 13 And Moses commanded the children of Israel, saying, This is the land which ye shall inherit by lot, which the LORD commanded to give unto the nine tribes, and to the half tribe. 14 For the tribe of the children of Reuben, according to the house of their fathers, and the tribe of the children of Gad according to the house of their fathers, have received their inheritance, and half the tribe of Manasseh have received their inheritance. 15 The two tribes, and the half tribe have received their inheritance on this side Jordan, near Jericho, eastward, toward the sun-rising.

We have here a particular Draught of the Line by which the Land of Canaan was meted and bounded on all sides. God directs Moses to settle it here, not as a Geography in his Map, only to please the Curious, but as a Prince in his Grant, that it may be certainly known what passeth and is convey'd by the Grant. There was a much larger Possession promis'd them, which is in due time they should be possess'd of, if they had been Obedient, reaching even to the River Euphrates, Deut. 11. 24. And even so far the Dominion of Israel did extend in David's time and Solomon's, 2 Chr. 9. 26. But this here describ'd is Canaan only, which was the Lot of the nine Tribes and a half, for the other two and a half were already settled, v. 14. 15. Now concerning the Limits of Canaan observe, 1. That it was limited within certain Bounds: For God appointeth the Bounds of our Habitation, Act. 17. 26. The Borders are set them, (1.) That they might know whom they were to dispossess, and how far their Commission extended which was given them, Chap. 33. 53. That they should drive out the Inhabitants. Those that lay within these Borders, and those only they must destroy; hitherto their bloody Sword must go, and no further. (2.) That they might know what to expect the Possession of themselves. God would not have his People to enlarge their Desire of Worldly Possessions, but to know when they have enough, and to rest satisfied with it. The Israelites themselves must not be placed alone in the midst of the Earth, but must leave room for their Neighbours to live by them. God sets Bounds to our Lot, let us then set Bounds to our Desires, and bring our Mind to our Condition.

2. That it lay (Comparatively) in a very little Compass; as 'tis here bounded, 'tis reckon'd to be but about One hundred and sixty Miles in Length, and about fifty in Breadth; perhaps it did not contain past half as much Ground as England; and yet this is the Country which was promis'd to the Father of the Faithful, and was the Possession of the Seed of Israel. This was that little Spot of Ground, in which only for many Ages God was known and his Name was great, Psal. 76. 1. This was the Vineyard of the Lord, the Garden inclos'd; but as it is with Gardens and Vineyards, the Narrowness of the Extent was abundantly made up by the extraordinary Fruitfulness of the Soil, otherwise it could not have subsisted so numerous a Nation as did inhabit it. See here then, (1.) How little a Part of the World God hath for himself; tho' the Earth

is his, and the fulness thereof, yet few have the Knowledge of him, and serve him: but those few are happy, very happy, because fruitful to God. (2.) How little a Share of the World God often gives to his own People. They that have their Portion in Heaven, have Reason to be content with a small Pittance of this Earth; but as here what is wanting in Quantity is made up in Quality; a little that a righteous Man has, having it from the Love of God, and with his Blessing, is far better and more comfortable than the Riches of many Wicked, Psal. 37. 16.

3. 'Tis observable what the Bounds and Limits of it were. 1. Canaan was itself a pleasant Land, (so 'tis call'd, Dan. 8. 9.) and yet it butt'd upon Wildernesses and Seas, and was surrounded with divers melancholly Prospects. Thus the Vineyard of the Church is compass'd on all Hands with the Desert of this World, which serves as a Foil to it, to make it appear the more beautiful for Situation. 2. Many of its Borders were its Defences and natural Fortifications, to render the Accesses of its Enemies the more difficult; to intimate to them, that the God of Nature was their Protector, and with his Favour would compass them as with a Shield. 3. The Border reach'd to the River of Egypt, v. 5. that the Sight of that Country, which they could look into out of their own, might mind them of their Bondage there, and their wonderful Deliverance thence. 4. Their Border is here made to begin at the Salt-Sea; v. 3. and there it ends, v. 12. That was the remaining lasting Monument of the Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah; that pleasant fruitful Vale, in which these Cities stood became a Lake, which was never stirr'd by any Wind, bore no Vessels, was replenish'd with no Fish, no living Creature of any sort being found in it, therefore call'd the Dead Sea; this was Part of their Border, that it might be a constant Warning to them to take Heed of those Sins which had been the Ruin of Sodom; yet the Iniquity of Sodom was afterwards found in Israel, Ezek. 16. 49. For which Canaan was made, tho' not a Salt Sea as Sodom, yet a Barren Soil, and continues so to this Day. 5. Their Western Border was the Great Sea, (v. 6.) which is now call'd the Mediterranean. Some make that Sea itself to be a Part of their Possession, and that by Virtue of this Grant they had the Dominion of it, and if they had not forfeited it by Sin, might have rode Masters of it.

16 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 17 These are the names of the men, which shall divide the land unto you, Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun. 18 And ye shall take one prince of every Tribe to divide the land by inheritance. 19 And the names of the men are these: of the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh. 20 And of the tribe of the children of Simeon, Shemuel the son of Ammihud. 21 Of the tribe of Benjamin, Elidad the son of Chislon. 22 And the prince of the tribe of the children of Dan, Bukki the son of Jogli. 23 The Prince of the children of Joseph: for the tribe of the children of Manasseh, Hinniel the son of Ephod. 24 And the prince of the tribe of the children of Ephraim, Kemuel the son of Shipthan. 25 And the prince of the tribe of the children of Zebulun, Elizaphan the son of Parnach. 26 And the prince of the tribe of the children of Issachar, Paltiel the son of Azzan. 27 And the prince of the tribe of the children of Asher, Ahihud the son of Shelomi. 28 And the prince of the tribe of the children of Naphtali, Pedahel the son of Ammihud. 29 These are they whom the LORD commanded to divide the inheritance unto the children of Israel, in the land of Canaan.

God here appoints Commissioners for the dividing of the Land to them. The Conquest of it is taken for granted, tho' as yet there was never a Stroke struck towards it. Here's no Nomination of the Generals and Commanders in Chief, that should carry on the War; for they were to get the Land in Possession, not by their own Sword or Bow, but by the Power and Favour of God; and so confident must they be of Victory and Success while God fought for them, that the Persons must now be nam'd who should be intrusted with the dividing of the Land, i. e. who should preside in casting the Lots, and determine Controversies that might arise, and see that all was done fairly.

1. The Principal Commissioners, who were of the Quorum, were Eleazar and Joshua, v. 17. typifying Christ, who, as Priest and King, divides the heavenly Canaan to the spiritual Israel; yet, as they were to go by the Lot, so Christ acknow-

ledgeth the Disposall must be by the Will of the Father, *Mat. 20. 23.* Compare *Eph. 1. 11.*

2. Besides these, that there might be no Suspicion of Partiality, a Prince of each Tribe was appointed to inspect this Matter, and to see that the Tribe he serv'd for was no way injur'd. Publick Affairs should be so manag'd, as not only to give Right to all, but if possible to give Satisfaction to all that they have Right done them. 'Tis a Happiness to a Land to have the Princes of their People meet together, some out of every Tribe to concert the Affairs that are of common Concern; a Constitution which is the abundant Honour, Ease, and Safety of the Nation that is blest with it.

Some observe that the Order of the Tribes here very much differs from that in which they had hitherto upon all Occasions been nam'd; and agrees with the Neighbourhood of their Lots in the Division of the Land. *Judah, Simeon* and *Benjamin* the three first here nam'd lay close together: the Inheritance of *Dan* lay next them on one side, and that of *Ephraim* and *Manasseh* on another side, *Zebulun* and *Issachar* lay abreast more Northerly; and lastly, *Asher* and *Naphthali* most Northward of all, as is easie to observe in looking over a Map of *Canaan*; this (saith *Bishop Patrick*) is an Evidence that *Moses* was guided by a Divine Spirit in his Writings. Known unto God are all his Works before hand, and what is new and surprizing to us he perfectly forelaw, without any Confusion or Uncertainty.

CHAP. XXXV.

Orders having been given before for the dividing of the Land of *Canaan* among the Lay-Tribes, (as I may call them) Care is here taken for a competent Provision for the Clergy, the Tribe of *Levi*, which minister'd in holy Things. 1. Forty Eight Cities were to be assign'd them, with their Suburbs, some in every Tribe, v. 1.—8. 2. Six Cities out of those were to be for Cities of Refuge, for any Man that kill'd another at unawares, v. 9.—15. In the Law concerning these observe, 1. In what Cases Sanctuary was not allow'd, not in case of wilful Murderer, v. 16.—21. 2. In what Cases it was allow'd, v. 20, 24. 3. What was the Law concerning those that took shelter in these Cities of Refuge, v. 25.—34.

1 AND the LORD spake unto Moses in the plains of Moab by Jordan, near Jericho, saying, 2 Command the children of Israel, that they give unto the Levites of the inheritance of their possession, cities to dwell in: and ye shall give also unto the Levites, suburbs for the cities round about them. 3 And the cities shall they have to dwell in, and the suburbs of them shall be for their cattle, and for their goods, and for all their beasts. 4 And the suburbs of the cities which ye shall give unto the Levites, shall reach from the wall of the city and outward, a thousand cubits round about. 5 And ye shall measure from without the city on the east side two thousand cubits, and on the south side two thousand cubits, and on the west side two thousand cubits: and the city shall be in the midst: this shall be to them the suburbs of the cities. 6 And among the cities which ye shall give unto the Levites, there shall be six cities for refuge, which ye shall appoint for the man-slayer, that he may flee thither: and to them ye shall add forty and two cities. 7 So all the cities which ye shall give to the Levites, shall be forty and eight cities: them shall ye give with their suburbs. 8 And the cities which ye shall give, shall be of the possession of the children of Israel: from them that have many, ye shall give many; but from them that have few, ye shall give few. Every one shall give of his cities unto the Levites, according to his inheritance, which he inheriteth.

The Laws about the Tythes and Offerings had provided very plentifully for the Maintenance of the Levites, but it was not to be thought, nor indeed was it for the publick Good, that when they came to *Canaan* they should all live about the Tabernacle, as they had done in the Wilderness, and therefore Care must be taken to provide Habitations for them; in which they might live comfortably and usefully. That's it which is here taken care of.

1. Cities were allotted them with their Suburbs, v. 2. They were not to have any Ground for Tillage; they needed not to sow or reap or gather into Barns, for their Heavenly Father fed them with the Tythe of the Increase of other Peoples La-

hours, that they might the more closely attend the Study of the Law, and might have more Leisure to teach the People; for they were not fed thus easily that they might live in Idleness, but that they might give themselves wholly to the Business of their Profession, and not be entangled in the Affairs of this Life. (1.) Cities were allotted them that they might live near together, and converse with one another about the Law, to their mutual Edification; and that in doubtful Cases they might consult one another, and in all Cases strengthen one another's Hands. (2.) These Cities had Suburbs annex'd to them, for their Cattle, v. 3. A Thousand Cubits from the Wall was allow'd them for out-housing to keep their Cattle in, and then Two Thousand more for Fields to graze their Cattle in, v. 4, 5. Thus was Care taken that they should not only live, but live plentifully, and have all desirable Conveniences about them, that they might not be look'd upon with Contempt by their Neighbours.

2. These Cities were to be assign'd them out of the Possessions of each Tribe, v. 8. (1.) That each Tribe might thus make a grateful Acknowledgment to God out of their real as well as out of their personal Estates; for what was given to the Levites was accepted as given to the Lord, and thus their Possessions were sanctified to them. (2.) That each Tribe might have the Benefit of the Levites dwelling among them, to teach them the good Knowledge of the Lord; Thus that Light was diffus'd through all Parts of the Country, and none left to sit in Darkness, *Deut. 33. 10.* They shall teach Jacob thy Judgments. Jacob's Curse on Levi's Anger was I will scatter them in Israel, *Gen. 44. 7.* But that Curse was turn'd into a Blessing, and the Levites by being thus scatter'd were put into a Capacity of doing so much the more good. 'Tis a great Mercy to a Country to be replenish'd in all Parts with faithful Ministers. The Number allotted them was Forty Eight in all; Four out of each of the Twelve Tribes one with another. Out of the united Tribes of *Simeon* and *Judah* Nine, out of *Naphthali* Three, and Four apiece out of all the rest, as appears, *Josh. 21.* Thus were they blest with a good Ministry, and that Ministry with a comfortable Maintenance, not only in Tythes, but in Glebe Lands. And though the Gospel is not so particular, as the Law was in this Matter, yet it expressly provides that he that is taught in the Word should communicate to him that teacheth in all good things, *Gal. 6. 6.*

9 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 10 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come over Jordan, into the land of *Canaan*: 11 Then you shall appoint your cities to be cities of refuge for you, that the slayer may flee thither, which killeth any person at unawares. 12 And they shall be unto you cities for refuge from the avenger, that the man-slayer die not, until he stand before the congregation in judgment. 13 And of these cities which ye shall give, six cities shall ye have for refuge. 14 Ye shall give three cities on this side Jordan, and three cities shall ye give in the land of *Canaan*, which shall be cities of refuge. 15 These six cities shall be a refuge, both for the children of Israel, and for the stranger, and for the sojourner among them: that every one that killeth any person unawares, may flee thither. 16 And if he smite him with an instrument of iron (so that he die) he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death. 17 And if he smite him with throwing a stone, (wherewith he may die) and he die, he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death. 18 Or if he smite him with an hand weapon of wood (wherewith he may die) and he die, he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death. 19 The revenger of blood himself shall slay the murderer, when he meeteth him, he shall slay him. 20 But if he thrust him of hatred, or hurl at him by laying of wait, that he die: 21 Or in enmity smite him with his hand, that he die, he that smote him shall surely be put to death, for he is a murderer: the revenger of blood shall slay the murderer, when he meeteth him. 22 But if he thrust him suddenly without enmity, or have cast upon him any thing without laying wait: 23 Or with any stone wherewith a man may die, seeing him not, and cast it upon him that he die, and was not his enemy, neither sought his harm, 24 Then the congregation shall judge

judge between the slayer, and the revenger of blood according to these judgments. 25 And the congregation shall deliver the slayer out of the hand of the revenger of blood, and the congregation shall restore him to the city of his refuge, whither he was fled: and he shall abide in it, unto the death of the high priest, which was anointed with the holy oil. 26 But if the slayer shall at any time come without the border of the city of his refuge, whither he was fled: 27 And the revenger of blood find him without the borders of the city of his refuge, and the revenger of blood kill the slayer; he shall not be guilty of blood: 28 Because he should have remained in the city of his refuge, until the death of the high priest: but after the death of the high priest, the slayer shall return into the land of his possession. 29 So these things shall be for a statute of judgment unto you, throughout your generations in all your dwellings. 30 Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death, by the mouth of witnesses: but one witness shall not testify against any person, to cause him to die. 31 Moreover, ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which is guilty of death; but he shall be surely put to death. 32 And ye shall take no satisfaction for him that is fled to the city of his refuge, that he should come again to dwell in the land, until the death of the high priest. 33 So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are: for blood, it defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it. 34 Defile not therefore the land which ye shall inhabit, wherein I dwell: for I the LORD dwell among the children of Israel.

We have here the Orders given concerning the Cities of Refuge, fifty annex'd to what goes before, because they were all *Levitical Cities*. In this Part of the Constitution there is a great deal both of good Law and pure Gospel.

(1.) Here is a great deal of good Law, in the Case of Murder and Man slaughter, a Case which the Laws of all Nations have taken particular Cognizance of. It is here enacted and provided consonant to natural Equity.

1. That wilful Murderer should be punished with Death, and in that Case no Sanctuary should be allow'd, no Ransom taken, nor any Commutation of the Punishment accepted; the Murderer shall surely be put to Death, v. 16. 'Tis suppos'd to be done of hatred, v. 10. or in Enmity, v. 21. upon a sudden Provocation, (for our Saviour, makes *rash Anger*, as well as Malice prepen'd to be Murder, *Mat. 5. 21, 22.*) Whether the Person be murder'd with an Instrument of Iron, v. 16. or Wood, v. 18. or with a Stone thrown at him, v. 17. 20. Nay, if he smite him with his Hand in Enmity, and Death ensue, 'tis Murder, *Mat. 5. 21.* And 'twas an Law consonant to the Law of Nature, that *Who so sheds Man's Blood, by Man shall his Blood be shed*, Gen. 9. 6. Where Wrong has been done Restitution must be made; and since the Murderer cannot restore the Life he has wrongfully taken away, his own must be exacted from him in lieu of it, not (as some have fancied) to satisfy the Manes or Ghost of the Person slain, but to satisfy the Law, and the Justice of a Nation, and to be a warning to all others not to do likewise. 'Tis here said, and 'tis well worthy the Consideration of all Princes and States, *that Blood defileth not only the Conscience of the Murderer, who is thereby prov'd not to have Eternal Life abiding in him, 1 Joh. 3. 15.* But also the Land in which it is shed; so very offensive is it to God, and all good Men, and the worst of Natures. And 'tis added *that the Land cannot be clean'd from the Blood of the Murderer, but by the Blood of the Murderer*, v. 33. If Murderers escape Punishment from Men, they that suffer them to escape will have a great deal to answer for, and God however will not suffer them to escape his righteous Judgments. Upon the same Principle it is provided that no Satisfaction should be taken for the Life of a Murderer, v. 31. If a Man would give all the Substances of his House to the Judges, to the Country, or to the Avenger of Blood, to atone for his Crime it must utterly be refused. The Redemption of the Life is so precious that it cannot be obtain'd by the Multitude of Riches, *Pl. 49. 7, 8.* which perhaps may allude to this Law. A Rule of Law comes in here, (which is a Rule of our Law in case of Treason only) that no Man shall be put to Death upon the Testimony of one Witness, but 'twas necessary there should be Two, v. 30. This

Law is settled in all capital Causes, *Deut. 17. 6. 19. 15.* And lastly, not only the Prosecution but the Execution of the Murderer is committed to the next of Kin, who as he was to be the Redeemer of his Kindman's Estate if it were mortgag'd, so he was to be the Avenger of his Blood if he were murder'd, v. 19. *The Avenger of Blood himself shall slay the Murderer*, if he were convicted by the notorious Evidence of the Fact, and he need not to have recourse by a judicial Process to the Court of Judgment. But if it were uncertain who the Murderer was, and the Proof doubtful, we cannot think that his bare Suspicion, or Surmise would empower him to do that which the Judges themselves could not do, but upon the Testimony of Two Witnesses. Only if the Fact were plain, then the next Heir of the Person slain might himself in a just Indignation slay the Murderer wherever he met him. Some think this must be understood to be after the lawful Judgment of the Magistrate, and so the Chaldees saith, he shall slay him, *when he shall be condemn'd unto him by Judgment*; but it should seem by v. 24. that the Judges interpos'd only in a doubtful Case; and that if the Person on whom he took Vengeance were indeed the Murderer, and a wilful Murderer, the Avenger was innocent, (v. 27.) only if it prov'd otherwise it was at his Peril. Our Law allows an Appeal to be brought against a Murderer, by the Widow or next Heir of the Person murder'd, yea, tho' the Murderer have been acquitted upon an Indictment; and if the Murderer be found guilty upon that Appeal, Execution shall be awarded at the Suit of the Appellant, who may properly be call'd the Avenger of Blood.

2. But if the Murder were not voluntary, nor done design'dly, if it were *without Enmity, or lying in wait*, v. 20. not seeing him, or seeking his harm, v. 23. which our Law calls *Chance-Medley*, or *Homicide per Infortunium*, in this Case there were Cities of Refuge appointed for the Man slayer to flee to. By our Law this incurs a Forfeiture of Goods, but a Pardon is granted of course upon the special Matter found.

Concerning the Cities of Refuge the Law was.

1. That if a Man kill'd another, in these Cities he was Safe, and under the Protection of the Law till he had his Trial before the Congregation, i. e. before the Judges in open Court. If he neglected thus to surrender himself, 'twas at his Peril, if the Avenger of Blood met him elsewhere, or overtook him loitering in his Way to the City of Refuge, and slew him, his Blood was upon his own Head, because he did not make use of the Security God had provided for him.

2. If upon Trial it was found to be wilful Murder, the City of Refuge should no longer be a Protection to him, 'twas already determin'd, *Exod. 21. 14. Thou shalt take him from mine Altar, that he may die.*

3. But if it were found to be by Error or Accident, and that the Stroke was given without any Design upon the Life of the Person slain, or any other; then the Man-slayer should continue safe in the City of Refuge, and the Avenger of Blood might not meddle with him, v. 25. There he was to remain in Banishment from his own House and Patrimony, till the Death of the High Priest; and if at any Time he went out of that City or the Suburbs of it, he put himself out of the Protection of this Law, and the Avenger of Blood if he met him might slay him, v. 26 27, 28. Now, (1.) By the Preservation of the Life of the Man-slayer, God would teach us that Men ought not to suffer for that which is rather their Unhappiness than their Crime, rather the Act of Providence than their own Act, for God deliver'd him into his Hand, *Exod. 21. 13.* (2.) By the Banishment of the Man-slayer from his own City, and the Confinement of him to the City of Refuge, where he was in a manner a Prisoner, God would teach us to conceive a dread and horror of the guilt of Blood, and to be very careful of Life, and always afraid lest by oversight or negligence we occasion the Death of any, (3.) By the limiting of the Time of the Offender's Banishment, to the Death of the High Priest, an Honour was put upon that sacred Office. The High Priest was to be look'd upon as so great a Blessing to his Country, that when he died, their Sorrow upon that Occasion should swallow up all other Resentments. The Cities of Refuge being all of 'em *Levitical Cities*, and the High Priest being the Head of that Tribe, and consequently having a peculiar Dominion over those Cities; those that were confin'd to them might properly be look'd upon as his Prisoners, and so his Death must be their Discharge; 'twas as if it were at his Suit that the Delinquent was imprison'd, and therefore at his Death it fell; *Alibi moritur cum Persona.* Ainsworth has another Notion of it, That as the High Priests while they lived by their Service and Sacrificing made Attonement for Sin, wherein they figur'd Christ's Satisfaction, so at their Death those were releas'd that had been exil'd for casual Murder, which typified Redemption in Christ. 4. By the abandoning of the Prisoner to the Avenger of Blood, in Case he at any Time went out of the limits of the City of Refuge, they were taught to adhere to the Methods infinite Wisdom prescrib'd for their Security. 'Twas for the Honour of a Remedial Law, that it should be so strictly observ'd. How can we expect to be sav'd, if we neglect the Salvation, which is indeed a great Salvation.

2. Here is a great deal of good Gospel couch'd under the Type and Figure of the Cities of Refuge; and to them the Apostle seems to allude, when he speaks of our flying for Refuge to the Hope set before us, Heb. 6. 18. and being found in Christ, Phil. 3. 9. We never read in the History of the Old Testament, of any Use made of those Cities of Refuge, no more than of other such Institutions, which yet no doubt were made use of upon the Occasions intended; only we read of those that in dangerous Cases, took hold of the Horns of the Altar, (1 Kings 1. 50—2. 28.) for the Altar, wherever that was, was as it were the capital City of Refuge. But the Law concerning these Cities was design'd both to raise, and to encourage the Expectations of those who looked for Redemption in Israel, which should be to those who are convinc'd of Sin, and in Terror by reason of it, as the Cities of Refuge were to the Man-slayer. Observe (1.) There were several Cities of Refuge, and they were so appointed in several Parts of the Country, that the Man-slayer wherever he dwelt in the Land of Israel, might in half a Day reach one or other of 'em; so tho' there is but one Christ appointed for our Refuge, yet wherever we are he is a Refuge at hand, a very present Help, for the Word is nigh us, and Christ in the Word. (2.) The Man-slayer was safe in any of these Cities; so in Christ Believers that fly to him, and rest in him are protected from the Wrath of God, and the Curse of the Law. There is no Condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, Rom. 8. 1. Who shall condemn those that are thus shelter'd? (3.) They were all Levites Cities; 'twas a kindness to the poor Prisoner, that tho' he might not go up to the Place where the Ark was, yet he was in the midst of Levites, who would teach him the good Knowledge of the Lord, and instruct him how to improve the Providence he was now under: It might also be expected, that the Levites would comfort and encourage him, and bid him welcome; so, it is the Work of Gospel Ministers to bid poor Sinners welcome to Christ, and to assist and counsel those that through Grace are in him. (4.) Even Strangers and Sojourners, tho' they were not native Israelites, might take the Benefit of these Cities of Refuge, v. 15. So in Christ Jesus no Difference is made between Greek and Jew, even the Sons of the Stranger, that by Faith fly to Christ shall be safe in him. (5.) Even the Suburbs or Borders of the City were a sufficient Security to the Offender, v. 26, 27. So there is Virtue, even in the Hem of Christ's Garment, for the healing and saving of poor Sinners. If we cannot reach to a full Assurance, we may Comfort our selves in a good Hope through Grace. (6.) The Protection which the Man-slayer found in the City of Refuge, was not owing to the Strength of it's Walls, or Gates, or Bars, but purely to the Divine Appointment, so it is the Word of the Gospel that gives Souls safety in Christ; for him hath God the Father sealed. (7.) If the Offender were ever caught straggling out of the Borders of his City of Refuge, or stealing home to his own House again, he lost the Benefit of his Protection, and lay expos'd to the Avenger of Blood; so, those that are in Christ must abide in Christ, for it is at their Peril if they forsake him, and wander from him. Drawing back is to Perdition.

C H A P. XXXVI.

We have in this Chapter the Determination of another Question, that arose upon the Case of the Daughters of Zelophehad. God had appointed that they should inherit, chap. 27. 7. Now here an Inconvenience is suggested, in Case they should marry to any other Tribe, v. 1. 4. 'Tis prevented by a Divine Appointment, that they should marry in their own Tribe, and Family, v. 5, 7. and this is settled for a Rule in like Cases, v. 8, 9. and they did marry accordingly to some of their own Relations, v. 10, 12. and with this the Book concludes, v. 13.

AND the chief fathers of the families of the children of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of the sons of Joseph, came near, and spake before Moses, and before the princes, the chief fathers of the children of Israel. 2 And they said, the LORD commanded my lord to give the land for an inheritance by lot to the children of Israel: and my lord was commanded by the LORD to give the inheritance of Zelophehad our brother, unto his daughters. 3 And if they be married to any of the sons of the other tribes of the children of Israel; then shall their inheritance be taken from the inheritance of our fathers, and shall be put to the inheritance of the tribe where-

unto they are received: so shall it be taken from the lot of our inheritance. 4 And when the jubilee of the children of Israel shall be, then shall their inheritance be put unto the inheritance of the tribe whereunto they are received: so shall their inheritance be taken away from the inheritance of the tribe of our fathers.

We have here the humble Address, which the Heads of the Tribe of Manasseh made to Moses and the Princes, on Occasion of the Order lately made concerning the Daughters of Zelophehad. The Family they belong'd to was Part of that half of the Tribe of Manasseh, which was yet to have their Lot within Jordan, not that half that was already settled, and yet they speak of the Land of their Possession, and the Inheritance of their Fathers, with as great Assurance, as if they had it already in their Hands, knowing whom they had trusted. In their Appeal observe,

1. They fairly recite the former Orders made in this Case, and do not move to have that set aside, but are very willing to acquiesce in it, v. 2. The Lord commanded to give the Inheritance of Zelophehad to his Daughters; and they are very well pleas'd it should be so, none of them knowing, but that hereafter it might be the Case of their own Families, and then their Daughters would have the Benefit of this Law.

2. They represent the Inconvenience which might possibly follow hereupon, if the Daughters of Zelophehad should see cause to Marry into any other Tribes, v. 3. And 'tis likely this was not a bare Surmise, or Supposition, but that they knew at this Time great Court was made to them by some young Gentlemen of other Tribes, because they were Heiresses, that they might get footing in this Tribe, and so enlarge their own Inheritance. This truly is often aim'd at more, than it should be in making Marriages; not the meanness of the Person, but the Convenience of the Estate, to lay House to House, and Field to Field, Wisdom indeed is good with an Inheritance; but what's an Inheritance good for in that Relation without Wisdom? But here we may presume the personal Merit of these Daughters, recommended them as well as their Fortunes; however the Heads of their Tribe foresaw the Mischief that would follow, and brought the Case to Moses, that he might consult the Oracle of God concerning it. The Difficulty they start God could have obviated, and provided against in the former Order given in this Case, but to teach us, that we must in our Affairs, not only attend God's Providence, but make use of our own Prudence; God did not direct in it, till they themselves that were concern'd wisely foresaw the Inconvenience, and piously address'd to Moses for a Rule in it. For tho' they were chief Fathers in their Families, and might have assum'd a Power to over-rule these Daughters of Zelophehad, in disposing themselves, especially their Father being dead, and the common Interest of their Tribe being concern'd in it, yet they chose rather to refer themselves to Moses, and it issu'd well. we should not covet to be Judges in our own Case, for it's hard to be so, and not be partial. It's easier in many Cases to take good Advice than to give it, and a Satisfaction to be under Direction.

Two Things they aim'd at in their Representation.

1. To preserve the Divine Appointment of Inheritances. They urge the Command, v. 2. That the Land should be given by Lot to the respective Tribes, and urge that it would break in upon the Divine Appointment, if such a considerable Part of the Lot of Manasseh should by their Marriage be transferr'd to any other Tribe; for the Issue would be denominated from the Father's Tribe, not the Mothers. This indeed would not lessen the Lot of the particular Persons of that Tribe, they would have their own still, but it would lessen the Lot of the Tribe in general, and render it less strong and considerable; they therefore thought themselves concern'd for the Reputation of their Tribe; and perhaps were the more jealous for it, because it was already very much weaken'd by the sitting down of the one half of it on this side Jordan.

2. To prevent Contests and Quarrels among Posterity. If those of other Tribes should come among them, perhaps it might occasion some Contests: They would be apt to give and receive Disturbance, and their Title might in process of Time come to be question'd; and how great a Matter would this Fire kindle! It is the Wisdom and Duty of those that have Estates in the World to settle them, and dispose of them, so as that no Strife and Contention may arise about them, among Posterity.

And

5 And Moses commanded the children of Israel, according to the word of the LORD, saying, The tribe of the sons of Joseph hath said well. 6 This is the thing which the LORD doth command concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, saying, Let them marry to whom they think best; only to the family of the tribe of their father shall they marry. 7 So shall not the inheritance of the children of Israel remove from tribe to tribe: for every one of the children of Israel shall keep himself to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers. 8 And every daughter that possesseth an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Israel, shall be wife unto one of the family of the tribe of her father, that the children of Israel may enjoy every man the inheritance of his fathers. 9 Neither shall the inheritance remove from one tribe to another tribe; but every one of the tribes of the children of Israel shall keep himself to his own inheritance. 10 Even as the LORD commanded Moses, so did the daughters of Zelophehad. 11 For Mahlah, Tirzah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Noah, the daughters of Zelophehad, were married unto their fathers brothers sons. 12 And they were married into the families of the sons of Manasseh the son of Joseph, and their inheritance remained in the tribe of the family of their father. 13 These are the commandments and the judgments which the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses, unto the children of Israel in the plains of Moab, by Jordan near Jericho.

Here's 1. The Matter settled by express Order from God between the Daughters of Zelophehad, and the rest of the Tribe of Manasseh. The Petition is assented to, and Care taken to prevent the Inconvenience fear'd; v. 5. *The Tribe of the Sons of Joseph hath said well.* Thus those that consult the Oracles of God concerning the making of their heavenly Inheritance sure, shall not only be directed what to do, but their Enquiries shall be graciously excepted, and they shall have not only their *well done*, but their *well said* good and faithful Servant. Now the Matter is thus accommodated; these Heiresses must be oblig'd to marry, not only within their own Tribe of Manasseh, but within the particular Family of the Hephherites to which they did belong, (1.) They are not determin'd to any parti-

cular Persons, there was choice enough in the Family of their Father, *Let them marry to whom they think best*; as Children must preserve the Authority of their Parents, and not marry against their Mind; so Parents must consult the Affections of their Children in disposing of them, and not compel them to marry such as they cannot Love. Forc'd Marriages are not likely to prove well. (2.) Yet they are confin'd to their own Relations, that their Inheritance might not go to another Family. God would have them know, that the Land being to be divided by Lot, the Disposal whereof was of the Lord, they could not mend, and therefore should not alter his Appointment. The Inheritances must not remove from Tribe to Tribe, v. 7. lest there should be Confusion among them, their Estates entangled, and their Genealogies perplex'd. God would not have one Tribe to be enrich'd, by the straitning and impoverishing of another, since they were all alike the Seed of Abraham his Friend.

2. The Law in this particular Case made perpetual, and to be observ'd whenever hereafter the like Case should happen, v. 8. Those that were not Heiresses might marry into what Tribe they pleas'd (tho' we may suppose that ordinarily they kept within their own Tribe) but those that were, must either quit their claim to their Inheritance, or marry one of their own Family, that each of the Tribes might keep themselves to their own Inheritance, and one Tribe might not encroach upon another, but throughout their Generations there might remain immoveable the ancient Land-marks *set*, not by their Fathers, but by the God of their Fathers.

3. The Submission of the Daughters of Zelophehad to this Appointment, How could they but marry well and to their Satisfaction, when God himself directed them? They married their Fathers Brothers Sons, v. 10, 11, 12. By this it appears, (1.) That the Marriage of Cousin Germans is not in itself unlawful, nor within the Degrees prohibited, for then God would not have countenanc'd these Marriages. But, (2.) That ordinarily it is not advisable, for if there had not been a particular Reason for it, (which cannot hold in any Case now, Inheritances being not dispos'd of as then by the special Designation of Heaven) they would not have married such near Relations. The World is wide, and he that walks uprightly will endeavour to walk surely.

Lastly, The Conclusion of this whole Book, referring to the latter Part of it, *These are the judgments which the Lord commanded in the plains of Moab*, v. 13. These foregoing ever since Chap. 26, most of which related to their Settlement in Canaan, into which they were now entering. Whatever new Condition God is by his Providence bringing us into, we must beg of him to teach us the Duty of it, and to enable us to do it; That we may do the Work of the Day in it's Day, of the Place in it's Place.



An EXPOSITION OF THE Fifth Book of MOSES, called, DEUTERONOMY. WITH PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

This Book is a Repetition of very much both of the History, and of the Laws contained in the three foregoing Books; which Repetition Moses delivered to Israel both by Word of Mouth, that it might affect, and by Writing, that it might abide, a little before his Death. There's no new History in it but that of the Death of Moses in the last Chapter, nor any new Revelation to Moses, for ought appears, and therefore the Style here is not as before. The Lord spake unto Moses saying. But the former Laws are repeated and commented upon, explain'd and enlarg'd, and some particular Precepts added to them, with copious Reasonings for the enforcing of them; In this Moses was divinely inspir'd, and assisted, so that this is as truly the Word of the Lord by Moses, as that which was spoken to him with an audible Voice out of the Tabernacle of the Congregation, Lev. 1. 1. The Greek Interpreters call it Deuteronomy, which signifies the Second Law, or a Second Edition of the Law, not with Amendments, for there needed none, but with Additions, for the further Direction of the People in divers Cases not mentioned before.— Now (1.) It was much for the Honour of the Divine Law, that it should be thus repeated; How great were the Things of that Law, which was thus inculcated, and how inexcusable would they be by whom they were counted as a strange Thing! Hof. 8. 12. (2.) There might be a particular Reason for the repeating of it now; The Men of that Generation, to whom the Law was first given, were all dead, and a new Generation was sprung up, to whom God would have it repeated by Moses himself, that, if possible, it might make a lasting Impression upon them. Now they were just going to take Possession of the Land of Canaan, Moses must read the Articles of Agreement to them, that they might know upon what Terms and Conditions they were to hold and enjoy that Land, and might understand that they were upon their good Behaviour in it. (3.) It would be of great Use to the People, to have those Parts of the Law thus gathered up, and put together, which did more immediately concern them, and their Practice; for the Laws which concern'd the Priests and Levites, and the Execution of their Offices are not repeated: 'Twas enough for them that they were once deliver'd; but in Compassion to the Infirmities of the People, the Laws of more common Concern are delivered a second time. Precept must be upon precept, and line upon line, Isa. 28. 10. The great and needful Truths of the Gospel should be often press'd upon People by the Ministers of Christ. To write the same things (saith Paul, Phil. 3. 1.) to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe. What God has spoken once, we have need to hear twice, to hear many times, and 'tis well, if after all, it be duly perceiv'd and regarded.— Three ways this Book of Deuteronomy was magnified and made honourable. (1.) The King was to write a Copy of it with his own Hand, and to read therein all the Days of his Life, Chap. 17. 18. (2.) 'Twas to be written upon great Stones plaister'd at their passing over Jordan, Chap. 27. 2, 3. (3.) 'Twas to be read publicly every seventh Year, at the Feast of Tabernacles, by the Priest in the Audience of all Israel, Chap. 31. 9.— The Gospel is a kind of Deuteronomy, a second Law, a Remedial Law, a spiritual Law, or Law of Faith; by it we are under the Law to Christ, and it is a Law that makes the Comers thereunto perfect.— This Book of Deuteronomy begins with a brief Rehearsal of the most remarkable Events that had befallen them since they came from Mount Sinai; At the fourth Chapter comes a most pathetic Exhortation to Obedience; At the twelfth Chapter, and so on to the Twentieth seventh, are repeated many particular Laws, which are enforc'd Chapter 27 and 28. with Promises and Threatnings, Blessings and Curses, form'd into a Covenant, Chap. 29 and 30. Care taken to perpetuate the Remembrance of these Things among them, Chap. 31. Particularly by a Song, Chap. 32. And so Moses concludes with a Blessing, Chap. 33.— All this was deliver'd by Moses to Israel in the last Month of his Life. The whole Book contains the History but of Two Months; compare Judg. 1. 3. with Josh. 4. 19. the latter of which was the Thirty Days of Israel's Mourning for Moses. See how busy that great and good Man was to do good, when he knew that his Time was short; how quick his Motion when he drew near his Rest. Thus we have more recorded of what our Blessed Saviour said and did in the last Week of his Life, than in any other. The last Words of eminent Persons do or should make deep Impressions.— Observe for the Honour of this Book, that when our Saviour would answer the Devil's Temptations with It is written, he fetch'd all his Quotations out of this Book. Mat. 4. 4, 8, 10.

CHAP. I.

The first Part of Moses's Farewel Sermon to Israel begins with this Chapter, and is continued to the latter end of the 4th Chapter, in the five first verses of this Chapter we have the Date of the Sermon; The Place where it was Preach'd, v. 1. 2, 5. and the Time when, v. 3, 4. The Narrative in this Chapter reminds them, 1. Of the Promise God made them of the Land of Canaan, v. 6, 8. 2. Of the Provision made of Judges for them, v. 9, 18. 3. Of their Unbelief and Murmuring upon the Report of the Spies, v. 19, 33. 4. Of the Sentence pass upon them for it, and the Ratification of that Sentence, v. 34, 46.

THese be the words which Moses spake unto all Israel, on this side Jordan in the Wilderness, in the plain over against the Red sea, between Paran, and Tophel, and Laban, and Hezeroth, and Dizahab, 2 (There are eleven days journey from Horeb by the way of mount Seir, unto Kadeshbarnea) 3 And it came to pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month, that Moses spake unto the children of Israel, according unto all that the LORD had given him in commandment unto them; 4 After he had slain Sihon the King of the Amorites, which dwelt in Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, which dwelt at Astaroth in Edrei. 5 On this side Jordan, in the land of Moab, began Moses to declare this law, saying, 6 The LORD our God spake unto us in Horeb, saying, Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount: 7 Turn you, and take your journey, and go to the mount of the Amorites, and unto all the places nigh thereunto, in the plain, in the hills, and in the vale, and in the south, and by the sea-side, to the land of the Canaanites, and unto Lebanon, unto the great river the river Euphrates. 8 Behold, I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give unto them, and to their seed after them.

We have here 1. The Date of this Sermon which Moses Preach'd to the People of Israel. A great Auditory no question he had, as many as could crowd within hearing, and particularly all the Elders and Officers, the Representatives of the People; And probably 'twas on the Sabbath-day that he deliver'd this to them. (1.) The Place where they were now Encamp'd was in the plain, in the land of Moab, (v. 1, 5.) where they were just ready to enter Canaan, and engage in a War with the Canaanites, yet he discours'd not to them concerning Military Affairs, the Arts and Stratagems of War, but concerning their Duty to God; for if they kept themselves in his Fear and Favour, he would secure to them the Conquest of the Land; their Religion would be their best Policy. (2.) The Time was, near the end of the fortieth Year, since they came out of Egypt. So long God hath born their manners, and they had born their own iniquity, (Num. 14. 34.) and now a new and more pleasant Scene was to be introduc'd, as a Token for good, Moses repeats the Law to them. Thus after God's Controversy with them for the Golden Calf, the first and surest sign of God's being reconciled to them, was the renewing of the Tables. There is no better Evidence and Earnest of God's Favour than his putting his Law in our Hearts, Psal. 147. 19, 20.

2. The Discourse itself. In general, Moses spake unto them all that the Lord had given him in Commandment, v. 3. Which intimates not only that what he now deliver'd was for substance, the same with what had formerly been Commanded, but it was what God now commanded him to repeat. He gave them this Rehearsal and Exhortation purely by Divine Direction; God appointed him to leave this Legacy to the Church.

He begins his Narrative with their Removal from Mount Sinai, v. 6. and relates here (1.) The Orders God gave them to Decamp, and Proceed in their March, v. 6, 7. Ye have dwelt long enough in this Mount. That was the Mount That burned with fire, Heb. 12. 18. and gender'd to bondage, Gal. 4. 24. Thither God brought them to humble them, and by the Terrors of the Law, to prepare them for the Land of Promise. There he kept them about a Year, and then told them they had dwelt long enough there, they must go forward. Tho' God bring his People into Trouble and Affliction, into Spiritual Trouble and Affliction of Mind, he knows when they have dwelt long enough in it, and will certainly find a time, the fittest time, to advance them from the Terrors of the Spirit of Bondage to the Comforts of the Spirit of

Adoption. See Rom. 8. 15. (2.) The Prospect he gave them of a happy Settlement in Canaan presently. Go to the Land of the Canaanites, v. 7. Enter and take Possession, 'tis all your own, Behold I have set the land before you, v. 8. But when God commands us to go forward in our Christian Course, he sets the Heavenly Canaan before us for our Encouragement.

9 ¶ And I spake unto you at that time, saying, I am not able to bear you my self alone: 10 The LORD your God hath multiplied you, and behold, you are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude. 11 (The LORD God of your fathers make you a thousand times so many more as ye are, and bless you as he hath promised you) 12 How can I my self alone bear your cumbrance, and your burden, and your strife? 13 Take ye wife men and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you. 14 And ye answered me, and said, The thing which thou hast spoken, is good for us to do. 15 So I took the chief of your tribes, wife men, and known, and made them heads over you, captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, and captains over fifties, and captains over tens, and officers among your tribes. 16 And I charged your judges at that time, saying, Hear the causes between your brethren, and judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him. 17 Ye shall not respect persons in judgment, but you shall hear the small as well as the great; you shall not be afraid of the face of man, for the judgment is Gods: and the cause that is too hard for you, bring it unto me, and I will hear it. 18 And I commanded you at that time all the things which ye should do.

Moses here minds them of the Happy Constitution of their Government, which was such as might make them all Safe and Easy, if it were not their own Fault. When Good Laws were given them, Good Men were intrusted with the Execution of them; which as it was an Instance of God's Goodness to them, so it was of the Care of Moses concerning them; and it should seem he mentions it here, to recommend himself to them as a Man that sincerely sought their Welfare, and so to make way for what he was about to say to them wherein he aim'd at nothing but their Good.

In this Part of his Narrative he insinuates to them, 1. That he greatly rejoiced in the Increase of their Numbers. He owns the accomplishment of God's Promise to Abraham, v. 10. You are as the stars of Heaven for multitude, and prays for the further accomplishment of it, v. 11. God make you a thousand times more. This Prayer comes in in a Parenthesis, and a good Prayer prudently put in cannot be impertinent, in any Discourse of Divine Things; nor will a pious Ejaculation break the coherence, but rather strengthen and adorn it. But how greatly are his Desires enlarg'd, when he prays that they might be made a thousand times more than they were? We are not straiten'd in the Power and Goodness of God, why should we be straiten'd in our own Faith and Hope, which ought to be as large as the Promise? and larger it need not be. 'Tis from the Promise that Moses here takes the measure of his Prayer, The Lord bless you as he hath promised you. And why might he not hope that they might become a thousand times more than they were now, when they were now ten thousand times more than they were when they came down into Egypt, about 250 Years ago? Observe, when they were under the Government of Pharaoh the Increase of their Numbers was envy'd, and complain'd of as a Grievance, Exod. 1. 9. but now under the Government of Moses it was rejoiced in, and pray'd for as a Blessing, the comparing of which might give them Occasion to reflect with shame upon their own Folly, when they had talk'd of making a Captain and returning to Egypt.

2. That he was not ambitious of monopolizing the Honour of the Government, and ruling them himself alone, as an absolute Monarch, v. 9. Tho' he was a Man as well worthy of that Honour, and as well qualified for the Business, as ever any Man was, yet he was desirous that others might be taken in as Assistants to him in the Business, and consequently Sharers with him in the Honour. I cannot my self alone bear the burthen, v. 12. Magistracy is a Burthen. Moses himself tho' so eminently gifted for it, found it lay heavy on his shoulders; nay, the best Magistrates complain most of the Burthen, and are most desirous of Help, and most afraid of undertaking more than they can perform.

3. That he was not desirous to prefer his own Creatures, or such as should underhand have a Dependence upon him, for he leaves it to the People to chuse their Judges, to whom he would grant

grant Commissions, not *durante bene placito*, to be turn'd out when he pleas'd, but *quam diu se bene gesserint*, to continue as long as they approv'd themselves faithful, v. 13. Take ye wise Men, that are known to be so among your Tribes, and I will make them Rulers. Thus the Apostles directed the Multitude to chuse Overseers of the Poor, and then they Ordain'd them, Acts 6. 3. He directs them to take wise men and understanding, whose personal Merit would recommend them; The Rise and Original of this Nation was so late, that none of them could pretend to Antiquity of Race, and Nobility of Birth above their Brethren; and they having all newly come out of Slavery in Egypt, 'tis probable one Family was not much richer than another; So that their Choice must be directed purely by the Qualifications of Wisdom, Experience and Integrity. Chuse such (saith Moses) whose praise is in your Tribes, and with all my heart I will make them Rulers. We must not grudge that God's Work be done by other hands than ours, provided it be done by good hands.

4. That he was in this Matter very willing to please the People, and tho' he did not in any thing aim at their Applause, yet in a thing of this nature he would not act without their Approbation. And they agreed to the Proposal, v. 14. The thing which thou hast spoken is good. This he mentions, to aggravate the Sin of their Mutinies and Discontents after this, that the Government they quarrell'd with was what they themselves had consented to; Moses would have pleas'd them if they would have been pleas'd.

5. That he aim'd to edify them, as well as to gratify them; for (1.) He appointed Men of good Characters, v. 15. Wise men and men known, Men that would be faithful to their Trust, and to the Publick Interest. (2.) He gave them a good Charge, v. 16, 17. Those that are advanc'd to Honour must know that they are charg'd with Business, and must give Account another Day of their Charge. (1.) He charg'd them to be diligent and patient. Hear the Causes. — Hear both sides, hear them fully, hear them carefully, for Nature hath provided us with two Ears, and he that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame to him, The Ear of the Learned is necessary to the Tongue of the Learned, Isa. 50. 4. (2.) To be Just and Impartial, judge righteously. Judgment must be given according to the Merits of the Cause, without regard to the Quality of the Parties: The Natives must not be suffer'd to abuse the Strangers, no more than the Strangers to insult the Natives, or to encroach upon them; The Great must not be suffer'd to oppress the Small, nor to crush them, no more than the Small to rob the Great, or to affront them. No Fates must be known in Judgment, but Unbrib'd, Unbias'd, Equity must always pass Sentence. (3.) To be Resolute and Courageous. Thou shalt not be afraid of the face of man. Be not over-aw'd to do an ill thing, either by the Clamours of the Crowd, or by the Menaces of those that have Power in their Hands. And he gives them a good Reason to enforce this Charge, for the judgment is God's. You are God's Vice-gerents, you act for him, and therefore must act like him; you are his Representatives, but if you judge Unrighteously you misrepresent him. The Judgment is his, and therefore he will protect you in doing right, and will certainly call you to account if you do wrong. (And Lasty) He allows them to bring all difficult Cases to him, which he would always be ready to hear and determine, and to make both the Judges and the People easy. Happy art thou, O Israel, in such a Prince as Moses was.

19 ¶ And when we departed from Horeb, we went through all that great and terrible wilderness, which you saw by the way of the mountain of the Amorites, as the LORD our God commanded us; and we came to Kadeshbarnea. 20 And I said unto you, Ye are come unto the mountain of the Amorites, which the LORD our God doth give unto us. 21 Behold, the LORD thy God hath set the land before thee: go up and possess it, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath said unto thee, fear not, neither be discouraged.

22 ¶ And ye came near unto me every one of you, and said, We will send men before us, and they shall search us out the land, and bring us word again by what way we must go up, and into what cities we shall come. 23 And the saying pleased me well: and I took twelve men of you, one of a tribe. 24 And they turned and went up into the mountain, and came unto the valley of Eshcol, and searched it out. 25 And they took of the fruit of the land in their hands, and brought it down unto us, and brought us word again, and said, It is a good land, which the LORD our God doth give us. 26 Notwithstanding, ye would not go up, but rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your

God. 27 And ye murmured in your tents, and said, Because the LORD hated us, he hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us. 28 Whither shall we go up? our brethren have discouraged our heart, saying, The people is greater and taller than we, the cities are great and walled up to heaven, and moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakims there. 29 Then I said unto you, Dread not, neither be afraid of them. 30 The LORD your God which goeth before you, he shall fight for you, according to all that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes: 31 And in the wilderness, where thou hast seen how that the LORD thy God bear thee as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went, until he came into this place. 32 Yet in this thing ye did not believe the LORD your God. 33 Who went in the way before you to search you out a place to pitch your tents in, in fire by night to shew you by what way ye should go, and in a cloud by day. 34 And the LORD heard the voice of your words, and was wroth, and sware, saying, 35 Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land, which I sware to give unto your fathers; 36 Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, he shall see it, and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children, because he hath wholly followed the LORD. 37 Also the LORD was angry with me for your sakes, saying, Thou also shalt not go in thither. 38 But Joshua the son of Nun, which standeth before thee, he shall go in thither, Encourage him: for he shall cause Israel to inherit it. 39 Moreover, your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it. 40 But as for you, turn ye, and take your journey, into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea. 41 Then ye answered and said unto me, We have sinned against the LORD, we will go up and fight, according to all that the LORD our God commanded us. And when ye had girded on every man his weapons of War, ye were ready to go up into the hill. 42 And the LORD said unto me, Say unto them, Go not up, neither fight, for I am not among you; lest ye be smitten before your enemies. 43 So I spake unto you, and ye would not hear, but rebelled against the commandment of the LORD, and went presumptuously up into the hill. 44 And the Amorites which dwelt in that mountain, came out against you, and chased you as bees do, and destroyed you in Seir, even unto Hormath. 45 And ye returned and wept before the LORD; but the LORD would not hearken to your voice, nor give ear unto you. 46 So ye abode in Kadesh many days, according unto the days that ye abode there.

Moses here makes a large Rehearsal of that fatal Turn which was given them by their own Sin, and God's Wrath, when from the very Borders of Canaan, the Honour of Conquering it, and the Pleasure of possessing it, that whole Generation was hurried back into the Wilderness, and their Carcasses fell there. 'Twas a memorable Story; we read it Numb. 13 and 14. but divers Circumstances are found here which are not related there.

1. He minds them of their march from Horeb to Kadeshbarnea, (v. 19.) through that great and terrible wilderness. This he takes notice of (1.) To make them sensible of the great Goodness of God to them in guiding them through so great a Wilderness, and protecting them from the Mischief they were surrounded with in such a terrible Wilderness. The Remembrance of our Dangers should make us thankful for our Deliverances. (2.) To aggravate the Folly of those who in their Discontent would go back again to Egypt through this Wilderness, tho' they had forfeited, and had no Reason to expect the Divine Conduct, in such a retrograde Motion.

2. He shews them how fair they stood for Canaan at that time, v. 20, 21. He had told them with Triumph, the Land is set before you, go up, and possess it. He lets them see how near they were to a happy Settlement, when they put a Bar in their own Door, that their Sin might appear the more exceeding sinful. 'Twill aggravate the eternal Ruin of Hypocrites that they were not far from the kingdom of God, and yet came short, Mark 12. 34.

3. He lays the Blame of sending the spies upon them, which did not appear in Numbers; there it is said, ch. 13. 1. that the Lord directed the sending of them, but here we find that the People first desired it, and God in permitting it gives them up to their own Counsels, v. 22. *Ye said, we will send men before us.*—Moses had given them God's Word, v. 20, 21. But they could not find in their Hearts to rely upon that; Humane Policy goes further with them than Divine Wisdom, and they will needs light a Candle to the Sun. As if it were not enough that they were sure of a God before them, they must send men before them.

4. He repeats the Report which the Spies brought of the Goodness of the Land, they were sent to Survey, v. 24, 25. The Blessings God has promis'd are truly valuable and desirable, even the Unbelievers themselves being Judges: Never any look'd into the Holy Land, but they must own it a good Land.—Yet they represented the Difficulties of Conquering it as insuperable; v. 28, as if it were in vain to think of attacking them either by Battle, for the People are taller than we, or by Siege, for the Cities are walled up to Heaven: An Hyperbole they made use to serve their ill Purpose, which was to dishearten the People, and perhaps therein they intended to reflect on the God of Heaven himself, as if they were able to defy him, like the Babel Builders, the top of whose Tower must reach up to Heaven, Gen. 11. 4. Those places only are walled up to Heaven, that are compass'd with God's Favour, as with a shield.

5. He tells them, what Pains he took with them to encourage them, when their Brethren said so much to discourage them, v. 29. *Then I said unto you, Dread not.*—Moses suggested enough to have still'd the Tumult, and to have kept them with their Faces towards Canaan.—He assur'd them that God was present with them, and President among them, and would certainly fight for them; v. 30. And for Proof of his Power over their Enemies, he refers them to what they had seen done in Egypt, where there Enemies had all possible Advantages against them, and yet were humbled, and forc'd to yield, v. 30. And for Proof of God's Good Will to them, and the real Kindness he intended them, he refers them to what they had seen in the Wilderness, v. 31, 33, through which they had been guided by the Eye of Divine Wisdom, in a Pillar of Cloud, and Fire which directed both their Motions, and their Rests; and had been carried in the Arms of Divine Grace, with as much care and tenderness as ever any Child was born in the Arms of a nursing Father. And was there any Room left to distrust this God? Or were they not the most ungrateful People in the World, who after such sensible Proofs of the Divine Goodness, hardened their hearts in the day of Temptation? Moses had complained once, that God had charg'd him to carry this People as the nursing Father doth the sucking Child, Num. 11. 12. But here he owns 'twas God that so carried them, and perhaps this is alluded to Acts 13. 18. where he is said to bear them, or to suffer their manners.

6. He chargeth them with the Sin they were guilty of upon this Occasion. Tho' those he was now speaking to were a new Generation, yet he lays it upon them, *ye Rebel'd, and ye murmur'd*; for many of these were then in being, tho' under 20 Years old, and perhaps were engaged in the Riot; and the rest inherited their Fathers Vices, and smarted for them. Observe what he lays to their Charge. (1.) Disobedience, and Rebellion against God's Law. *Ye would not go up, but rebelled,* v. 26. The rejecting of God's Favours is really a rebelling against his Authority. (2.) Invidious Reflections upon God's Goodness. They basely suggested, v. 27. *Because the Lord hated us, he brought us out of Egypt.* What could have been said more absurd and disingenuous, and more reproachful to God? (3.) An unbelieving heart at the bottom of all this, v. 32. *Ye did not believe the Lord your God.* All our Disobedience to God's Laws, and Distrust of his Power and Goodness flows from a Disbelief of his Word. A sad pass 'tis come to with us, when the God of Eternal Truth cannot be believed!

7. He repeats the Sentence pass'd upon them for this Sin, which now they had seen the Execution of. (1.) They were all condemn'd to dye in the Wilderness, and none of them must be suffer'd to enter Canaan, except Caleb and Joshua, v. 34, 35, 36. So long they must continue their Wandrings in the Wilderness that most of them would drop off of Course, and the youngest of them should be cut off. Thus they could not enter in because of unbelief. 'Twas not the Breach of any of the Commands of the Law that shut them out of Canaan, no, not the Golden Calf, but their Disbelief of that Promise which was typical of Gospel Grace, to signify, that no Sin will ruin us but Unbelief, which is a Sin against the Remedy. (2.)

Moses himself afterwards fell under God's Displeasure for a hasty Word they provoked him to speak, v. 37. *The Lord was angry with me for your sakes.* Because all the Old Stock must go off, Moses himself must not stay behind. Their Unbelief let Death into the Camp, and when he is entred even Moses falls within his Commission. (3.) Yet here is Mercy mix'd with this Wrath. (1.) That tho' Moses might not bring them into Canaan, Joshua should, v. 38. *Encourage him,* for he would be discouraged from taking up a Government, which he saw Moses himself fall under the weight of, but let him be assur'd, he shall accomplish that for which he is rais'd up, *he shall cause Israel to inherit it.* Thus what the Law could not do in that it was weak, Jesus our Joshua doth by bringing in the better Hope. (2.) That tho' this Generation should not enter Canaan, the next should, v. 39. As they had been chosen for their Fathers sakes, so their Children might justly have been rejected for their sakes. But Mercy rejoiceth against Judgment.

8. He minds them of their foolish and fruitless Attempt to get this sentence revers'd, when it was too late. (1.) They try'd it by their Reformation, in this particular: Whereas they had refus'd to go up against the Canaanites, now they would go up, Ay, that they would, in all haste, and they girded on their Weapons of War for that Purpose, v. 41. Thus when the Door is shut, and the Day of Grace is over, there will be found those that stand without and knock.—But this which look'd like a Reformation, proved but a further Rebellion, God by Moses prohibited the attempt, v. 42. Yet they went presumptuously up to the Hill, v. 43. Acting now in Contempt of the Threatning, as before in Contempt of the Promise, as if they were govern'd by a Spirit of Contradiction. And it sped accordingly, v. 44. They were chased and destroyed, and by this Defeat which they suffer'd, when they had provoked God to leave them, they were taught what Success they might have had if they had kept themselves in his Love.—(2.) They try'd by their Prayers and Tears to get the Sentence revers'd, v. 45. *They returned and wept before the Lord.* While they were fretting and quarrelling 'tis said, Numb. 14. 1. *They wept that Night*; those were Tears of Rebellion against God, these were Tears of Repentance and Humiliation before God. Note, Tears of Discontent must bewep over again: The Sorrow of the World worketh Death, and is to be repented of; 'tis not so with godly Sorrow, that will end in Joy. But their Weeping was all to no Purpose, *The Lord would not hearken to your Voice,* because you would not hearken to his; The Decree was gone forth, and like Esau, they found no Place of Repentance, tho' they sought it carefully with Tears.

CHAP. II.

Moses in this Chapter proceeds in the Rehearsal of God's Providences concerning Israel in their way to Canaan, yet preserves not the Record of any thing that happens during their tedious March back to the Red-Sea, in which they wore out almost 38 Years, but passeth that over in silence, as a dark Time; and makes his Narrative to begin again when they faced about towards Canaan, v. 1.—3. and drew towards the Countries that were inhabited, concerning which God here gives them Direction. 1. What Nations they must not give any disturbance to. (1.) Not to the Edomites, v. 4.—8. (2.) Not to the Moabites, v. 9. of the Antiquities of whose Country, with that of the Edomites, he gives some Account, v. 10.—12. And here comes in an Account of their passing the River Zered, v. 13.—16.—(3.) Not to the Ammonites, of whose Country here is some Account given, v. 17.—23. 2. What Nations they should Attack and Conquer. They must begin with Sihon, King of the Amorites, v. 24, 26. And accordingly, (1.) They had a fair occasion of Quarrelling with him, v. 26.—32. 2. God gave them a compleat Victory over him, v. 33.—37.

THEN we turned, and took our journey into the Wilderness, by the way of the Red-Sea, as the LORD spake unto me: and we compassed mount Seir many days. 2 And the LORD spake unto me, saying, 3 Ye have compassed the mountain long enough: turn you northward. 4 And command thou the People, saying, Ye are to pass through the coast of your brethren the Children of Esau, which dwell in Seir, and they shall be afraid of you: take ye good heed unto your selves therefore. 5 Meddle not with them; for I will not give you of their Land, no not so much as a foot breadth, because I have given mount Seir unto Esau for a possession. 6 Ye shall buy meat of them for

for money, that ye may eat; and ye shall also buy water of them for money, that ye may drink. 7 For the LORD thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand: he knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness: these forty years the LORD thy God hath been with thee, thou hast lacked nothing.

Here's 1. A short Account of the long Story of Israel in the Wilderness; *We compassed Mount Seir many Days, v. 1.* Near 38 Years they wander'd in the Desarts of Seir, probably in some of their Rests they stay'd several Years, and never stir'd; God by this not only chastis'd them for their Murmuring and Unbelief, but (1.) prepar'd them for Canaan, by humbling them for Sin, teaching them to mortify their Lusts, to follow God, and to comfort themselves in him. 'Tis a work of time to make Souls meet for Heaven, and it must be done by a long Train of Exercises.—(2.) He prepar'd the Canaanites for Destruction; all this time the measure of their Iniquity was in the filling, and tho' it might have been improv'd by them as a space to Repent, it was abus'd by them to the hardening of their Hearts: Now the Host of Israel was once repuls'd, and after that was so long entangled, and seemingly lost in the Wilderness they were secure, and thought the Danger was over from that Quarter, which would make the next Attempt of Israel upon them the more dreadful.

2. Orders given them to turn towards Canaan: Tho' God contend long, he will not contend for ever. Tho' Israel may be long kept waiting for Deliverance and Enlargement, it will come at last. *The Vision is for an appointed time, and at the end it shall speak and not lie.*

3. A Charge given them not to annoy the Edomites: 1. They must not offer any Hostility to them as Enemies, *v. 4. 5. Meddle not with them.* (1.) They must not improve the Advantage they had against them by the Fright they would be put into upon Israel's Approach. *They shall be afraid of you,* knowing your Strength and Numbers, and the Power of God engag'd for you, but do not you think that their Fears making them an easy Prey, you may therefore Prey upon them; no, *Take heed to your selves.* There's need of great Caution, and a strict Government of our own Spirits to keep ourselves from injuring those we have an Advantage against. Or, this Caution is given to the Princes; they must not only not meddle with the Edomites themselves, but not permit any of their Soldiers to meddle with them. (2.) They must not revenge upon the Edomites the Affront they gave them in refusing them Passage through their Country, *Numb. 23. 21.* Thus before God brought Israel to destroy their Enemies in Canaan, he taught them to forgive their Enemies, in Edom. (3.) They must not expect to have any Part of their Land given them for a Possession; *Mount Seir* was already settled upon the Edomites, and they must not under Pretence of God's Covenant and Conduct think to seize for themselves all they could lay Hands on. Dominion is not founded in Grace. God's Israel shall be well-placed, but must not expect to be placed alone in the midst of the Earth, *Isa. 5. 8.*

4. They must Trade with them as Neighbours: Buy Meat and Water of them, and pay for what they bought, *v. 6.* Religion must never be made a Cloke for Injustice. The Reason given, *v. 7.* is, because God hath blessed thee, and hitherto thou hast lacked nothing; and therefore, (1.) Thou needest not beg; scorn to be beholden to Edomites, when thou hast a God All-sufficient to depend upon. Thou hast wherewithal to pay for what thou callest for, thanks to the Divine Blessing, use therefore what thou hast, use it cheerfully, and do not sponge upon the Edomites.—(2.) Therefore thou must not steal. Thou hast experienced the Care of the Divine Providence concerning thee, in confidence of which for the future, and in a firm Belief of its All-sufficiency never use any indirect Methods for thy Supply. Live by thy Faith, and not by the Sword.

8 And when we passed by from our brethren the children of Esau, which dwelt in Seir, through the way of the plain from Elath, and from Ezion-gaber, we turned and passed by the way of the wilderness of Moab. 9 And the LORD said unto me, Distress not the Moabites, neither contend with them in battle: for I will not give thee of their land for a possession, because I have given Ar unto the Children of Lot for a possession. 10 The Emims dwelt therein in times past, a people great, and many, and tall as the Anakims; 11 Which also were accounted giants, as the Anakims, but the Moabites call them Emims. 12 The Horims also dwelt in Seir before-time, but the

children of Esau succeeded them when they had destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their stead, as Israel did unto the land of his possession, which the LORD gave unto them. 13 Now rise up, said I, and get you over the brook Zered; And we went over the brook Zered. 14 And the space in which we came from Kadesh-barnea, until we were come over the brook Zered, was thirty and eight years; until all the generation of the men of war were wasted out from among the host, as the LORD sware unto them. 15 For indeed the hand of the LORD was against them to destroy them from among the host, until they were consumed. 16 ¶ So it came to pass when all the men of war were consumed and dead from among the people. 17 That the LORD spake unto me, saying, 18 Thou art to pass over through Ar, the coast of Moab, this day. 19 And when thou comest nigh over against the children of Ammon, distress them not; nor meddle with them: for I will not give thee of the land of the children of Ammon any possession, because I have given it unto the children of Lot for a possession. 20 (That also was accounted a land of giants, giants dwelt therein in old time, and the Ammonites call them Zamzummims, 21 A people great, and many, and tall as the Anakims; but the LORD destroyed them before them, and they succeeded them, and dwelt in their stead: 22 As he did to the children of Esau which dwelt in Seir, when he destroyed the Horims from before them, and they succeeded them: and dwelt in their stead even unto this day: 23 And the Avims which dwelt in Hazerim, even unto Azzah, the Caphtorims which came forth out of Caphtor, destroyed them, and dwelt in their stead.)

It is observable here that Moses speaking of the Edomites, *v. 8.* calls them our Brethren, the children of Esau; Tho' they had been unkind to Israel, in refusing them a peaceable Passage through their Country, yet he calls them Brethren: For tho' our Relations fail in their Duty to us, we must retain a sense of the Relation, and not be wanting in our Duty to them, as there is Occasion.

Now in these Verses we have,

1. The Account which Moses gives of the Original of the Nations which he had here Occasion to speak of; The Moabites, Edomites, and Ammonites. We know very well from other Parts of his History, whose Posterity they were, but here he tells us how they came to these Countries in which Israel found them; They were not the Aborigines or first Planters. But: (1.) The Moabites dwelt in a Country which had belong'd to a numerous Race of Giants, call'd Emim, i.e. Terrible-ones; as Tall as the Anakims, and perhaps more Fierce, *v. 10. 11.* (2.) The Edomites in like manner dispossest the Horim from Mount Seir, and took their Country, *v. 12.* And again, *v. 22.* of which we read, *Gen. 36. 20.* (3.) The Ammonites likewise got Possession of a Country that had formerly been inhabited by Giants, call'd Zamzummims, crafty Men, or wicked Men, *v. 20. 21.* probably, the same that are call'd Zuzim, *Gen. 14. 5.* He illustrates these Remarks by an Instance older than any of these, The Caphtorim (who were a-kin to the Philistines, *Gen. 10. 14.*) drove the Avim out of their Country and took Possession of it, *v. 23.* The Learned Bishop Patrick supposes these Avites being expell'd here, to have settled in Assyria, and to be the same People we read of under that Name, *2 Km. 17. 31.* Now these Revolutions are Recorded; (1.) To shew how soon the World was Peopled, after the Flood, so well Peopled that when a Family grew numerous, they could not find a Place to settle in, at least in that Part of the World, but they must drive out those that were already settled. (2.) To shew that the Race is not to the Swift, nor the Battle to the Strong. Giants were expelled by those of ordinary Stature; for probably, these Giants like those before the Flood, (*Gen. 6. 4.*) were notorious for Impiety and Oppression, which brought the Judgments of God upon them, against which their great Strength would be no Defence. (3.) To shew what uncertain things worldly Possessions are, and how oft they change their Owners: 'Twas so of old, and ever will be so. Families decline, and from them Estates are transfer'd to Families that increase; so little consistency or continuance is there in these things. (4.) To encourage the Children of Israel, who were

now going to take Possession of Canaan against the Difficulties they would meet with, and to shew the Unbelief of those that were afraid of the *Sons of Anak*, to whom the Giants here said to be Conquer'd are compared, *v. 11, 21*. If the *Providence* of God had done this for *Moabites* and *Ammonites*, much more would his *Promise* do it for *Israel*, his peculiar People.

2. The Advances which *Israel* made towards *Canaan*. They pass'd by the way of the *Wilderness of Moab*, *v. 8*. and then went over the Brook or Vale of *Zered*, *v. 13*. And there *Moses* takes Notice of the fulfilling of the Word God had spoken concerning them, That none of those that were number'd at *Mount Sinai* should see the Land that God had promis'd, *Numb. 14. 23*. According to that Sentence, now they begin to let their Faces towards *Canaan*, and to have it in their Eye. Notice is taken of their being all destroy'd and consum'd, and not a Man of them left, *v. 14*. Common Providence we may observe, in about Thirty-eight Years ordinarily raiseth a new Generation, so that in that Time few remain of the old Ones, but here 'twas entirely New, and none at all remain'd but *Caleb* and *Joshua*; for indeed the Hand of the Lord was against them, *v. 15*. Those cannot but waste, till they are consum'd, who have the Hand of God against them. Observe, *Israel* is not call'd to engage with the *Canaanites* till all the Men of War, the Veteran Regiments, that had been us'd to Hardship, and had learn'd the Art of War from the *Egyptians*, were consum'd and dead from among the People, *v. 16*. That the Conquest of *Canaan* being effected by an Host of new rais'd Men, train'd up in a Wilderness, the Excellency of the Power might the more plainly appear to be of God and not of Men.

3. The Caution given them, not to meddle with the *Moabites* or *Ammonites*, whom they must not dislodge, nor so much as disturb in their Possessions. Distress them not, nor contend with them, *v. 9*. Tho' the *Moabites* aim'd to ruin *Israel*, *Numb. 22. 6*. yet *Israel* must not aim to ruin them. If others design us a Mischief, that will not justify us in designing them a Mischief. But why must not *Moabites* and *Ammonites* be meddled with? (1.) Because they were the Children of *Lot*, *v. 9. 19*. Righteous *Lot*, who kept his Integrity in *Sodom*. Note. Children often fare the better in this World for the Piety of their Ancestors; the Seed of the Upright, tho' they degenerate, yet are blessed with Temporal good Things. (2.) Because the Land they were possess'd of was what God had given them, and he did not design it for *Israel*. Even wicked Men have a Right to their worldly Possessions, and must not be wronged. The Tares are allow'd their Place in the Field, and must be rooted out until the Harvest. God gives and preserves outward Blessings to wicked Men, to shew that these are not the best Things, but he has better in Store for his own Children.

24 ¶ Rise ye up, take your journey, and pass over the river *Arnon*: Behold, I have given into thine hand *Sihon* the Amorite king of *Heshbon*, and his land, begin to possess it, and contend with him in battle. 25 This day will I begin to put the dread of thee and the fear of thee upon the nations that are under the whole heaven, who shall hear report of thee, and shall tremble, and be in anguish because of thee. 26 ¶ And I sent messengers out of the wilderness of *Kedemoth*, unto *Sihon* king of *Heshbon*, with words of peace, saying, 27 Let me pass through thy land: I will go along by the highway. I will neither turn unto the right hand nor to the left. 28 Thou shalt sell me meat for money, that I may eat; and give me water for money, that I may drink: only I will pass through on my feet: 29 (As the children of *Esau* of which dwell in *Sier*, and the *Moabites* which dwell in *Ar*, did unto me) until I shall pass over *Jordan*, into the land which the LORD our God giveth us. 30 but *Sihon* king of *Heshbon* would not let us pass by him: for the LORD thy God hardened his spirit, and made his part obstinate, that he might deliver him into thy hand, as appeareth this day. 31 And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have begun to give *Sihon* and his land before thee: begin to possess, that thou mayest inherit his land. 32 Then *Sihon* came out against us, he and all his people, to fight at *Jahaz*. 33 And the LORD our God delivered him before us, and we smote him, and his sons, and all his people. 34 And we took all his cities at that time, and utterly

destroyed the men and the women, and the little ones of every city, we left none to remain: 35 Only the cattle we took for a prey unto our selves, and the spoils of the cities which we took. 36 From *Aroer*, which is by the brink of the river of *Arnon*, and from the city that is by the river, even unto *Gilead*, there was not one city too strong for us: the LORD our God delivered all unto us. 37 Only unto the land of the children of *Ammon* thou camest not, nor unto any place of the river *Jabbok*, nor unto the cities in the mountains, nor unto whatsoever the LORD our God forbad us.

God having tried the Self-denial of his People in forbidding them to meddle with the *Moabites* and *Ammonites*, and they having quietly pass'd by those rich Countries, and tho' superiour in Number, not made any Attack upon them, here he recompenseth them for their Obedience, by given them Possession of the Country of *Sihon* King of the *Amorites*. If we forbear what God forbids, we shall receive what he promisseth, and shall be no Losers at last by our Obedience; tho' it may seem for the present to be our Loss. Wrong not others, and God shall right thee.

1. God gives them Commission to seize upon the Country of *Sihon* King of *Heshbon*, *v. 23. 25*. This was then God's way of disposing Kingdoms, but such particular Grants are not now either to be expected or pretended. In this Commission, observe, (1.) Tho' God assur'd them the Land should be their own, yet they must bestir themselves, and contend in Battle with the Enemy. What God gives, we must endeavour to get. (2.) God promisseth that when they fight, he will fight for them. Do you begin to possess it, and I'll begin to put the Dread of you upon them. God would dispirit the Enemy, and so destroy them; would magnify *Israel*, and so terrify all those against whom they were Commissioned. See *Exod. 15. 14*.

2. *Moses* sends to *Sihon* a Message of Peace, only begs a Passage through his Land, with a Promise to give his Country no Disturbance, but the Advantage of Trading for ready Money with so great a Body, *v. 26. 27. 28. 29*. *Moses* here in did neither disobey God, who bid him contend with *Sihon*, nor dissemble with *Sihon*; but doubtless 'twas Divine Direction that he did it, that *Sihon* might be left inexcusable, tho' God hardened his Heart. This may illustrate the Method of God's dealing with those to whom he gives his Gospel, but doth not give Grace to believe it.

3. *Sihon* began the War, *v. 32*. God having made his Heart obstinate, and hid from his Eyes the Things that belong'd to his Peace, *v. 30*. That he might deliver him into the Hand of *Israel*. Those that meddle with the People of God, meddle to their own Hurt; and God sometimes ruins his Enemies by their own Resolves. See *Mic. 4. 11, 12, 13. Rev. 16. 14*.

4. *Israel* was Victorious. (1.) They put all the *Amorites* to the Sword, Men, Women and Children, *v. 33. 34*. This they did as the Executioners of God's Wrath, now the Measure of the *Amorites* Iniquity was full, *Gen. 15. 16*. And the longer it was in the filling, the sorer was the Reckoning at last. This was one of the Devoted Nations, they dy'd not as *Israel's* Enemies, but as Sacrifices to Divine Justice, in the Offering of which Sacrifices *Israel* was employ'd as a Kingdom of Priests. The Case being therefore extraordinary, it ought not therefore to be drawn into a Precedent for Military Executions which make no Distinction, and give no Quarter. They will have Judgment without Mercy, that shew no Mercy. (2.) they took Possession of all they had; their Cities, *v. 34*. Their Goods, *v. 35*. And their Land, *v. 36*. The Wealth of the Sinner is laid up for the Just. What a new World did *Israel* now come into! Most of them were born, and liv'd all their Days in a vast howling Wilderness, where they knew not what either Fields or Cities were, had no Houses to dwell in, neither sow'd nor reap'd, and now of a sudden to become Masters of a Country so well built, so well husbanded, this made them amends for their long waiting, and yet it was but the Earnest of a great deal more. Much more Joyful will the Change be which Holy Souls will experience when they remove out of the Wilderness of this World to the better Country, that is the Heavenly; to the City that has no Foundations.

C H A P. III.

Moses in this Chapter relates, 1. The Conquest of Og King of Bashan, and the seizing of his Country, v. 1.—11. 2. The Distribution of these new Conquests to the two Tribes and a half, v. 12.—17. Under certain Provisions and Limitations, v. 18.—20. 3. The Encouragement given to Joshua to carry on the War which was so gloriously begun, v. 21, 22. 4. Moses's Request to go over into Canaan, v. 23.—25. With the Denial of that Request, but the Grant of an Equivalent, v. 26.—29.

Then we turned, and went up the way to Bashan: and Og the king of Bashan came out against us, he and all his People to battle at Edrei. 2 And the LORD said unto me, Fear him not: for I will deliver him, and all his people, and his land into thy hand, and thou shalt do unto him as thou didst unto Sihon king of the Amorites, which dwelt at Heshbon. 3 So the LORD our God delivered into our hands Og also the king of Bashan, and all his people: and we smote him until none was left to him remaining. 4 And we took all his cities at that time, there was not a city which we took not from them, threescore cities, all the region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan. 5 All these cities were fenced with high walls, gates and bars, besides unwalled Towns a great many. 6 And we utterly destroyed them, as we did unto Sihon king of Heshbon, utterly destroying the men, women, and children, of every city. 7 But all the cattle, and the spoil of the cities, we took for a prey to our selves. 8 And we took at that time out of the hand of the two kings of the Amorites, the land that was on this side Jordan, from the river of Arnon unto mount Hermon: 9 (Which Hermon the Sidonians call Sirion: and the Amorites call it Shenir) 10 All the cities of the plain, and all Gilead, and all Bashan, unto Salcah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan: 11 For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of giants; behold, his bedstead was a bedstead of iron: is it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon? nine cubits was the length thereof, and four cubits the breadth of it, after the cubit of a man.

We have here another brave Country delivered into the Hand of Israel; that of Bashan. The Conquest of Sihon and Og are often mention'd together to the Praise of God, the rather, because in these, Israel's Triumphs began, *Psal.* 135. 11. 136. 19.

See 1. How they got the Mastery of Og a very formidable Prince, (1.) Very strong, for he was of the Remnant of the Giants, v. 11. His personal Strength was extraordinary; a Monument of which was preserv'd by the Ammonites in his Bedstead, which was shew'd as a Rarity in their chief City. You might guess at his Weight by the Materials of his Bedstead, 'twas Iron, as if a Bedstead of Wood were too weak for him to trust to; and you might guess at his Stature by the Dimensions of it, 'twas nine Cubits long, and four Cubits broad; which supposing a Cubit to be but half a Yard, (and some learned Men have made it appear to be somewhat more) was four Yards and a half long, and two Yards broad, and if we allow his Bed to be two Cubits longer than himself, and that's as much as we need allow, he was three Yards and a half high, double to the Stature of an ordinary Man, and every way Proportionable, yet they smote him, v. 3. Note, When God pleads his People's Cause, he can deal with Giants as with Grasshoppers. No Man's Might can secure him against the Almighty. His Army likewise was very powerful, for he had the Command of sixty fortified Cities, besides unwalled Towns, v. 5. Yet all this was nothing before God's Israel when they came with Commission to destroy him. (2.) He was stout and daring; He came out against Israel to battle, v. 1. 'Twas wonder he did not take Warning by the Ruin of Sihon, and send to desire Conditions of Peace, but he trusted to his own Strength, and so was harden'd to his own Destruction. Note, Those that are not awaken'd by the Judgments of God upon others, but persist in their De-

fiance of Heaven, are ripening apace for the like Judgments upon themselves, *Jer.* 3. 8. God bid Moses not fear him, v. 2. If Moses himself was so strong in Faith as not to need the Caution, yet 'tis probable the People needed it; and for them these fresh Assurances art design'd, I will deliver him into thine hand.—Not only deliver thee out of his hand, that he shall not be thy Ruin, but deliver him into thy hand, that thou shalt be his Ruin, and make him pay him dear for his Attempt. He adds, Thou shalt do to him as thou didst to Sihon. Intimating, that they ought to be encourag'd by their former Victory to trust in God for another Victory, for he is God and changeth not.

2. How they got Possession of Bashan, a very desirable Country. They took all the Cities, v. 4. and all the Spoil of them, v. 7. They made them all their own, v. 10. So that now they had in their Hands all that fruitful Country which lay East of Jordan, from the River Arnon unto Hermon, v. 8. Their Conquering and Possessing of these Countries was intended, not only for the Encouragement of Israel, in the Wars of Canaan, but for the Satisfaction of Moses before his Death; because he must not live to see the completing of their Victory and Settlement, God thus gives him a Specimen of it. Thus the Spirit is given to them that believe as the Earnest of their Inheritance, until the Redemption of the purchased Possession.

12 And this land which we possessed at that time; from Aroer, which is by the river Arnon, and half mount Gilead, and the cities thereof, gave I unto the Reubenites, and to the Gadites. 13 And the rest of Gilead, and all Bashan, being the kingdom of Og, gave I unto the half tribe of Manasseh; all the region of Argob, with all Bashan, which was called the land of giants. 14 Jair the son of Manasseh took all the country of Argob, unto the coasts of Geshuri, and Maachathi; and called them after his own name, Bashan-havoth-jair, unto this day. 15 And I gave Gilead unto Machir. 16 And unto the Reubenites, and unto the Gadites, I gave from Gilead even unto the river Arnon, half the valley, and the border, even unto the river Jabbok, which is the border of the children of Ammon: 17 The plain also, and Jordan, and the coast thereof, from Chinnereth even unto the sea of the plain, even the salt-sea, under Ashdodpithgah east-ward. 18 ¶ And I commanded you at that time, saying, The LORD your God hath given you this land to possess it: ye shall pass over armed before your brethren the children of Israel, all that are meet for the war. 19 But your wives, and your little ones, and your cattle (for I know that ye have much cattle) shall abide in your cities which I have given you: 20 Until the LORD have given rest unto your brethren, as well as unto you, and until they also possess the land which the LORD your God hath given them beyond Jordan: and then shall ye return every man unto his possession, which I have given you.

Having shew'd how this Country they were now in was Conquer'd, in these Verses he shews how it was Settled upon the Reubenites, Gadites, and half Tribe of Manasseh, which we had the Story of before, *Num.* 32. Here is the Rehearsal.

1. Moses specifies the particular Parts of the Country that were allotted to each Tribe; especially the Distribution of the Lot to the Half Tribe of Manasseh, the Sub-division of which Tribe is observable. Joseph was divided into Ephraim and Manasseh; Manasseh was divided into one Half on the one side Jordan, and t'other Half on t'other side: That here on the East side Jordan was again divided into two great Families, which had their several Allotments, *Jair*, v. 14. *Machir*, v. 15. and perhaps *Jacob's* Prediction of the smallness of that Tribe, was now accomplish'd in these Divisions and Sub-divisions.—Observe, that Bashan is here call'd the Land of the Giants, because it had been in their Possession, but Og was the last of them. These Giants, it seems, had lost their Country, and were rooted out of it sooner than any of their Neighbours, for they, who presuming upon their Strength and Stature, had their Hand against every Man, had every Man's Hand against them, and went down slain to the Pit, tho' they were the Terror of the Mighty in the Land of the Living.

2. He repeats the Condition of the Grant, which they had already agreed to, *v.* 18, 19, 20. That they should send a strong Detachment over *Jordan* to lead the Van in the Conquest of *Canaan*, who should not return to their Families at least not to settle; (tho' for a time they might retire thither into winter Quarters, at the end of a Campaign) till they had seen their Brethren in as full a Possession of their respective Allotments, as themselves were now in of *theirs*. They must hereby be taught, not to look at their own things only, but at the things of others, *Phil.* 2. 4. It ill becomes an Israelite to be Selfish; and to prefer any private Interest before the publick Welfare. When we are at rest, we should desire to see our Brethren at rest too, and should be ready to do what we can towards it; for we are not born for ourselves, but are Members one of another. A good Man cannot rejoice much in the Comforts of his Family, unless withal he sees Peace upon Israel, *Psal.* 128. 6.

21 ¶ And I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, Thine eyes have seen all that the LORD your God hath done to these two kings: so shall the LORD do unto all the kingdoms whither thou passest. 22 Ye shall not fear them: for the LORD your God he shall fight for you. 23 And I befought the LORD at that time, saying, 24 O LORD God, thou hast begun to shew thy servant thy greatness, and thy mighty hand: for what God is there in heaven and in earth, that can do according to thy works, and according to thy might? 25 I pray thee let me go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon. 26 But the LORD was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me: and the LORD said unto me, Let it suffice thee, speak no more unto me of this matter. 27 Get thee up into the top of Pisgah, and lift up thine eyes west-ward, and north-ward, and south-ward, and east-ward, and behold it with thine eyes: for thou shalt not go over this Jordan. 28 But charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him: for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see. 29 So we abode in the valley over against Beth-peor.

Here's 1. The Encouragement Moses gave to Joshua, who was to succeed him in the Government, *v.* 21. 22. He commanded him not to fear. Thus those that are Aged, and experienced in the Service of God, should do all they can to strengthen the Hands of those that are young, and setting out in Religion. Two things he would have him consider for his Encouragement. (1.) What God had done: Joshua had seen what a total Defeat God had given by the Forces of Israel to these two Kings, and from thence he might easily infer, so shall the Lord do to all the rest of the Kingdoms, we are to make War upon. He must not only infer from thence, that thus the Lord can do with them all, for his Arm is not shorten'd; but thus he will do, for his Purpose is not chang'd: He that has begun, will finish: As for God his Work is perfect. Joshua had seen it with his own Eyes. And the more we have seen of the Instances of Divine Wisdom, Power and Goodness, the more inexcusable we are, if we fear what *Flesh* can do unto us. (2.) What God had promised. The Lord your God he shall fight for you; and that Cause cannot but be Victorious which the Lord of Hosts fights for. If God be for us, who can be against us, so as to prevail? We reproach our Leader, if we follow him trembling.

2. The Prayer Moses made for himself, and the Answer God gave to that Prayer.

1. His Prayer was, That if it were God's Will he might go before Israel over Jordan into Canaan. At that time, when he had been encouraging Joshua to fight Israel's Battels, taking it for granted that he must be their Leader; upon that Occasion he was touch'd with an earnest Desire to go over himself, which expresseth itself not in any passionate and impatient Complaints or Reflections upon the Sentence he was under, but in humble Prayers to God for a gracious Revering of it. I befought the Lord. Note, We should never allow any Desires in our Hearts, which we cannot in Faith offer up to God by Prayer; and what Desires are innocent, let them be presented to God. We have not, because we ask not.

Observe 1. What he pleads here, Two things, (1.) The great Experience he had had of God's Goodness to him in what

he had done for Israel. Thou hast begun to shew thy servant thy Greatness. Lord perfect what thou hast begun. Thou hast given me to see thy Glory in the Conquest of these two Kings, and the Sight has affected me with Wonder and Thankfulness, O let me see more of the Out-goings of my God, my King. This great Work no doubt will be carried on and compleated, let me have the Satisfaction of seeing it. Note, The more we see of God's Glory in his Works, the more we will desire to see. The Works of the Lord are great, and therefore are sought out more and more of all them that have pleasure therein. (2.) The good Impressions that have been made upon his Heart by what he had seen, for what God is there in Heaven and Earth that can do according to thy Works! The more we are affected with what we have seen of God, and of his Wisdom, Power and Goodness, the better prepar'd we are for further Discoveries. Those shall see the Works of God that admire him in them. Moses had thus express'd himself, concerning God and his Works, long before, *Exod.* 15. 11, and he still continues of the same Mind, that there are no Works worthy to be compar'd with God's Works, *Psal.* 86. 8.

What he begs. I pray thee let me go over, *v.* 25. God had said, he should not go over; yet he prays he might; not knowing but that the Threatning was Conditional, for it was not ratified with an Oath, as that concerning the People was, that they should not enter. Thus Hezekiah pray'd for his own Life; and David for the Life of his Child, after both had been expressly threaten'd; and the former prevail'd, tho' the latter did not. Moses remember'd the time when he had by Prayer prevail'd with God to recede from the Declarations he had made of his Wrath against Israel, as *Exod.* 32. 14. And why might he not hope in like manner to prevail for himself?—Let me go over and see the good Land. Not let me go over to be a Prince and Ruler there; he seeks not his own Honour, is content to resign the Government to Joshua; but let me go to be a Spectator of thy Kindness to Israel, to see what I believe concerning the Goodness of the Land of Promise. How pathetically doth he speak of Canaan, that good Land, that goodly Mountain! Note, Those may hope to obtain and enjoy God's Favours, that know how to value them.—What he means by that goodly Mountain, we may learn from *Psal.* 78. 54. where it is said of God's Israel, that he brought them to the Border of his Sanctuary, even to this Mountain which his Right Hand had purchased: Where it is plainly to be understood of the whole Land of Canaan, yet with an Eye to the Sanctuary, the Glory of it.

2. God's Answer to this Prayer had in it a Mixture of Mercy and Judgment, that he might sing unto God of both.

1. There was Judgment in the Denial of his Request, and that in something of Anger too, *v.* 26. The Lord was wroth with me for your sakes. God not only sees Sin in his People, but is much displeased with it; and even those that are deliver'd from the Wrath to come, yet may lye under the Tokens of God's Wrath in this World; and may be deny'd some particular Favour which their Hearts are much upon. God is a gracious, tender, loving Father, but he is angry with his Children when they do amiss, and denies them many a thing that they desire, and are ready to cry for. But how was he Wrath with Moses, for the sake of Israel? Either (1.) For that Sin which they provok'd him to. See *Psal.* 106. 32, 33. Or (2.) The Removal of Moses at that time when he could so ill be spar'd, was a Rebuke to all Israel, and a Punishment of their Sin: Or, (3.) 'Twas for their sakes, that it might be a Warning to them to take heed of offending God by passionate and unbelieving Speeches at any time, after the Similitude of his Transgression; for if this were done to such a green Tree, what should be done to the dry?—He acknowledges God would not hear him. God had often heard him for Israel, yet would not hear him for himself: 'Twas the Prerogative of Christ the greater Intercessor, to be heard always; yet of him his Enemies said, He saved others, himself he could not save: Which the Jews would not have upbraided him with, had they consider'd, that Moses their great Prophet prevail'd for others, but for himself he could not prevail. Tho' Moses being one of the wrestling Seed of Jacob, did not seek in vain, yet he had not the Thing itself which he fought for. God may accept your Prayers, and yet not grant us the very Thing we pray for.

2. Here's Mercy mix'd with this Wrath, in several Things.

1. God quieted the Spirit of Moses under the Decree that was gone forth, by that Word, *v.* 26. Let it suffice thee. With which Word, no doubt a Divine Power went to reconcile Moses to the Will of God, and to bring him to acquiesce in it. If God do not by his Providence give us what we desire, if by his Grace he makes us content without it, it comes much to one. Let it suffice thee, to have God for thy Father, and Heaven for thy Portion, tho' thou hast not every Thing thou would'st have in this World, Be satisfied with this, God is All-sufficient.

2. He put an Honour upon his Prayer, in bespeaking him not to insist upon this Request, Speak no more to me of this matter.

matter. It intimates, That what God doth not think fit to *grant*, we should not think fit to *ask*; and that God takes such a Pleasure in the Prayer of the Upright, that it is no Pleasure to him, no not in any particular Instance to give a Denial to it.

3. He promis'd him a Sight of *Canaan*, from the Top of *Pisgah*, v. 27. Tho' he should not have the Possession of it, he should have the Prospect of it; not to *santalize* him, but such a Sight of it as would yield him true Satisfaction, and would enable him to form a very clear and pleasing Idea of that Promised Land. Probably *Moses* had not only his Sight *prefer'd* for other Purposes, but greatly *enlarg'd* for this Purpose; for if he were not to have such a Sight of it as others could not have from the same Place, it had been no particular Favour to *Moses*, nor the Matter of a Promise. — Even great Believers, in this present State, see Heaven but at a Distance.

4. He provided him a Successor, one who should support the Honour of *Moses*, and carry on and compleat that Glorious Work, which the Heart of *Moses* was so much upon, the bringing of *Israel* to *Canaan*, and settling them there, v. 28. Charge *Joshua*, and encourage him in this Work. Those to whom God gives a Charge, he will be sure to give Encouragement to. — And 'tis a Comfort to the Church's Friends, when they are dying and going off, to see God's Work likely to be carried on by other Hands, when they are silent in the Dust.

C H A P. IV.

*In this Chapter we have, 1. A most earnest and pathetic Exhortation to Obedience, both in general, and in some particular Instances, back'd with a very great Variety of very pressing Arguments, repeated again and again, and set before them in the most moving and affectionate manner imaginable, v. 1.-40. 2. The appointing the Cities of Refuge on that side Jordan, v. 41.-43. 3. The particular Description of the Place where *Moses* deliver'd the following Repetition of the Law, v. 44.-49.*

NOW therefore hearken, O *Israel*, unto the statutes, and unto the judgments which I teach you, for to do *them*, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers giveth you. 2 Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall you diminish *ought* from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you. 3 Your eyes have seen what the LORD did because of *Baal-peor*: for all the men that followed *Baal-peor*, the LORD thy God hath destroyed them from among you. 4 But ye that did cleave unto the LORD your God, are alive every one of you this day. 5 Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whether ye go to possess it. 6 Keep therefore and do *them*, for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the Nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. 7 For what nation is *there* so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all *things* that we call upon him for? 8 And what nation is *there* so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous, as all this law which I set before you this day? 9 Only take heed to thy self, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest thou depart from thy heart all the days of my life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons sons: 10 Specially the day that thou stoodest before the LORD thy God in *Horeb*, when the LORD said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children. 11 And ye came near and stood under the mountain, and the mountain burnt with fire unto the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness. 12 And the LORD spake unto you out of the midst of the fire ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude, only ye heard a voice. 13 And he declared unto you his covenant, which

he commanded you to perform, *even* ten commandments, and he wrote them upon two tables of stone. 14 ¶ And the Lord commanded me at that time, to teach you statutes and judgments, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go over to possess it. 15 Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves (for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the LORD spake unto you in *Horeb*, out of the midst of the fire.) 16 Lest ye corrupt *your selves*, and make you a graven Image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female, 17 The likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air, 18 The likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth: 19 And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, *even* all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the LORD thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven. 20 But the LORD hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, *even* out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance, as ye are this day. 21 Furthermore, the LORD was angry with me for your sakes, and sware that I should not go over Jordan, and that I should not go in unto that good land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance. 22 But I must die in this land, I must not go over Jordan: but ye shall go over and possess this good land. 23 Take heed unto your selves, lest ye forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which he made with you, and make you a graven image, or the likeness of any thing which the LORD thy God hath forbidden thee. 24 For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, *even* a jealous God. 25 ¶ When thou shalt beget children, and childrens children, and shalt have remained long in the land, and shall corrupt *your selves*, and make a graven image, or the likeness of any thing, and shall do evil in the sight of the LORD thy God, to provoke him to anger: 26 I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto you go over Jordan to possess it: ye shall not prolong *your* days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed. 27 And the LORD shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen, whither the LORD shall lead you. 28 And there ye shall serve gods, the work of mens hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell. 29 But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul. 30 When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, *even* in the latter days, if thou turn to the LORD thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice: 31 (For the LORD thy God is a merciful God) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them. 32 For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there have been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it? 33 Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live? 34 Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs,

and by wonders; and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrours, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? 35 Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the LORD he is God; *there is none else besides him.* 36 Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee: and upon earth he shewed thee his great fire, and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire. 37 And because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee out in his sight with his mighty power out of Egypt: 38 To drive out nations from before thee, greater and mightier than thou art, to bring thee in to give thee their land for an inheritance, as it is this day. 39 Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the LORD he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: *there is none else.* 40 Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the earth, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for ever.

This most lively and excellent Discourse is so entire, and the Particulars of it so oft repeated, that we must take it all together in the Exposition of it, and endeavour to digest it into proper heads, for we cannot divide it into Paragraphs.

1. In general, it is the Use and Application of the foregoing History: It comes in by way of Inference from it, v. 1. *Now therefore hearken O Israel.* This Use we should make of the Review of God's Providences concerning us, we should by them be quick'n'd and engag'd to Duty and Obedience. The Histories of the Years of Ancient Times should in like manner be improv'd by us.

2. The Scope and Drift of his Discourse is to perswade them to keep close to God, and to his Service, and not to forsake him for any other God, nor in any Instance to decline from their Duty to him. Now observe what he saith to them with a great deal of Divine Rhetorick. (1.) By way of Exhortation and Direction. (2.) By way of Motive and Argument to enforce his Exhortations.

1. See here how he charges and commands them, and shews them what is good, and what the Lord required of them.

1. He demands their diligent Attention to the Word of God, and to the Statutes and Judgments that were taught them. *Hearken O Israel.* He means not only that they must now give him the Hearing, but that whenever the Book of the Law was read to them, or read by them, they should be attentive to it. *Hearken* to the Statutes, as containing the great Commands of God, and the great Concerns of your own souls, and therefore challenging your utmost Attention. At Horeb God had made them hear his Words, v. 10. hear them with a Witness; The Attention which was then constrain'd by the Circumstances of the Delivery, ought ever after to be engag'd by the Excellency of the Things themselves. What God so spoke once we should hear twice, hear often.

2. He charges them to preserve the Divine Law pure and entire among them, v. 2. *Keep it pure, and do not add to it; keep it entire, and do not diminish from it.* Not in Practice; so some, ye shall not add, by committing the Evil which the Law forbids, nor diminish by omitting the Good which the Law requires: Not in Opinion; so others ye shall not add your own Inventions, as if the Divine Institutions were defective, nor introduce, much less impose any Rites of Religious Worship other than what God has appointed: Nor shall ye diminish, or set aside any thing that is appointed, as needless or superfluous. God's Work is perfect, nothing can be put to it or taken from it, but it makes it the worse. See Eccl. 3. 14. The Jews understand it as prohibiting the Alteration of the Text or Letter of the Law, even in the least Jot or Tittle. And to their great Care and Exactness herein we owe very much under God, the Purity and Integrity of the Hebrew Code. We find a Fence like this made about the New Testament in the close of it, Rev. 22. 18, 19.

3. He charges them to keep God's Commandments, v. 2. to do them, v. 5. 14. to keep and do them, v. 6. to perform the Covenant, v. 13. Hearing must be in order to Doing; Knowledge in order to Practice. God's Commandments were the Way they must keep in, The Rule they must keep to; They must go-

vern themselves by the Moral Precepts; perform their Devotion according to the Divine Ritual; and administer Justice according to the Judicial Law. He concludes his Discourse, v. 40. with this repeated Charge, *Thou shalt keep his Statutes, and his Commandments which I command thee.* What are Laws made for but to be observ'd and obey'd?

4. He charges them to be very strict and careful in their Observance of the Law, v. 9. *Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy Soul diligently,* and v. 15. *Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves:* And again, v. 22. *Take heed to yourselves.* Those that would be Religious must be very cautious, and walk circumspectly. Considering how many Temptations we are compass'd about with, and what corrupt Inclinations we have in our own Bosoms, we have great need to look about us, and to keep our Hearts with all Diligence. Those cannot walk aright that walk Carelessly, and at all Adventures.

5. He charges them particularly to take heed of the Sin of Idolatry, that Sin which of all other they would be most tempted to by the Customs of the Nations, were most addicted to by the Corruption of their Hearts, and would be most provoking to God, and of most pernicious Consequence to themselves: *Take good heed, lest in this Matter ye corrupt yourselves,* v. 15, 16. Two sorts of Idolatry he cautions them against.

1. The Worship of Images, however by them they might intend to worship the true God, as they had done in the Golden Calf; so changing the Truth of God into a Lye, and his Glory into Shame. The Second Commandment is expressly directed against this, and it is here enlarg'd upon, v. 15, 16, 17, 18. *Take heed lest you corrupt yourselves, i. e. lest ye debase yourselves;* for they that think to make Images of God, form in their Minds such Notions of him, as must needs be an Inlet to all Impieties: And 'tis intimated that it is a Spiritual Adultery: *And take heed lest you destroy yourselves.* If any thing ruin you, this will be it. Whatever you do, make no Similitude of God, either in a Human Shape, Male or Female; or in the Shape of any Beast or Fowl, Serpent or Fish: For the Heathen worshipp'd their Gods by Images of all these Kinds, being either not able to form, or not willing to admit that plain Demonstration which we find, Hof. 8. 6. *The workman made it, therefore it is not God.* To represent an infinite Spirit by an Image; and the Great Creator by the Image of a Creature, is the greatest affront we can put upon God, and the greatest Cheat we can put upon ourselves.

As an Argument against their making Images of God, he urgeth it very much upon them, that when God made himself known to them at Horeb, he did it by a Voice of Words, which sounded in their Ears, to teach them that Faith comes by hearing, and God in the World is high us; but not by any Image presented to their Eye; for to see God as he is, is reserv'd for our Happiness in the other World, and to see him as he is not, will do us Hurt and no Good in this World. Ye saw no similitude, v. 12. *no manner of similitude,* v. 15. 'Tis probable they expected to have seen some Similitude, for they were ready to break through unto the Lord to gaze, Exod. 19. 21. But all they saw was Light and Fire, and nothing that they could make an Image of; God in infinite Wisdom so ordering his Manifestation of himself, because of the Peril of Idolatry. 'Tis said indeed of Moses that he beheld the similitude of the Lord, Numb. 12. 8. God allowed him that Favour, because he was above the Temptation of Idolatry; But for the People who were newly come from admiring the Idols of Egypt, they must see no Resemblance of God, lest they should have pretended to copy it, and so should have received the second Commandment in vain: Faith (saith Bishop Patrick) they would have thought that that forbade them only to make any other Representation of God, besides that wherein he shewed himself to them; in which they would have concluded it lawful to represent him. Let this be a Caution to us, to take heed of making Images of God in our Fancy and Imagination, when we are worshipping him, lest thereby we corrupt ourselves. There may be Idols in the Heart, where there are none in the Sanctuary.

2. The Worship of the Sun, Moon and Stars is another Sort of Idolatry they are here caution'd against, v. 14. This was the first and most ancient Idolatry of all other, and the most plausible, drawing the Adoration to those Creatures, that not only are in Situation above us, but are most sensibly glorious in themselves, and most generally serviceable to the World. And the Plausibleness of it made it the more dangerous. It is intimated here, (1.) How strong the Temptation is to sense; for the Caution is, *lest thou shouldest be driven to worship them,* by the strong Impulse of a vain Imagination, and the impetuous Torrent of the Customs of the Nations. The Heart is supposed to walk after the Eye, which in our corrupt and degenerate State it is very apt to do. *When thou seest the Sun, Moon and Stars,* thou wilt so admire their Height and Brightness, their regular Motion, and powerful Influence, that would be strongly tempted to give that Glory

to them which is due to him that made them, and made them what they are to us; gave them their beings, and made them Blessings to the World. It seems there was need of a great deal of Resolution to arm them against this Temptation; so weak was their Faith in an invisible God, and an invisible World.—(2.) Yet he shews how weak the Temptation would be to those that would use their Reason; for these pretended deities the *Sun, Moon and Stars*, were only Blessings which the Lord their God, whom they were obliged to worship, had imparted to all Nations. 'Tis absurd to worship them, for (1.) They are *Man's Servants*, were made and ordained to give Light on the Earth, and shall we serve those that were made to serve us? The Sun in Hebrew is called *Shemish*, which signifies a *Servant*, for it is the Minister General of this visible World, and holds the Candle to all Mankind; let it not then be worshipp'd as a Lord. (2.) They are *God's Gifts*: He has imparted them, whatever Benefit we have by them we owe it to him, 'tis therefore highly injurious to him to give that Honour and Praise to them which is due to him only.

6. He charges them to teach their Children to observe the Law of God. *Teach them thy sons, and thy sons sons, v. 9. that they may teach their Children, v. 10.* (1.) Care must be taken in general to preserve the Entail of Religion among them, and to transmit the Knowledge and Worship of God to Posterity; for the Kingdom of God in Israel was design'd to be perpetual, if they did not forfeit the Privilege of it. (2.) Parents must, in order hereunto, particularly take Care to teach their own Children the Fear of God, and to train them up in an Obedience of all his Commandments.

7. He charges them never to forget their Duty, v. 23. *Take heed lest you forget the Covenant of the Lord your God. Tho' God is ever mindful of the Covenant, we are apt to forget it; and that's at the bottom of all our Departures from God: We have need therefore to watch against all those Things which would put the Covenant out of our Minds, and to watch over our own Hearts, lest at any time we let it slip, and so we must take heed lest at any time we forget our Religion, lest we lose it, or leave it off. Care and Caution, and Holy Watchfulness are the best Helps against a bad Memory. These are the Directions and Commands he gives them.*

2. Let us see now what are the Motives or Arguments with which he backs these Exhortations. How doth he order the Cause before them, and fill his Mouth with Arguments? And a great deal he has to say on God's Behalf: Some of his Topics are indeed peculiar to that People, yet applicable to us. But upon the whole, 'tis evident, that Religion has Reason on its side, the Powerful Charms of which all that are Irreligious willfully stop their Ears to.

1. He urges, *The Greatness, Glory and Goodness of God*. Did we consider what a God he is with whom we have to do, we would surely make Conscience of our Duty to him, and would not dare to sin against him.—He minds them here. (1.) That the Lord *Jehovah* is the one only Living and True God. This they must know and consider, v. 39. There are many things which we know, but are not the better for, because we do not consider them, we do not apply them to ourselves, nor draw proper Inferences from them. This is a Truth so evident that it cannot but be known, and so improveable, that if it were duly consider'd it would effectually reform the World. That the Lord *Jehovah* he is God, an Infinite and Eternal being, Self-Existent and Self-sufficient, and the Fountain of all Being, Power, and Motion; That he is God in Heaven above, cloth'd with all the Glory, and Lord of all the Hosts of the upper World; and that he is God upon Earth beneath, which tho' distant from the Throne of his Glory, is not out of the reach of his Sight or Power; and tho' defpicable and mean is not below his Care and Cognizance. And there is none else; no True and Living God but he; all the Deities of the Heathen were Counterfeits and Usurpers; nor did any of them so much as pretend to be Universal Monarchs in Heaven and Earth, but were only local Deities. Israel that worshipp'd no other but the Supreme Numen were for ever inexcusable if they either changed their God, or neglected him. (2.) That he is a consuming Fire, a jealous God, v. 24. Take heed of offending him, for (1.) He has a jealous Eye to discern an Affront: he must have your entire Affection and Adoration, and will by no means endure a Rival. God's Jealousie over us is a good Reason for our godly Jealousie over ourselves. (2.) He has a Heavy Hand, to punish an Affront, especially in his Worship, for there he is in a special manner jealous. He is a consuming Fire; His Wrath against Sinners is so, 'tis Dreadful and Destroying, 'tis a fiery Indignation which will devour the Adversaries, Heb. 10. 27. Fire consumes that only which is Fuel for it, so the Wrath of God fastens upon those only who by their own sin have fitted themselves for Destruction, 1 Cor. 3. 13. Isa. 27. 4. Even in the New Testament we find the same Argument urg'd upon us as a Reason why we should serve God with reverence, Heb. 12. 28, 29: because tho' he be our God, and a Rejoicing Light to

those that serve him faithfully, yet he is a consuming Fire to those that trifle with him. (3.) That yet he is a merciful God, v. 31. It comes in here as an Incouragement to Repentance, but might serve us an Inducement to Obedience, and a Consideration proper to prevent their Apostacy. Shall we forsake a merciful God, who will never forsake us, as it follows here, if we be faithful unto him. Whither can we go to mend ourselves? Shall we forget the Covenant of our God, who will not forget the Covenants of our Fathers? Let us be held to our Duty to the Bonds of Love, and prevailed with by the Mercies of God to cleave to him.

2. He urges *Their Relation to this God*, his Authority over them, and their Obligations to him. The Commandments you are to Keep and do are not mine, saith Moses, nor my Inventions, nor my Injunctions, but they are the Commandments of the Lord, fram'd by Infinite Wisdom, Enacted by Sovereign Power, He is the Lord God of your fathers, v. 1. So that you are his by Inheritance, your Fathers were his, and you were born in his House. He is the Lord your God, v. 2. So that you are his by your own Consent. He is the Lord my God, v. 5. So that I treat with you as his Agent, and Ambassador, and in his name Moses delivered unto them all that, and that only which he had received from the Lord.

3. He urges *The Wisdom of being Religious*, v. 6. For this your wisdom in the sight of the Nations: In keeping God's Commandments. 1. They would act wisely for themselves. This is your Wisdom. 'Tis not only agreeable to Right Reason but highly conducive to our true Interest; This is one of the first and most ancient Maxims of Divine Revelation, The fear of the Lord that is Wisdom, Job 28. 28. 2. They would answer the expectations of their Neighbours, who upon reading or hearing the Precepts of the Law that was given them, would conclude, that certainly the People that were govern'd by this Law were a wise and understanding People. Great things may justly be look'd for from those that are guided by Divine Revelation, and unto whom are committed the Oracles of God; They must needs be wiser and better than other People; And so they are if they are rul'd by the Rules that are given them, and if they are not, though Reproach may for their sakes be cast upon the Religion they profess, yet it will in the end certainly return upon themselves to their eternal Confusion, Those that enjoy the Benefit of Divine Light and Laws, ought to carry themselves so as to support their own Reputation for Wisdom and Honour, (See Eccl. 10. 1.) that God may be glorified thereby.

4. He urges the singular Advantages they enjoy'd by virtue of the Happy Establishment they were under, v. 7, 8. Our communion with God, (which is the highest Honour and Happiness we are capable of in this World) is kept up by the Word and Prayer; in both these Israel was happy above any People under Heaven.

(1.) Never was any People so Privileged in speaking to God, v. 7. He was nigh unto them in all that they call'd upon him for—ready to answer their Enquiries, and relieve them by his Oracle; ready to answer their Requests, and to grant them, by a particular Providence, When they had cried unto God for Bread, for Water, for Healing, they had found him near them; to succour and relieve them, a very present Help, and in the midst of them, Pl. 46. 1, 5. His Ear open to their Prayers.—Observe 1. It is the Character God's Israel that on all Occasions they call upon him, in every thing they make their requests known to God. They do nothing but what they consult him in, they desire nothing but what they come to him for. 2. Those they call upon God shall certainly find him within call, and ready to give an Answer of Peace to every Prayer of Faith.—See Isa. 58. 9. Thou shalt cry, as the Child for the Nurse, and he shall say, here I am, what doth my dear Child cry for.— 3. This is a Privilege which makes the Israel of God truly Great and Honourable: What can go further than this to magnify a People, or Person? Is any Name more illustrious than that of Israel, a Prince with God? What nation is there so great? Other Nations might boast of greater Numbers, larger Territories, and more ancient Incorporations, but none could boast of such an Interest in Heaven as Israel had. They had their Gods, but not so nigh to them as Israel's God was; they could not help them in a time of need, as 1 Kin. 18. 27.

(2.) Never was any People so Privileged in hearing from God, by the Statutes and Judgments which were set before them, v. 8. This also was the Grandure of Israel above any People, What nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous? Observe 1. That all the Statutes and Judgments of the Divine Law are infinitely Just and Righteous above the Statutes and Judgments of any of the Nations. The Law of God is far more Excellent than the Law of Nations. No Law so consonant to natural Equity, and the unprejudic'd Dictates of Right Reason, so consistent with itself in all the Parts of it, and so conducive to the welfare and interest of Mankind as the Scripture-Law is, Psal. 119. 128.— 2. The having of these

these Statutes and Judgments set before them, is the true and transcendent *Greatness* of any Nation or People. See *Psal.* 147. 19, 20. 'Tis an Honour to us that we have the Bible, in Reputation and Power among us. 'Tis an Evidence of a Peoples being *high* in the Favour of God, and a means of making them high among the Nations. They that *magnify* the Law shall be *magnified* by it.

5. He urges God's *glorious appearances* to them at mount Sinai, when he gave them this Law. This he insists much upon. Take heed *lest thou forget the day that thou stoodest before the Lord thy God in Horeb*, v. 10. Some of them were now alive that could remember it, tho' they were then under Twenty Years of Age, and the rest of them might be said to stand there in the Loins of their Fathers, who received the Law and enter'd into Covenant there, not for themselves only, but for *their Children*, to whom God had an Eye particularly in giving the Law, that they might *teach it* their Children.

Two things they must remember, and one would think they should never forget them.

1. What they saw at Mount Sinai, v. 11. They saw a strange Composition of Fire and Darknes, both *dreadful* and very *awful*; and they must needs be a mighty Foil to each other; The Darknes made the Fire in the midst of it look the more *dreadful*: Fires in the Night are most frightful, and the Fire made the Darknes that surrounded it look the more *awful*; for it must needs be a strong Darknes which such a Fire did not disperse. In allusion to this Appearance upon Mount Sinai, God is said to shew himself for his People, and against his and their Enemies, in Fire and Darknes together, *Psal.* 18. 8, 9.

He tells them again, v. 36. What they saw, for he would have them never to forget it, he *shewed thee his great Fire*. One Flash of Lightning, that Fire from Heaven, strikes an awe upon us; and some have observ'd that most Creatures naturally turn their Face towards the Lightning, as ready to receive the Impressions of it; but how dreadful then must a *constant* Fire from Heaven be! It gave an earnest of the Day of Judgment in which the Lord Jesus shall be reveal'd in *flaming Fire*.

As he minds them of what they saw, so he tells them what they saw not; *no manner of similitude*, from which they might form either an Idea of God in their Fancies, or an Image of God in their high Places.—By what we see of God, sufficient ground is given us to believe him a Being of Infinite Power and Perfection, but no Occasion given us to suspect him to have a Body such as we have.

2. What they heard at Mount Sinai, v. 12. *The Lord spake unto you with an intelligible Voice*, in your own Language, and you heard it. This he enlargeth upon towards the close of his Discourse, v. 32, 33, 36. (1.) They heard the Voice of God, speaking out of Heaven. God manifests himself to all the World in the Works of Creation, without Speech or Language, and yet their Voice is heard, *Psal.* 19. 2. But to Israel he made himself known by Speech and Language, condescending to the weakness of the Church's Infant-state: Here was the Voice of one crying in the Wilderness, to prepare the way of the Lord. (2.) They heard it out of the midst of the Fire, which shew'd, that it was God himself that spake to them, for who else could dwell with devouring Fire? God spake to Job out of the Whirlwind, which was terrible; but to Israel out of the Fire, which was more terrible. We have reason to be thankful that he doth not thus speak to us, but by men like ourselves, whose Terror shall not make us afraid, *Job* 33. 6, 7. (3.) They heard it, and yet lived, v. 33. 'Tis a Wonder of Mercy that the Fire did not devour them, or that they did not dye for fear, when Moses himself trembled. (4.) Never any People heard the like. He bids them inquire of former Days, and distant Places, and they will find this Favour of God to Israel without Precedent or Parallel, v. 32. This singular Honour done them, call'd for singular Obedience from them. It might justly be expected they should do more for God than other People, since God had done so much more for them.

6. He urges God's *gracious Appearances* for them, in bringing them out of Egypt, from the Iron-Furnace, where they labour'd in the Fire, forming them into a People, and then taking them to be his own People, a People of Inheritance, v. 20. This he mentions again, v. 34, 37, 38. Never did God do such a thing for any People: The Rise of this Nation, was quite different from the Origin of all other Nations. (1.) They were thus *dignify'd* and *distinguish'd*, not for any thing in them that was deserving or inviting, but because God had a kindness for their Fathers, he chose them. See the Reasons of Free Grace; we are not beloved for our own sakes, but for his sake who is the great Trustee of the Covenant. (2.) They were deliver'd out of Egypt by Miracles and Signs, in Mercy to them, and in Judgment upon the Egyptians, against whom God stretched out his Arm, which was signify'd by Moses stretching out his Hand to in summoning the Plagues. (3.) They were design'd for a happy Settlement in Canaan, v. 38. Nations

must be driven out from before them, to make Room for them, to shew how much dearer they were to God than any other People were. Egyptians and Canaanites must both be sacrificed to Israel's Honour and Interest. They that stand in Israel's Light, in Israel's Way, it is at their peril.

7. He urges God's *righteous Appearance* against them sometimes for their Sins. He instanceth particularly in the matter of Peor, v. 34. This had hapned very lately; their Eyes had seen but *tother* Day, the sudden Destruction of those, and joynd themselves to Baal-Peor, and the Preservation of those that cleave to the Lord; from which they might easily infer the danger of Apostasy from God, and the Benefit of Adherence to him. He also takes notice again of God's Displeasure against himself, v. 21, 22. *The Lord was angry with me for your sakes*. He mentions this to try their Ingenuity, whether they would really be troubled for the great Prejudice they had occasion'd to their faithful Friend and Leader. Others suffering for our Sakes, should grieve us more than our own.

8. He urges the *certain Benefit and Advantage* of Obedience. This Argument he begins with, v. 1. *That ye may live, and go in and possess the Land*; and this he concludes with, v. 40. *That it may go well with thee, and with thy Children after thee*. He minds them that they were upon their good Behaviour, their Prosperity would depend upon their Piety. If they kept God's Precepts, he would undoubtedly fulfil his Promises.

9. He urges the *Fatal Consequences* of their Apostasy from God: That it would undoubtedly be the Ruin of their Nation. This he enlarges upon, v. 25, —31. Where 1. He foresees their Revolt from God to Idols; that in process of time, when they had remained long in the Land, and were settled upon their Lees, they would corrupt themselves, and make a graven Image; this was the Sin that would most easily beset them, v. 25.

2. He foretels the Judgments of God upon them for this, Ye shall utterly be destroyed, v. 26. Scattered among the Nations, v. 27. And their Sin should be made their Punishment, v. 28. *There shall ye serve Gods, the work of Mens Hands*, be compell'd to serve them, whether ye will or no; Or, through your own Sottishness and Stupidity, you will find no better Succours to apply yourselves to in your Captivity—Those that cast off their Duties of Religion in their Prosperity, cannot expect the Comforts of it when they come to be in Distress. Justly are they then sent to the Gods whom they have served, *Judges* 10. 14.

3. Yet he encourages them to hope that God would reserve Mercy for them in the latter Days; that he would by his Judgments upon them, bring them to Repentance, and take them again into Covenant with himself, v. 29, 30, 31. Where observe, (1.) That whatever Place we are in, we may from thence seek the Lord our God, tho' never so remote from our own Land, or from his holy Temple. There's no part of this Earth that has a Gulf fixed between it and Heaven. (2.) They, and they only, shall find God to their Comfort, who seek him with all their Heart, i. e. That are entirely devoted to him, and earnestly desirous of his Favour, and solicitous to obtain it. (3.) Afflictions are sent to engage and quicken us to seek God, and by the Grace of God working with them, many are reduced to their right Mind. When these things are come upon thee, 'tis to be hoped thou wilt turn to the Lord thy God, for thou seest what comes of turning from him. See *Dan.* 9. 11, 12. (4.) God's Faithfulness to his Covenant encourageth us to hope, that he will not reject us, tho' we are driven to him by Affliction. If we at length remember the Covenant, we shall find that he has not forgotten it.

Now let all these Arguments be laid together, and then say, Whether Religion has not Reason on its side? None cast off the Government of their God, but those that have first abandon'd the Understanding of a Man.

41 ¶ Then Moses severed three cities on this side Jordan, toward the sun rising: 42 That the slayer might flee thither, which should kill his neighbour unawares, and hated him not in times past; and that fleeing to one of these cities, he might live: 43 Namely, Bezer in the wilderness, in the plain-country, of the Reubenites; and Ramoth in Gilead, of the Gadites; and Golan in Bashan, of the Manassites. 44 ¶ And this is the law which Moses set before the children of Israel: 45 These are the testimonies, and the statutes, and the Judgments, which Moses spake unto the children of Israel, after they came forth out of Egypt: 46 On this side Jordan in the valley over against Beth-peor, in the land of Sihon King of the

the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon, whom Moses and the children of Israel smote, after they were come forth out of Egypt. 47 And they possessed his land, and the land of Og king of Bashan, two kings of the Amorites, which were on this side Jordan, toward the sun-rising; 48 From Aroer, which is by the bank of the river Arnon, even unto mount Sion, which is Hermon. 49 And all the plain on this side Jordan east-ward, even unto the sea of the plain, under the springs of Pishah.

Here's 1. The Nomination of the Cities of Refuge on that side Jordan where Israel now lay Encamp'd. Three Cities were appointed for that Purpose, one in the Lot of Reuben, another in that of Gad, and another in that of the Half Tribe of Manasseh, v. 41, 42, 43. What Moses could do for that People while he was yet with them, he did, to give Example to the Rulers that were settled, that they might observe them the better when he was gone.

2. The Introduction to another Sermon that Moses Preach'd to Israel, which we have in the following Chapters. Probably, it was Preach'd the next Sabbath-Day after, when the Congregation attended to receive Instruction. He had in general Exhorted them to Obedience in the former Chapter; here he comes to repeat the Law which they were to observe; for he demands an *universal*, but not an *Implicit* Obedience. How can we do our Duty, if we do not know it? Here therefore he sets the Law before them, as the Rule they were to work by, the Way they were to walk in: Sets it before them, as the Glass in which they were to see their Natural Face, that looking into this perfect Law of Liberty, they might continue therein. These are the Testimonies, the Statutes, and the Judgments, The Moral, Ceremonial, and Judicial Laws, which had been Enacted before, when Israel were newly come out of Egypt, and were now repeated, on this side Jordan, v. 44, 45, 46. The Place where Moses gave them these Laws in Charge, is here particularly described. 'Twas (1.) Over against Beth-peor, an Idol Temple of the Moabites, which perhaps, Moses sometimes look'd towards with a particular Caution to them, against the Infection of that, and other such like dangerous Places. (2.) 'Twas upon their new Conquests, in the very Land which they had got out of the Hands of Sihon and Og, and were now actually in Possession of, v. 47. Their present Triumphs herein were a powerful Argument for Obedience.

CHAP. V.

In this Chapter we have the Second Edition of the Ten Commandments. 1. The general Intent of them; they were in the Nature of a Covenant between God and Israel, v. 1.—5. 2. The particular Precepts are repeated, v. 6—21. With the double Delivery of them, both by Word and Writing, v. 22. 3. The settling of the Correspondence from thence forward between God and Israel by the Mediation and Ministry of Moses. 1. 'Twas Israel's humble Petition that it might be so, v. 23.—27. 2. 'Twas God's gracious Grant that it should be so, v. 28.—31. And from hence he infers the Obligation they were under to Obedience, v. 32.

AND Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep and do them. 2 The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. 3 The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day. 4 The LORD talked with you face to face in the mount, out of the midst of the fire, 5 (I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to shew you the word of the LORD: for ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount) saying,

Here 1. Moses Summons the Assembly. He called all Israel, not only the Elders, but 'tis likely, as many as the People as could come within hearing, v. 1. The greatest of them were not above God's Command, nor the meanest of them below his Cognizance; but they were all concern'd to hear, what they were all bound to do.

2. He demands Attention. Hear O Israel; Hear and Heed, Hear and Remember. Hear, that you may Learn, and Keep, and Do; else your hearing is to no Purpose. When we hear the Word of God, we must set ourselves to learn it, that we may have it ready to us upon all Occasions, and what we have

learn'd, we must put in Practice, for that's the End of Hearing and Learning; not to fill our Heads with Notions, or our Mouths with Talk, but to rectify and direct our Affections, and Conversations.

3. He refers them to the Covenant made with them in Horeb, as that which they must Govern themselves by. See the wonderful Condescension of Divine Grace in turning the Command into a Covenant, that we might be more the strongly bound to Obedience by our own Consent, and the more encourag'd in it by the Divine Promise, both which are suppos'd in the Covenant. The Promises and Threatnings annex'd to some of the Precepts, as to the 2d, 3d, and 5th, make them amount to a Covenant. Observe, 1. The Parties to this Covenant. God made it not with our Fathers, not with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; To them God gave the Covenant of Circumcision, Acts 7. 8. But not that of the Ten Commandments. The Light of Divine Revelation shone gradually, and the Children were made to know more of God's Mind, than their Fathers had done. The Covenant was made with us, or our immediate Parents, that represented us, before Mount Sinai, and transferr'd for us. (2.) The Publication of this Covenant; God himself did as it were read the Articles to them. v. 4. He talked with you Face to Face. Word to Word. So the Chaldees. Not in dark Visions, as of Old he spake to the Fathers, Job 4. 12, 13. But openly and clearly, and so as that all the Thousands of Israel might Hear and Understand. He spake to them, and then received the Answer they returned to him: Thus was it Transacted Face to Face. (3.) The Mediator of the Covenant, Moses stood before God and them, at the Foot of the Mount, v. 5. And carried Messages between them both for the settling of the Preliminaries, Exod. 19. And for the exchanging of the Ratifications, Exod. 24. Herein Moses was a Type of Christ, who stands between God and Man, to shew us the Word of the Lord: A Blessed Day's-Man, that has laid his Hand upon us both, so that we may both Hear from God, and Speak to him without trembling.—

6 ¶ I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the Land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. 7 Thou shalt have no other gods before me. 8 Thou shalt not make thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters beneath the earth. 9 Thou shalt not bow down thy self unto them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, 10 And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments. 11 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain: for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. 12 Keep the sabbath-day to sanctify it, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee. 13 Six days thou shalt labour, and do all thy work: 14 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattel, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou. 15 And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath-day. 16 ¶ Honour thy father and thy mother as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged: and that it may go well with thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. 17 Thou shalt not kill. 18 Neither shalt thou commit adultery. 19 Neither shalt thou steal. 20 Neither shalt thou bear false witness against thy neighbour. 21 Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour's wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour's house, his field, or his man-servant, or his maid-servant, his ox, or his ass, or any thing that is thy neighbour's.

bours. 22 ¶ These words the LORD spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice, and he added no more; and he wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me.

Here's the Repetition of the Ten Commandments; in which observe, 1. Tho' they had been spoken before, and written, yet they are again rehears'd: For *Precept* must be upon *Precept*, and *Line upon Line*, and all little enough to keep the Word of God in our Minds, and to preserve and renew the Impressions of it. We have need to have the same things oft inculcated upon us. See *Phil.* 3. 1.

2. There is some Variation here from that Record, *Exod.* 20. As there is between the Lord's Prayer, as it is in *Mat.* 6. and as it is *Luke* 11. In both 'tis more necessary that we tie ourselves to the *things*, than to the *Words* unalterably.

3. The most considerable Variation is in the 4th Commandment, *Exod.* 20. The Reason annex'd, is taken from the Creation of the World; here 'tis taken from their Deliverance out of *Egypt*, because that was typical of our Redemption by Jesus Christ, in remembrance of which the Christian Sabbath was to be observ'd, *v.* 15. *Remember that thou wast a Servant, and God brought thee out.*—And therefore, (1.) It is fit that thy Servants should be favoured by the Sabbath-rest; for thou knowest the Heart of a Servant, and how welcome one Day's Ease will be after six Days Labour. (2.) It is fit that thy God should be honour'd by the Sabbath Work, and the Religious Services of the Day in Consideration of the great things he has done for thee. In the Resurrection of Christ we were brought into the glorious Liberty of the Children of God. *With a mighty Hand, and an out-stretched Arm*, therefore by the Gospel Edition of the Law, we are directed to observe the first Day of the Week, in remembrance of that Glorious Work of Power and Grace.

4. 'Tis added in the 5th Commandment, *That it may go well with thee*, which addition the Apostle quotes, and puts first, *Eph.* 6. 3. *That it may be well with thee, and that thou mayst live long.* If there be Instances of some that have been very Dutiful to their Parents, and yet have not liv'd long upon Earth, we may reconcile it to the Promise, by this Explication of it, Whether they *live long* or no, it shall *go well with them*, either in this World, or in a better. See *Ecc.* 8. 12.

5. The five last Commandments are connected or coupled together, which they are not in *Exodus*: *Neither shall thou commit Adultery, neither shalt thou Steal, &c.* Which intimates, that God's Commands are all of a piece, the same Authority that obliges us to one, obliges us to another; and we must not be partial in the Law, but have respect to all God's Commandments; for he that *offends in one Point, is guilty of all*, *Jam.* 2. 10. 11.

6. That these Commandments were given with a great deal of awful Solemnity, *v.* 22. (1.) They were spoken with a great Voice out of the Fire and thick Darkness. That was a Dispensation of Terror, design'd to make the Gospel of Grace the more welcome, and to be a Specimen of the Terrors of the Judgment-Day, *Psal.* 50. 3. 4. (2.) He added no more.—What other Laws he gave them, were sent by *Moses*, but no more were spoken in the same manner, that the Ten Commandments were. He added no more, therefore we must not add: The Law of the Lord is perfect. (3.) He wrote them in two Tables of Stone, that they might be preserv'd from Corruption, and might be transmitted pure and entire to Posterity, for whose use they were intended as well as for the present Generation. These being the Heads of the Covenant, the Chest in which the written Tables were deposited, was call'd the *Ark of the Covenant*. See *Rev.* 11. 19.

23 And it came to pass when ye heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness (for the mountain did burn with fire) that ye came near unto me, even all the heads of your tribes, and your elders. 24 And ye said, Behold, the LORD our God hath shewed us his glory, and his greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire: we have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth. 25 Now therefore why should we die? for this great fire will consume us. If we hear the voice of the LORD our God any more, then we shall die. 26 For who is there of all flesh that hath heard the voice of the living God, speaking out of the midst of the fire (as we have) and lived? 27 Go thou

near, and hear all that the LORD our God shall say; and speak thou unto us all that the LORD our God shall speak unto thee, and we will hear it, and do it. 28 And the LORD heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me; and the LORD said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: they have well said all that they have spoken. 29 O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever. 30 Go say to them, Get you into your tents again. 31 But as for thee, stand thou hear by me, and I will speak unto thee all the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments which thou shalt teach them, that they may do them in the land which I give them to possess it. 32 Ye shall observe to do therefore as the LORD your God hath commanded you: you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. 33 You walk in all the ways which the LORD your God hath commanded you, that you may live, and that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess.

Here 1. *Moses* minds them of the Agreement of both the Parties that were now Treating, in the Mediation of *Moses*.

1. Here's the mighty Consternation that the People were put into, by that extream Terror with which the Law was given. They own'd, they could not bear it any more; *This great fire will consume us*; This dreadful Voice will be fatal to us, we shall certainly Dye, if we hear it any more, *v.* 25. They wonder'd that they were not already struck dead with it, and took it for an extraordinary Instance of the Divine Power and Goodness, not only that they were thus spoken to, but that they were enabled to bear it. For, *who ever heard the Voice of the living God, as we have and lived?* God's Appearances have always been terrible to Man, ever since the Fall: But Christ having taken away Sin, invites us to come boldly to the Throne of Grace.

2. Their earnest Request, that God would from hence forward spake to them by *Moses*, with a Promise that they would hear what he said, as from God himself, and do it, *v.* 27. It seems by this, (1.) That they expected to receive further Commands from God, and were willing to hear more from him. (2.) That they thought *Moses* able to bear these Discoveries of the Divine Glory, which they by reason of Guilt, were sensible of their inability to stand up under. They believ'd him to be a Favourite of Heaven, and also one that would be Faithful to them; yet at other times they murmur'd at him, and but a little before this, were ready to stone him, *Exod.* 17. 4. See how Mens Convictions correct their Passions. (3.) That now they were in a good Mind, under the strong Convictions of the Word they heard. Many have their Consciences startled by the Law, that have them not purified: Fair Promises are extorted from them, but no good Principles fix'd and rooted in them.—

3. God's Approbation of their Request. (1.) He commends what they said, *v.* 28. They spoke it to *Moses*, but God took notice of it; for there is not a Word in our Tongue, but he knows it. He acknowledges, they have well said. Their owning the necessity of a Mediator to deal between them and God, was well said. Their desire to receive further Directions from God by *Moses*, and their Promise to observe what Directions should be given them, were well said. And what is well said, shall have its Praise with God, and should have with us. What's good, as far as it goes, let it be commended. (2.) He wishes they were but sincere in it, *v.* 29. *O that were such a Heart in them!* (1.) Such a Heart as they should have; a Heart to Fear God, and keep his Commandments for ever. Note, The God of Heaven is truly and earnestly desirous of the Welfare and Salvation of poor Sinners: He has given abundant Proof that he is so; He gives us time and space to Repent; by his Mercies invites to Repentance, and waits to be gracious; has sent his Son to redeem us, publish'd a general Offer of Pardon and Life, has promis'd his Spirit to those that pray for him, and has said it, and sworn, That he hath no pleasure in the Ruin of Sinners. (2.) Such a Heart as they now had, or one would think they had. Note, It would be well with many, if there were always such a Heart in them, as there seems to be sometimes; when they are under Conviction of Sin, or the Rebukes of Providence, or when they

they come to look Death in the Face : *How gracious will they be, when these pangs come upon them !* O that there were always such an Heart in them. (3.) He appoints *Moses* to be his Messenger to them, to receive the Law from his Mouth, and to communicate it to them, v. 31. Here, the Matter was settled by consent of both Parties, That God should from henceforward speak to us by Men like ourselves, by *Moses* and the Prophets ; the Apostles and Evangelists, whom if we believe not, neither would we be persuaded, tho' God should speak to us as he did to Israel at Mount *Sinai*, or send Expresses from Heaven or Hell.

2. Hence he infers a Charge to them, to observe and do all that God had Commanded them, v. 32, 33. Seeing God had shewed himself so tender of them, and so willing to consider their Frame, and gratify them, in what they desire, and withal, to ready to make the best of them ; seeing they themselves had desired to have *Moses* for their Teacher, who was now teaching them, and seeing they had promised so solemnly, and upon so many good Causes and Considerations, that they would hear and do, he charges them to walk in all the Ways that God had commanded them ; assuring them that it would be highly for their Advantage to do so. The only way to be Happy, is to be Holy.—Say to the Righteous it shall be well with them.

CHAP. VI.

Moses in this Chapter goes on with his Charge to Israel, to be sure to keep up their Religion in Canaan. 'Tis much the same with Chap. 4.—1. His Preface is a Persuasive to Obedience, v. 1, 2, 3. 2. He lays down the great Principles of Obedience. The first Truth to be believed that God is One, v. 4. The first Duty to be done, To Love him with all our Heart, v. 5. 3. He prescribes the Means for keeping up Religion, v. 6, 9. 4. He cautions them against those things which would be the ruin of Religion. Abuse of Plenty, v. 10, 12. Inclination to Idolatry, v. 14, 15. And gives them some general Precepts, v. 13, 16, 17, 18. 5. He directs them what Instructions to give their Children, v. 20, 25.

NOW these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go to possess it : 2 That thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes, and his commandments which I command thee ; thou and thy son, and thy sons son, all the days of thy life, and that thy days might be prolonged. 3 ¶ Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it, that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey.

Observe here (1.) That *Moses* Taught the People all that, and that only which God commanded him to Teach them, v. 1. Thus Christ's Ministers are to Teach his Churches all that he has commanded, and neither more nor less, *Matth.* 28. 20. (2.) That the End of their being Taught was, that they might do as they were Taught, v. 1. Might Keep God's Statutes, v. 2. And observe to do them, v. 3. Good Instructions from Parents and Ministers, will but aggravate our Condemnation, if we do not live up to them. (3.) That *Moses* carefully endeavoured to fix them for God and Godliness, now they were entering upon the Land of Canaan, that they might be prepared for the Comforts of that Land, and fortified against the Snares of it ; and now they were setting out in the World, might set out well. (4.) That the Fear of God in the Heart, will be the most powerful Principle of Obedience, v. 2. That thou mightest Fear the Lord thy God, to keep all his Statutes. (5.) The Entail of Religion in a Family, or Country is the best Entail : 'Tis highly desirable that not we only, but our Children, and our Childrens Children, may Fear the Lord. (6.) Religion and Righteousness advance and secure the Prosperity of any People. Fear God, and it shall be well with thee.—Those that are well Taught, if they do what they are Taught, shall be well fed too, as Israel in the Land flowing with Milk and Honey, v. 3.

4 Hear O Israel, the LORD our God is one LORD. 5 And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. 6 And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart. 7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy

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children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. 8 And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. 9 And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates. 10 And it shall be when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which I swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee, great and goodly cities which thou buildedst not, 11 And houses full of all good things which thou filledst not, and wells digged which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive-trees which thou plantedst not, when thou shalt have eaten and be full ; 12 Then beware lest thou forget the LORD which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. 13 Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God and serve him, and shalt swear by his name. 14 Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are round about you : 15 (For the LORD thy God is a jealous God among you) lest the anger of the LORD thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth. 16 ¶ Ye shall not tempt the LORD your God, as ye tempted him in Massah.

Here's 1. A brief Summary of Religion, containing the first Principles of Faith and Obedience, v. 4, 5. These two Verses the Jews reckon one of the choicest Portions of Scripture : They write it in their Phylacteries, and think themselves not only oblig'd to say it at least twice every Day, but very happy in being so oblig'd ; having this Saying among them, *Blessed are we, who every Morning and Evening say, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.* But more blessed are we, if we duly consider and improve, 1. What we are here taught to believe concerning God ; That *Jehovah* our God is One *Jehovah*. (1.) That the God whom we serve is *Jehovah*, a Being Infinitely and Eternally Perfect, Self-existent, and Self-sufficient. (2.) That he is the only Living and True God ; He only is God, and he is but One. The firm Belief of this self-evident Truth, would effectually arm them against all Idolatry, which was introduc'd by that Fundamental Error, That there are Gods many. 'Tis past Dispute, that there is one God, and there is no other but he, *Mark* 12. 32. Let us therefore have no other, nor desire to have any other.—Some have thought there is here a plain intimation of the Trinity of Persons in the Unity of the Godhead ; for here is the Name of God three times, and yet all declared to be One. Happy they that have this One Lord for their God, for they have but one Master to please, but one Benefactor to seek to. 'Tis better to have one Fountain than a Thousand Cisterns ; one All-sufficient God, than a thousand Insufficient ones.

2. What we are here taught concerning the Duty which God requires of Man. 'Tis all summ'd up in this, as its Principle, *Thou shalt Love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart.* He had undertook, v. 2. to teach them to Fear God ; and in pursuance of his Undertaking, he here teaches them to Love him : For the better Affection we have to him, the greater Veneration we shall have for him : And the Child that honours his Parents, no doubt loves them. Did ever any Prince make a Law that his Subjects should Love him ? Yet such is the Condescension of the Divine Grace, that this is made the first and great Commandment of God's Law, that we Love him, and that we perform all other Parts of our Duty to him from a Principle of Love : *My Son, give me thy Heart.*—We must highly esteem him, be well pleased that there is such a being, well pleased in all his Attributes, and Relations to us ; our Desire must be towards him, our Delight in him, our Dependance upon him, and to him we must be entirely Devoted. It must be a constant Pleasure to us to think of him, hear from him, speak to him, and to serve him.—We must love him, (1.) as the Lord, the Best of Beings, most Excellent and Amiable in himself. (2.) As our God, a God in Covenant with us, our Father, and the most Kind and Bountiful of Friends and Benefactors.—We are also commanded to Love God with all our Heart, and Soul, and Might ; that is, We must love him, (1.) With a sincere Love ; not in Word and Tongue only, saying, we love him, when our Hearts are not with him, but inwardly, and in Truth, solacing ourselves in him. (2.) With a strong Love ; the Heart must be carried out towards him with great Ardor, and Fer- vency of Affection. Some have from hence thought, that we

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should

should avoid saying (as we commonly express ourselves) that we will do this or that *with all our Heart*; for we must not do any thing with all our Heart but *love God*; and that this Phrase being here us'd concerning that *Sacred Fire*, it should not be *unhallowed*. He that is our All must have our All, and none but he. (3.) With a *Superlative Love*. We must love God above any Creature whatsoever, and love nothing beside him, but what we love for him, and in subordination to him. (4.) With an *Intelligent Love*; for so 'tis explain'd, *Mark 12. 33.* To love him with all the Heart, and *with all the Understanding*; we must know him, and therefore Love him, as those that see good Cause to Love him. (5.) With an *Intire Love*; He is *One*, and therefore our Hearts must be *united* in his Love: and the whole stream of our Affections must run towards him. O that this Love of God may be shed abroad in our Hearts!

2. Means are here prescrib'd for the maintaining and keeping up of Religion in their Hearts and Houses, that it might not wither, and go to decay. And they are these:

1. Meditation, *v. 6.* *These words which I command thee shall be in thy heart.* Tho' the words alone without the things will do us no good, yet we are in danger of losing the things if we neglect the words, by which ordinarily Divine Light and Power are convey'd to the Heart. God's words must be laid up in our Hearts, that our Thoughts may be daily conversant with them, and employ'd about them, and thereby the whole Soul may be brought to abide and act under the Influence and Impression of them.— This immediately follows upon the Law of *loving God with all our Heart*, for they that do so will lay up his Word in their Hearts, both as an Evidence and Effect of that Love, and as a Means to preserve and increase it. He that loves God loves his Bible.

2. The Religious Education of Children, *v. 7.* *Thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children,* and by communicating thy Knowledge thou wilt increase it. They that love the Lord God themselves, should do what they can to engage the Affections of their Children to him, and so to preserve the Entail of Religion in their Families from being cut off. *Thou shalt whet them diligently upon thy Children,* so some read it; frequently repeat these things to them, try all ways of infilling them into their Minds, and making them pierce into their Hearts. As in whetting a Knife 'tis turn'd first on this side, then on that.— Be careful and exact in teaching thy Children; And aim as by whetting to sharpen them, and put an edge upon them.— Teach them *thy Children*, not only those of thine own Body (say the *Jews*) but all those that are any way under thy Care and Tuition.— Bishop Patrick well observes here, that *Moses* thought his Law so very plain and easy, that every Father might be able to instruct his Sons in it, and every Mother her Daughters. Thus that *Good thing* which is committed to us, we must carefully transmit to those that come after us, that it may be perpetuated.

3. Pious Discourse. *Thou shalt talk of these things,* with due Reverence and Seriousness, for the Benefit not only of thy Children, but of thy other Domesticks, thy Friends and Companions, as thou *sittest in thine House*; either at Work, or at Meat, or at Rest, or to receive Visits, and when thou *walkest by the way*, either for Diversion, or for Conversation, or in Journeys, when at Night thou art retiring from thy Family to lie down for sleep, and when in the Morning thou art risen up, and returnest to thy Family again. Take all Occasions to discourse with those about thee of Divine things; not of unrevealed Mysteries, or Matters of doubtful Disputation, but of the plain Truths and Laws of God, and the things that belong to our Peace. So far is it from being reckon'd a Diminution to the Honour of Sacred things to make them the Subject of our familiar Discourse, that they are recommended to us to be talked of; for the more conversant we are with them, the more we shall admire them, and be affected with them, and may thereby be instrumental to communicate Divine Light and Heat.

4. Frequent Reading of the Word.— *They shall be as frontlets between thine eyes, and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house,* *v. 8, 9.* 'Tis probable at that time, there were few written Copies of the whole Law, only at the Feast of Tabernacles the People had it read to them; And therefore God appointed them, at least for the present to write some Select Sentences of the Law that were most weighty and comprehensive, upon their Walls, or in Scrolls of Parchment to be worn about their Wrists, and some think hence the *Phylacteries* so much us'd among the *Jews* took rise. Christ blames the *Pharisees* not for wearing them, but for affecting to have them broader than other Peoples, *Matth. 23. 5.* But when Bibles came to be common among them, there was the less Occasion for this Expedient. 'Twas prudently and piously provided by the first Reformers of the *English Church*, that then when Bibles were scarce, some select Portions of Scripture should be written on the Walls and Pillars of the Churches, which the People might make familiar to them, in conformity to this Direction here; which seems to me to have been bind-

ing in the letter of it to the *Jews*, as it is to us in the intent of it, which is, that we should endeavour by all Means possible to make the Word of God familiar to us, that we may have it ready to us upon all Occasions, for our restraint from Sin, and our Direction and Excitement to our Duty. It must be as that which is *graven on the palms of our hands*, always before our Eyes. See *Prov. 7. 2, 3, 4.*— 'Tis also intimated, that we must never be *asham'd to own* our Religion, nor to own ourselves under the Check and Government of it. Let it be written on our Gates, and let every one that goes by our Door read it, That we believe *Jehovah* to be God alone, and believe ourselves bound to love him with all our hearts.

3. A Caution is here given not to forget God in a Day of Prosperity and Plenty, *v. 10, 11, 12.* Here 1. He raiseth their Expectations of the Goodness of their God; taking it for granted that he would bring them into the good Land that he had promis'd, *v. 10.* That they should no longer dwell in Tents as Shepherds and poor Travellers, but should settle in great and goodly Cities, should no longer wander in a barren Wilderness, but should enjoy Houses well furnished, and Gardens well planted, *v. 11.* And all this without any Care or Expence of their own, which he here lays a great stress upon, *Cities which thou buildest not, Houses which thou fillest not,* &c. both because it made the Mercy really much more valuable, that what they had came to them so cheap; And yet if they did not actually consider it, the Mercy would be the less esteem'd, for we are most sensible of the Value of that which has cost us dear. When they came so easily by the Gift, they would be apt to grow secure, and unmindful of the Giver.— 2. He engageth their watchfulness against the Badness of their own Hearts, *Then beware,* when thou liest safe and soft, *lest thou forget the Lord,* *v. 12.* Note (1.) In a Day of Prosperity we are in great Danger of forgetting God; our Dependence upon him, our Need of him, and our Obligations to him. When the World smiles, we are apt to make our court to it, and expect our happiness in it, and so we forget him that is our only Portion and Rest. *Agur* prays against this Temptation, *Prov. 30. 9.* *Lest I be full and deny thee.* (2.) There is therefore need of great care and caution at such a time, and a strict watch over our own Hearts. *Then beware—* Being warn'd of your Danger, stand upon your Guard against it. Bind the words of God for a sign upon thy hand, for this End, to prevent thy forgetting God.— When thou art settled in Canaan, forget not thy Deliverance out of Egypt: But look to the Rock out of which thou wast hewn: when thy later End is greatly increased, remember the smallness of thy Beginnings.

4. Some special Precepts and Prohibitions are here given, which are of great Consequence. (1.) They must upon all Occasions give honour to God, *v. 13.* *fear him and serve him,* (for if he be a Master we must both Reverence him, and do his Work) and *swear by his name*; i. e. We must not upon any Occasion appeal to any other but to him, as the Discerner of Truth, and Avenger of Wrong. Swear by him only, and not by any Idol, or any other Creature.— *Swear by his name* in all Treaties and Covenants with the Neighbour Nations; and do not complement them so far as to swear by their Gods. *Swearing by his name* is sometimes put for an open Profession of his name; *Isa. 45. 23.* *Every tongue shall swear* is expounded, *Rom. 14. 11.* *Every tongue shall confess to God.* (2.) They must not upon any Occasion give that Honour to other Gods, *v. 14.* *Ye shall not go after other Gods,* i. e. Ye shall not serve or Worship them, for therein they went astray, they went a whoring from the True God; who in this more than in any thing is a jealous God, *v. 15.* and the Learned Bishop Patrick observes here out of *Maimonides*, that we never find either in the Law or the Prophets *Anger* or *Fury*, or *jealousie*, or *indignation* attributed to God but upon occasion of Idolatry. (3.) They must take heed of dishonouring God by tempting him, *v. 16.* *Ye shall not tempt the Lord your God,* i. e. Ye shall not in any Exigence distrust the Power, Presence, and Providence of God, nor quarrel with him, which if they indulg'd an evil Heart of Unbelief they would take occasion to do in Canaan as well as in the Wilderness: No change of Condition will cure a Disposition to Murmur and Fret: Our Saviour uses this Caution as an Answer to one of Satan's Temptations, with Application to himself, *Matth. 4. 7.* *Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God,* either by despairing of his Power and Goodness, while we keep in the way of our Duty, or by presuming upon it, when we turn aside out of that way.

17 You shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and his testimonies, and his statutes which he hath commanded thee. 18 And thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of the LORD: that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest go in and possess the good land which the LORD swore unto thy fathers.

thers. 19 To cast out all thine enemies from before thee, as the LORD hath spoken. 20 And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments which the LORD our God hath commanded you? 21 Then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaohs bond-men in Egypt, and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. 22 And the LORD shewed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh and upon all his household, before our eyes. 23 And he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he swore unto our fathers. 24 And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as it is at this day. 25 And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments, before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded us.

Here 1. Moses chargeth them to keep God's Commandments themselves, v. 17, 18, 19. *You shall diligently keep God's Commandments.* Note, It requires a great deal of Care and Pains to keep up Religion in the Power of it, in our Hearts and Lives. Negligence will ruin us; but we cannot be Saved without Diligence. To induce them to this, he here sheweth them (1.) That this would be very acceptable to God, it is right and good in the sight of the Lord: And that's right and good indeed, that is so in God's sight. If we have any regard to the Favour of our Creator as our Felicity, and the Law of our Creation as our Rule, we will be Religious. (2.) That it would be very advantageous and profitable to themselves. 'Twould secure to them the Possession of the Land of Canaan, Prosperity there, and constant Victory over those that stood in their way. In short, Do well, and it shall be well with thee.

2. He chargeth them to Instruct their Children in the Commands of God; not only that they might in their tender Years intelligently and affectionately joyn in Religious Services, but that afterwards they might in their Day keep up Religion, and convey it to those that should come after them.

Now 1. Here's a proper Question, which 'tis supposed the Children would ask, v. 20. *What mean the Testimonies and the Statutes?* What's the meaning of the Feasts we observe, the Sacrifices we offer, and the many peculiar Customs we keep up? Observe (1.) All Divine Institutions have a certain meaning, and there is something great design'd in them. (2.) It concerns us to know and understand the meaning of them, that we may perform a reasonable Service, and may not offer the blind for Sacrifice. (3.) It is good for Children betimes to enquire into the true intent and meaning of the Religious Observances they are Train'd up in. They that are thus inquisitive in Divine things, 'tis a good sign they are concern'd about them, and a good means of their attaining to a great Acquaintance with them. *Then shall we know, if thus we follow on to know.*

2. Here's a full Answer put into the Parents Mouths to be given to this good Question. Parents and Teachers must give Instruction to those under their Charge, tho' they do not ask it; nay, tho' they have an Aversion to it, much more must they be ready to answer Questions, and to give Instruction when it is desired; for it may be hoped, they that ask it, will be willing to receive it. Did the Children ask the meaning of God's Laws, let them be told, That they were to be observed, (1.) In a grateful remembrance of God's former Favours to them, especially their Deliverance out of Egypt, v. 21, 22, 23. The Children must be often told of the deplorable State their Ancestors were in, when they were Bondmen in Egypt, the great Salvation God wrought for them in fetching them out thence, and that God in giving them these peculiar Statutes, meant to perpetuate the memorial of that Work of Wonder, by which they were form'd into a peculiar People. (2.) As the prescribed Condition of his further Favours, v. 24. *The Lord commanded us all these Statutes for our good.* Note, God commands us nothing but what is really for our own good: 'Tis our Interest as well as our Duty to be Religious. 1. 'Twill be our Life, that he might preserve us alive, which is a great Favour, and more than we could expect, considering how often we have forfeited Life itself. Godliness has the Promise of the Continuance and Comfort of the Life that now is, as far as it is for God's Glory. 2. 'Twill be our Righteousness. Could we perfectly fulfil but that one Command of loving God with all our Heart, Soul, and Might, and could we say, we had

never done otherwise, that would be so our Righteousness, as to intitle us to the Benefits of the Covenant of Innocency; Had we continued in every thing that is written in the Book of the Law to do it, the Law would have justified us. But that we cannot pretend to, therefore our sincere Obedience shall be accepted through a Mediator, to denominate us, as Noah was righteous before God, Gen. 7. 1. Luke 1. 6. and 1 John 3. 7. The Chaldee reads it, *There shall be a Reward to us, if we observe to do these Commandments;* for without doubt, in keeping God's Commandments there is great Reward.

C H A P. VII.

Moses in this Chapter exhorts Israel (1.) in general to keep God's Commandments, v. 11, 12. (2.) in particular, and in order to that, to keep themselves pure from all communion with Idolaters. 1. They must utterly destroy the seven devoted Nations, and not spare them, or make Leagues with them, v. 1, 2, 16, 24. 2. They must by no means marry with the Remainers of them, v. 3, 4. (3.) They must deface and consume their Altars and Images, and not so much as take the Silver and Gold of them to their own use, v. 5, 25, 26. — To enforce this Charge he shews that they were bound to do so. 1. In Duty. Considering (1.) Their Election to God, v. 6. (2.) The Reason of that Election, v. 7, 8. (3.) The Terms they stood upon with God, v. 9, 10. 2. In Interest. 'Tis here promis'd (1.) In general, that if they would serve God, he would bless and prosper them, v. 12, — 15. (2.) In particular that if they would drive out the Nations that they might not be a Temptation to them, God will drive them out that they should not be any vexation to them, v. 17, — 24.

1 **W**HEN the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites; and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; 2 And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee: thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them, thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: 3 Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. 4 For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly. 5 But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire. 6 For thou art a holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. 7 The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people (for ye were the fewest of all People) 8 But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. 9 Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him, and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations: 10 And repayeth them that hate him, to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face. 11 Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day, to do them.

Here's 1. A very strict Caution against all Friendship and Fellowship with Idols and Idolaters. Those that are taken into Communion with God must have no Communication with the unfruitful works of Darkness. These things they

are charg'd about, for the preventing of this Snare now before them.

1. They must *show them no mercy*, v. 1, 2. Bloody work is here appointed them, and yet it is God's Work, and good Work, and in its time and place needful, acceptable and honourable.

1. God here engageth to *do his part*. 'Tis spoken of as a thing taken for granted, that God would *bring them into the land of promise*, that he would *cast out the nations* before them, who were the present Occupants of that Land; no room was left to doubt of that. His Power is *irresistible* and therefore he *can* do it. His Promise is *inviolable*, and therefore he *will* do it.— Now (1.) These Devoted Nations are here *named and number'd*, v. 1. Seven in all, and Seven to one is great odds. They are *specified* that Israel might know the Bounds and Limits of their Commission; *Hitherto* their Severity must *come*, but no further; nor must they under colour of this Commission kill all that came in their way; no, here must its Waves be stay'd.— The *confining* of this Commission to these Nations *here mention'd*, plainly intimates, that after-ages were not to *draw* this into a *Precedent*; This will not serve to justify those barbarous Wars which *give no Quarter*. How agreeable soever this Method might be when God himself prescrib'd it, to that Dispensation under which such multitudes of Beasts were kill'd and burn'd in Sacrifice; Now all Sacrifices of Attainment are perfected in and superseded by the great Propitiation made by the Blood of Christ, Humane Blood is become perhaps more *precious* than it was, and those that have most Power, yet must not be *Prodigal* of it.— (2.) They are here own'd to be *greater and mightier* than Israel. They had been long rooted in this Land to which Israel came Strangers; They were more numerous, had Men much more bulky, and more expert in War than Israel had; yet all this shall not hinder but that they shall be *cast out before Israel*. The strength of Israel's Enemies magnifies the Power of Israel's God, who will certainly be too hard for them.

2. He engageth them to *do their part*.— Thou shalt *smite them, and utterly destroy them*, v. 2. If God *cast them out*, Israel must not *take them in*, no not as Tenants or Tributaries or Servants. No *Covenant* of any kind must be *made with them*, no Mercy must be *show'd* them. This Severity was appointed,

1. By way of Punishment for the Wickedness they and their Fathers had been guilty of. The Iniquity of the *Amorites* was now full, and the longer it had been in the filling, the fiercer was the Vengeance when it came at last. 2. By way of Prevention of the Mischief they would do to God's Israel if they were left alive. The *People of these Abominations* must not be mingled with the *Holy Seed*, lest they corrupt them. Better all these Lives should be lost from the Earth, than that Religion and the True Worship of God should be lost in Israel. Thus we must deal with our Lusts, that *war against our Souls*; God has *deliver'd* them into our Hands by that Promise, *Sin shall not have dominion over you*, unless it be your own Faults; let not us then make Covenants with them, or *show them any Mercy*, but mortify and crucify them and *utterly destroy them*.

2. They must *make no marriages* with those of them that escap'd the Sword, v. 3, 4. The Families of the *Canaanites* were Ancient, and 'tis likely some of them were call'd *honourable*, which might be a Temptation to the *Israelites*, especially those of them that were of least note in their Tribes to court an Alliance with them to mend their Blood, and the rather, because their Acquaintance with the Country might be serviceable to them in the Improvement of it; but Religion and the Fear of God must over-rule all these Considerations. To intermarry with them was therefore *unlawful* because it was *dangerous*; This very thing had prov'd of fatal Consequence to the *Old World*, Gen. 6. 2. and thousands in the World that now is, have been undone by irreligious ungodly Marriages, for there is more ground of fear in mixt Marriages than the Good will be *perverted*, than of hopes that the Bad will be *converted*.— The Event prov'd the Reasonableness of this warning, *They will turn away thy Son from following me*. Solomon paid dear for his folly herein. We find a national Repentance for this Sin of marrying strange Wives, and care taken to reform, *Ezr. 9.* and *10.* and *Neh. 9. 23.* &c. and a New Testament Caution not to be *unequally yoked with Unbelievers*, *2 Cor. 6. 14.* Those that in chusing Yokefellows keep not at least within the Bounds of a justifiable Profession of Religion cannot promise themselves *Helps meet for them*.— One of the *Chaldee* Paraphrases adds here as a Reason of this Command, v. 3. *For he that marries with Idolaters doth in effect marry with their Idols*.

3. They must destroy all the Relicks of their Idolatry, v. 5. Their *Altars and Pillars*, their *Groves and Graven Images*, all must be destroy'd; both in a Holy Indignation against Idolatry, and to prevent Infection. This Command was given before, *Exod. 23. 24.— 34. 13.* A great deal of good Work of

this kind was done by the People in their pious Zeal, *2 Chr. 31. 1.* And by good *Josiah*, *2 Chr. 34. 3, 7.* And with this may be compar'd the burning of the Conjuring Books, *Acts 19. 19.*

2. Here are very good Reasons to enforce this Caution. 1. The Choice God had made of this People for his own, v. 6. There was such a Covenant and Communion established between God and Israel, as was not between him, and any other People in the World. Shall they by their Idolatries dishonour him, who had thus honour'd them? Shall they slight him, who had thus testified his Kindness for them? Shall they put themselves upon the Level with other People, when God had thus dignify'd and advanc'd them above all People? Had God taken them to be a *special* People to him, and no other but them, and will not they take God to be a *special* God to them, and no other but him?

2. The Freeness of that Grace, which made this Choice. (1.) There was nothing in them to recommend or entitle them to this Favour. *In the multitude of the People is the Kings Honour*, Prov. 14. 28. But their Number was inconsiderable; they were only seventy Souls, when they went down into Egypt, and tho' greatly increased there, yet there were many other Nations more numerous; Ye were *the fewest of all People*, v. 7. The Author of the *Jerusalem Targum* passes too great a Compliment upon his Nation, in his reading this, *Ye were humble in Spirit, and meek above all People*; quite contrary. They were rather *stiff-necked* and *ill-natur'd* above all People. (2.) God fetch'd the Reason of it purely from himself, v. 8. (1.) He lov'd you, *because he would love you*.— Even so Father, because it seem'd good in thine Eyes. All that God loves, he loves *freely*, *Hof. 14. 4.* Those that perish, perish by their own Merits, but all that are sav'd, are sav'd by Prerogative. (2.) He has done his Work, because he would keep his Word. He has brought you out of Egypt in pursuance of the Oath sworn to your Fathers. Nothing in them, or done by them, did or could make God a Debtor to them, but he had made himself a Debtor to his own Promise, which he would perform notwithstanding their Unworthiness.

3. The Tenor of the Covenant into which they were taken; 'Twas in short this, that as they were to God, so God would be to them. They should certainly find him, (1.) *Kind to his Friends*, v. 9. The Lord thy God is not like the Gods of the Nations, the Creatures of Fancy, Subjects fit enough for loose Poetry, but no proper Objects of serious Devotion; *no he is God*, God indeed, God alone, *the faithful God*, able and ready not only to fulfil his own Promises, but to answer all the just Expectations of his Worshippers, and he will certainly keep *Covenant and Mercy*, i. e. *show Mercy according to Covenant, to them that love him, and keep his Commandments*. And in Vain do we pretend to love him, if we do not make Conscience of his Commandments; and this (as is here added for the Explication of the Promise in the second Commandment) not only to thousands of Persons, but to *thousands of Generations*, so inexhaustible is the Fountain, so constant the Streams. (2.) *Faithful to his Enemies*, he *repayeth them that hate him*, v. 10. Note, 1. Wilful Sinners are Haters of God; for the Carnal Mind is Enmity against him. Idolaters are so in a special manner, for they are in League with his Rivals. 2. Those that hate God cannot hurt him, but certainly ruin themselves. He will *repay them to their Face*; in defiance of them, and all their impotent Malice. His *Arrows* are said to be *made ready against the face of them*, *Psal. 21. 12.* Or, he will bring those Judgments upon them, which shall appear to themselves to be the just Punishment of their Idolatry. Compare *Job 21. 19.* He *rewarded him, and he shall know it*. Tho' Vengeance seem to be slow, yet it is not slack. The *Wicked and Sinner* shall be *recompens'd in the Earth*, *Prov. 11. 31.* I cannot pass the Gloss of the *Jerusalem Targum* upon this Place, because it speaks the Faith of the Jewish Church concerning a Future State: *He recompenseth to them that hate him, the Reward of their good Works in this World, that he might destroy them in the World to come*.

12 ¶ Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep and do them; that the LORD thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he swore unto thy fathers. 13 And he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee: he will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which he swore unto thy fathers to give thee. 14 Thou shalt be blessed above all people: there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle. 15 And the LORD will take away,

away from thee all sickness, and put none of the evil diseases of Egypt (which thou knowest) upon thee; but will lay them upon all *them* that hate thee. 16 And thou shalt consume all the people which the LORD thy God shall deliver thee; thine eye shall have no pity upon them: neither shalt thou serve their gods, for that *will be* a snare unto thee. 17 If thou shalt say in thine heart, These nations *are* more than I, how can I dispossess them? 18 Thou shalt not be afraid of them: *but* shalt well remember what the LORD thy God did unto Pharaoh, and unto all Egypt; 19 The great temptations which thine Eyes saw, and the signs, and the wonders, and the mighty hand, and the stretched out arm, whereby the LORD thy God brought thee out: so shall the LORD thy God do unto all the people of whom thou art afraid, 20 Moreover, the LORD thy God will send the hornet among them, until they are left and hide themselves from thee, be destroy'd, 21 Thou shalt not be affrighted at them: for the LORD thy God *is* among you, a mighty God and terrible. 22 And the LORD thy God will put out those nations before thee by little and little: thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee. 23 But the LORD thy God shall deliver them unto thee, and shall destroy them with a mighty destruction, until they be destroyed. 24 And he shall deliver their kings into thine hand, and thou shalt destroy their name from under heaven: there shall no man be able to stand before thee, until thou have destroyed them. 25 The graven images of their gods shall ye burn with fire: thou shalt not desire the silver or gold *that is* on them, nor take it unto thee, lest thou be snared therein: for it *is* an abomination to the LORD thy God. 26 Neither shalt thou bring an abomination into thy house, lest thou be a cursed thing like it: *but* thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it, for it *is* a cursed thing.

Here 1. The Caution against Idolatry is repeated, and against Communion with Idolaters, v. 16. Thou shalt consume the People— and not serve their gods. We are in danger of having Fellowship with the Works of Darkness, if we take Pleasure in Fellowship with those that do those Works. Here is also a Repetition of the Charge to destroy the Images, v. 25, 26. The Idols which the Heathen had worshipp'd, were an Abomination to God, and therefore must be so to them: All that truly love God, hate what he hates.— Observe how this is urg'd upon them, *thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it*: Such a holy Indignation as this, must we conceive against Sin, that *abominable thing, which the Lord hates*. They must not retain the Images, either to gratify their Covetousness, *Thou shalt not desire the Silver or Gold that is on them*, nor think it pity to have that destroy'd. Achan paid dear for converting that to his own Use which was an Anathema.— Nor to gratify thy Curiosity; neither shalt thou bring it into thine House, to be hung up as an Ornament, or preserv'd as a Monument of Antiquity: No, to the Fire with it, that's the fittest Place for it. Two Reasons are given for this Caution. *Left thou be snared therein*, v. 25. i. e. lest thou be drawn e'er thou art aware, to like it and love it, to fancy it and pay respect to it, *And lest thou be a cursed thing like it*, v. 26. They that make Images, are said to be like unto them, stupid and senseless; here they are said to be in a worse Sense like to them, accursed of God, and devoted to Destruction. Compare these two Reasons together, and observe, That whatever brings us into a Snare, brings us under a Curse.

2. The Promise of God's Favour to them, if they would be Obedient, is enlarg'd upon a most affecting Copiousness, and fluency of Expression, which speaks how much it is both God's desire, and our own Interest that we be Religious.— All possible Assurance is here given them.

1. That if they would sincerely endeavour to do their Part of the Covenant, God would certainly perform his Part.— He shall keep the Mercy which he swore to thy Fathers, v. 12. Let us be constant to our Duty, and we cannot question the Constancy of God's Mercy.—

2. That if they would love God, and serve him, and devote themselves and theirs to him, he would love them, and bless them, and multiply them greatly, v. 13, 14. What could they desire more to make them happy? (1.) *He will love thee*. He began in Love to us, 1 John 4. 21. And if we return his Love in filial Duty, then, and then only, we may expect the Continuance of it, John 14. 21. (2.) *He will bless thee* with the Tokens of his Love, above all People. If they would distinguish themselves from their Neighbours by singular Services, God would dignify them above their Neighbours by singular Blessings. (3.) *He will multiply thee*. Increase was the ancient Blessing for the Peopling of the World, once and again, Gen. 1. 28.—9. 1. and here for the Peopling of Canaan, that little World by itself. The Increase both of their Families, and of their Stock is promis'd: They should neither have Estates without Heirs, nor Heirs without Estates, but should have the compleat Satisfaction of having many Children, and plentiful Provisions and Portions for them.

3. That if they keep themselves pure from the Idolatries of Egypt, God would keep them clear from the Diseases of Egypt, v. 15. It seems to refer not only to those Plagues of Egypt, by the Force of which they were deliver'd, but to some other Epidemical Country-Disease, as we call it, which they remembered the Prevalency of among the Egyptians, and by which God had chastis'd them for their National Sins. Diseases are God's Servants, go where he sends them, and do what he bids them: 'Tis therefore good for the Health of our Bodies to mortify the Sin of our Souls.

4. That if they would cut off the devoted Nations, they should cut them off, and none should be able to stand before them. Their Duty in this Matter would itself be their Advantage. *Thou shalt consume all the People which the Lord thy God shall deliver thee*, that's the Precept, v. 16. And then the Lord thy God shall deliver them unto thee, and shall destroy them, that's the Promise, v. 23. Thus we are commanded not to let Sin reign, not to indulge ourselves in it, or give Countenance to it, but to hate it, and strive against it; and then God has promis'd, that Sin shall not have Dominion over us, Rom. 6. 12, 14. But we shall be more than Conquerors over it.

The Difficulty and Doubtfulness of the Conquest of Canaan, having been a Stone of Stumbling to their Fathers, he here animates them against those Things which were most likely to discourage them, bidding them not to be afraid of them, v. 18. And again, v. 21.

1. Let them not be dishearten'd by the Number and Strength of their Enemies. *Say not, they are more than I, how can I dispossess them?* v. 17. We are apt to think that the most Numerous, must needs be Victorious: But to fortify them against this Temptation, he minds them of the Destruction of Pharaoh, and all the Power of Egypt, v. 18, 19. They had seen the great Temptations, or Miracles (so the Chaldee reads it) the Signs and Wonders, wherewith God had brought them out of Egypt, in order to his bringing of them into Canaan, and from thence might easily infer, both that God could dispossess the Canaanites, who, though Formidable enough, had not such Advantages against Israel, as the Egyptians had: He that had done the greater, could do the lesser: And that he would dispossess them, otherwise his bringing Israel out of Egypt had been no Kindness to them. He that begun, would finish. Thou shalt therefore well remember this, v. 18. The Word and Works of God are *thou wilt remember'd*, when they are improv'd as Helps to our Faith and Obedience. That's well laid up, which is ready to us when we have occasion to use it.

2. Let them not be dishearten'd by the Weakness and Deficiency of their own Forces; for God would send them in Auxiliary Troops of Hornets, or Wasps, as some read it, v. 20. Probably bigger than ordinary, which should so terrify and molest their Enemies, and perhaps be the Death of many of them, that their most numerous Armies would become an easy Prey to Israel. God plagued the Egyptians with Flies, but the Canaanites with Hornets. Those who take not Warning by lesser Judgments on others, may expect greater on themselves. But their great Encouragement was, that they had God among them, a Mighty God, and Terrible, v. 21. And if God be for us, if God be with us, we need not fear the Power of any Creature against us.

3. Let them not be dishearten'd by the slow Progress of their Arms, nor think the Canaanites would never be subdued, if they were not expelled the first Year; no, they must be put out by little and little, and not all at once, v. 22. Note, We must not think that because the Deliverance of the Church, and the Destruction of its Enemies is not effected presently, therefore it will never be effected; God will do his own Work, in his own Method and Time; and we may be sure, that's always the best. Thus Corruption is driven out of the Hearts of Believers, by little and little. The Work of Sanctification is carried on gradually; but that Judgment will at length be brought forth into a compleat Victory.— The Reason here given (as before Exod. 23. 29, 30.) is, *Left the Beast of the Field*

Field increase upon thee. The Earth God has given to the Children of Men; and therefore there shall rather be a Remainder of Canaanites to keep Possession till Israel become numerous enough to replenish it, than that it should be a *Habitation of Dragons*, and a *Court for the wild Beasts of the Desert*, Isa. 34. 13. Yet God could have prevented this Mischief from the Beasts, Lev. 26. 6. But Pride and Security, and other Sins that are the common Effects of a settled Prosperity, were the Enemies more dangerous than the Beasts of the Field, that would be apt to *increase upon them*. See Judges 3. 1, 4.

CHAP. VIII.

Moses had charg'd Parents in teaching their Children, to whet the Word of God upon them, chap. 6, 7. by frequent Repetition of the same Things, over and over again: And here he himself takes the same Method in instructing the Israelites, as his Children; frequently inculcating the same Precepts and Cautions, with the same Motives or Arguments to enforce them; that what they heard so oft might abide with them. In this Chapter Moses gives them, 1. General Exhortations to Obedience, v. 1.—6. 2. A Review of the great Things God had done for them in the Wilderness, as a good Argument for Obedience, v. 2.—5. and v. 15, 16. 3. A Prospect of the Good Land into which God would now bring them, v. 7, 8, 9. 4. A necessary Caution against the Temptations of a prosperous Condition, v. 10.—14. and 17, 18. 5. A fair Warning of the fatal Consequences of Apostasy from God, v. 19, 20.

ALL the commandments which I command thee this day, shall ye observe to do, that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers. 2 And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no. 3 And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna (which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know) that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live. 4 Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell these forty years. 5 Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that as a man chasteneth his son, so the LORD thy God chasteneth thee. 6 Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to fear him. 7 For the LORD thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains, and depths that spring out of valleys and hills, 8 A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig-trees, and pomegranates, a land of oil-olive, and hony. 9 A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayst dig brass.

The Charge here given them, is the same as before, to keep and do all God's Commandments: Their Obedience must be, 1. Careful, *observe to do*. (2.) Universal, to do all the Commandments, v. 1. And (3.) From a good Principle, with a Regard to God, as the Lord, and their God, and particularly with a holy Fear of him, v. 6. From a Reverence of his Majesty, a Submission to his Authority, and a Dread of his Wrath.

To ingage them to this Obedience, besides the great Advantages of it, which he sets before them, v. 1. That they should live and multiply, and all should be well with them; he directs them,

1. To look back upon the Wilderness, through which God had now brought them, v. 2. *Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the Wilderness.* Now they were come to Age, and were entering upon their Inheritance, they must be minded of the Discipline they had been under during their Minority, and the Method God had taken to train them up for himself. The Wilderness was the School in which they had been for forty Years boarded and taught, un-

der Tutors and Governors; and now was a time to bring all this to Remembrance. The Occurrences of these last forty Years were, (1.) Very Memorable, and well worthy to be remembered. (2.) Very useful and profitable to be remembered, as yielding a Compilation of Arguments for Obedience. And (3.) They were recorded on purpose that they might be remembered. As the Feast of the Passover was a Memorial of their Deliverance out of Egypt, so the Feast of Tabernacles was of their Passage through the Wilderness. Note, It is very good for us to remember all the ways both of God's Providence and Grace, by which he hath led us hitherto through this Wilderness, that we may be prevail'd with cheerfully to serve him, and trust in him. Here let us set up our Ebenezer.

1. They must remember the *Straits* they were sometimes brought into; (1.) For the mortifying of their Pride, 'twas so humble them; that they might not be exalted above Measure with the abundance of Miracles that were wrought in their Favours; and that they might not be secure, and confident of being in Canaan presently. (2.) For the manifesting of their Perverseness, to prove them, that they and others might know (for God himself perfectly knew it before) all that was in their Hearts, and might see that God chose them, not for any thing in them that might recommend them to his Favour, for their whole Carriage was disobliging. Many Commandments God gave them, which there had been no Occasion for, if they had not been led through the Wilderness, as those relating to the Manna, (Exod. 16. 28.) and God thereby try'd them, as our first Parents were try'd by the Trees of the Garden, whether they would keep God's Commandments or no. Or, God thereby proved them whether they would trust his Promise, the Word which he commanded to a thousand Generations, and in dependence on his Promises obey his Precepts.

2. They must remember the *Supplies* which were always granted them. God himself took particular Care of their Food, Raiment and Health; and what would they have more?

(1.) They had Manna for Food, v. 3. God suffered them to hunger, and then fed them with Manna, that the Extremity of their Want might make their Supply the more acceptable, and God's Goodness to them therein the more remarkable. God often brings his People low, that he may have the Honour of helping them. And thus the Manna of Heavenly Comforts is given to them that hunger and thirst after Righteousness, Mat. 5. 6. *To the hungry Soul every bitter thing is sweet.* 'Tis said of the Manna, that it was a sort of Food, which neither they nor their Fathers knew. And again, v. 16. If they knew there was such a Thing that fell sometimes with the Dew in those Countries, as some think they did, yet it was never known to fall in such vast Quantities, so constantly, and at all Seasons of the Year, so long, and only about a certain Place: These Things were altogether Miraculous, and without Precedent, *The Lord created a new thing* for their Supply. And hereby he taught them, *That Man liveth not by Bread alone*; tho' God hath appointed Bread for the strengthening of Man's Heart, and that is ordinarily made the Staff of Life, yet God can, when he pleases command Support and Nourishment without it, and make something else very unlikely to answer the Intention as well. We might live upon Air, if it were sanctify'd for that Use by the Word of God; for the Means God ordinarily useth he is not ty'd to, but can perform his kind Purposes to his People without them. Our Saviour quotes this Scripture in answer to that Temptation of Satan, *Command that these Stones be made Bread*. What needs that? saith Christ, My heavenly Father can keep me alive without Bread, Mat. 4. 3, 4. Let none of God's Children distrust their Father, nor take any sinful indirect Course for the Supply of their own Necessities, some way or other God will provide for them in the way of Duty and honest Diligence, and *verily they shall be fed*. It may be apply'd Spiritually; The Word of God, as it is the Revelation of God's Will and Grace, duly receiv'd and entertain'd by Faith, is the Food of the Soul. The Life which is supported by that is the Life of the Man, and not only that Life which is supported by Bread. The Manna typified Christ, the Bread of Life. He is the Word of God; by him we live; the Lord evermore give us that Bread which endures to eternal Life, and let us not be put off with the Meats that perisheth.

2. The same Cloaths served them from Egypt to Canaan; at least the generality of them. Tho' they had not Change of Raiment, yet it was always new, and waxed not old upon them, v. 4. This was a standing Miracle, and the greater, if, as the Jews say, they grew with them, so as to be always fit for them. But 'tis plain they brought out of Egypt Bundles of Cloaths on their Shoulders, Exod. 12. 34. which they might Barter with each other, as there was Occasion, and those, with what they wore, suffic'd till they came into a Country where they could furnish themselves with new Cloaths.

Now by the Method God took of providing Food and Raiment for them, (1.) He humbled them. 'Twas a Mortification to them to be ty'd for forty Years together to the same Meat, without any Varieties, and to the same Cloaths, in the same Fashion. Thus he taught them, that the good things he design'd for them were Figures of better things; and that the Happiness of Man consists not in being cloath'd in Purple or fine Linen, and in *far'ing Sumptuously every Day*, but by being taken into Covenant and Communion with God, and in *learning his Righteous Judgments*. God's Law, which was given to Israel in the Wilderness, must be to them instead of Food and Raiment. (2.) He proved them, whether they could trust him to provide for them then when Means and second Causes fail'd. Thus he taught them to live in a Dependence upon Providence, and not to perplex themselves with Care *what they should eat and drink, and wherewithal they should be cloath'd*. Christ would have his Disciples learn the same Lesson, *Matt. 6. 25.* and took a like Method to teach it them, when he *sent them out without Purse or Scrip*, and yet took Care that they *lacked nothing*, *Luke 22. 35*— (3.) God took Care of their Health and Ease. Tho' they travel'd on Foot in a dry Country, the Way rough and untrodden, yet their Feet swelled not; God preserv'd them from taking Hurt by the Inconveniences of their Journey; and Mercies of that kind we ought to acknowledge. Note, Those that follow God's Conduct are not only safe, but easy. Our Feet swell not while we keep in the Way of Duty; 'tis the *Way of Transgression that is hard*, *Prov. 13. 15*. God has promis'd to keep the Feet of his Saints, *1 Sam. 2. 9*.

3. They must also remember the Rebukes they had been under, *v. 5*. During these Years of their Education they had been kept under a strict Discipline, and not without Need. As a Man chasteneth his Son, for his good, and because he loves him, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee. God is a loving tender Father to all his Children, yet when there is Occasion, they shall feel the Smart of the Rod. Israel did so; they were chastened that they might not be condemned; chastened with the Rod of Men. Not as a Man wounds and slays his Enemies, whose Destruction he aims at, but as a Man chasteneth his Son, whose Happiness and Welfare he designs. So did their God chasten them; he chasten'd and taught them, *Psal. 94. 12*. This they must consider in their Heart, i. e. They must own it from their own Experience: that God had corrected them with a fatherly Love, for which they must return to him a filial Reverence and Compliance. Because God has chastened thee as a Father, therefore, *v. 6*. thou shalt keep his Commandments. This Ufe we should make of all our Afflictions; by them let us be engag'd and quicken'd to our Duty. Thus they are directed to look back upon the Wilderness.

2. He directs them to look forward to Canaan, into which God was now bringing them. Look which Way we will, both our Reviews and our Prospects will furnish us with Arguments for Obedience. The Land which they were now going to take Possession of, is here describ'd to be a very good Land, *v. 7, 8, 9*. There was every Thing in it that was desirable. (1.) 'Twas well water'd like Eden, the Garden of the Lord. 'Twas a Land of Brooks of Water, of Fountains and Depths, which contributed to the Fruitfulness of the Soil. Perhaps there was more Plenty of Water there now than had been in Abraham's time, the Canaanites having found and digg'd Wells; so that Israel reap'd the Fruit of their Industry, as well as of God's Bounty. (2.) The Ground produc'd great Plenty of all good Things, not only for the necessary Support, but for the Convenience and Comfort of Humane Life. In their Father's Land they had Bread enough; 'twas Corn Land, a Land of Wheat and Barley, where, with the common Care and Labour of the Husbandman, they might eat Bread without Scarceness. 'Twas a fruitful Land that was never turn'd into Barrenness, but for the Iniquity of them that dwelt therein. They had not only Water enough to quench their Thirst, but Vines, the Fruit whereof was ordain'd to make glad the Hearts. And were the desirous of Dainties? They needed not send to far Countries for them, when their own was so well stock'd with Fig Trees and Pomegranates, Olives of the best kind, and Honey, or Date Trees, as some think it should be read. (3.) Even the Bowels of its Earth were very rich, tho' it should seem that Silver and Gold they had none; of these the Princes of Sheba should bring Presents, *Psal. 72. 15*. yet they had Plenty of those more servicable Metals, Iron and Brass. Iron-stone and Mines of Brass were found in their Hills. See *Job 28. 2*.

Now these Things are mention'd, (1.) To shew the great Difference between that Wilderness through which God had led them, and the good Land into which he was bringing them. Note, Those that bear the Inconveniences of an afflicted State with Patience and Submission, are humbled by them, and prove well under them, are best prepar'd for better Circumstances. (2.) To shew what Obligations they lay under to keep God's Commandments, both in Gratitude for his Favour to them, and in Interest, that the Fa-

vours might be continued. The only Way to keep Possession of this good Land would be to keep in the Way of their Duty. (3.) To shew what a Figure it was of good Things to come. Whatever others saw, 'tis probable Moses in it saw a Type of the better Country: The Gospel Church in the New Testament Canaan, water'd with the Spirit in his Gifts and Graces, planted with the Trees of Righteousness, bearing the Fruits of Righteousness. Heaven is the Good Land, in which there is nothing wanting, and where there is a Fullness of Joy.

10 When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the LORD thy God, for the good land which he hath given thee. 11 Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day: 12 Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; 13 And when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied: 14 Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God (which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; 15 Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock or flint; 16 Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end) 17 And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth. 18 But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God; for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day. 19 And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day, that ye shall surely perish. 20 As the nations which the LORD destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish: because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the LORD your God.

Moses having mention'd the great Plenty they would find in the Land of Canaan, finds it necessary to caution them against the Abuse of that Plenty, which was a Sin they would be the more prone to now they came into that Vineyard of the Lord immediately out of a barren Desert.

1. He directs them to the Duty of a prosperous Condition, *v. 10*. They are allow'd to eat, even to fulness; not to Surfeiting or Excess; but let them always remember their Benefactor, the Founder of their Feast, and never fail to give Thanks after Meat, *Then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God*. (1.) They must take heed of eating or drinking to much as to indispose themselves for this Duty of Blessing God, but rather serve God therein with so much the more Cheerfulness and Enlargement. (2.) They must not have any Fellowship with those that when they had eaten and were full, blessed false Gods, as the Israelites themselves had done in their Worship of the Golden Calf, *Exod. 32. 6*. (3.) Whatever they had the Comfort of, God must have the Glory of. As our Saviour has taught us to bless before we eat, *Matt. 14. 19, 20*. So we are here taught to bless after Meat. That's our Hosannah, God bless; this is our Hallelujah, blessed be God. In every thing we must give Thanks. From this Law the Religious Jews took up a laudable Usage of Blessing God, not only at their solemn Meals, but upon other Occasions; if they drank of a Cup of Wine, they lifted up their Hands, and said, *Blessed be he that created the Fruit of the Vine to make glad the Heart*: If they did but smell at a Flower, they said, *Blessed be he that made this Flower sweet*. (4.) When they gave Thanks for the Fruits of the Land, they must give Thanks for the good Land itself, which was given them by Promise. From all our comfortable Enjoyments, we must take Occasion to thank God for our comfortable Settlements; and I know not but we of this Nation have as much Reason as they had to give Thanks for a good Land.

2. He arms them against the Temptations of a prosperous Condition, and charges them to stand upon their Guard against them. When thou art settled in goodly Houses of thy own building, v. 12. (for tho' God gave them Houses which they builded not, Chap. 6. 10. those would not serve them, they must have larger and finer) And when thou art grown rich in Cattle, in Silver and in Gold, v. 13. as Abraham, Gen. 13. 2. when all thou hast is multiplied.

1. Then take heed of Pride. Beware then lest thy Heart be lifted up, v. 14. when the Estate riseth, the Mind is apt to rise with it, in Self-conceit, Self-complacency, and Self-confidence. Let us therefore strive to keep the Spirit low in a high Condition; Humility is both the Ease and the Ornament of Prosperity. Take heed of saying so much as in thy Heart, that proud Word, My power, and the might of my hand hath gotten me this Wealth, v. 17. Note, We must never take the Praise of our Prosperity to ourselves, nor attribute it to our Ingenuity or Industry; for Bread is not always to the Wise, nor Riches to Men of Understanding, Eccl. 9. 11. 'Tis Spiritual Idolatry thus to sacrifice to our own Net, Hab. 1. 16.

2. Then take heed of forgetting God. This follows upon the lifting up of the Heart; for 'tis through the Pride of the Conscience, that the Wicked seeks not after God, Psal. 10. 4. Those that admire themselves, despise God.

(1.) Forget not thy Duty to God, v. 11. We forget God, if we keep not his Commandments; we forget his Authority over us, and our Obligations to him, and Expectations from him, if we be not Obedient to his Laws. When Men grow Rich, they are tempted to think Religion a needless thing; they are happy without it, think it a thing below them, and too hard upon them; their Dignity forbids them to stoop, and their Liberty forbids them to Serve. But we are basely Ungrateful, if the better God is to us, the worse we are to him.

2. Forget not God's former Dealings with thee. Thy Deliverance out of Egypt, v. 14. The Provision he made for thee in the Wilderness, that great and terrible Wilderness; they must never forget the Impressions which the Horrors of that Wilderness made upon them, See Jer. 2. 6. where 'tis call'd the very shadow of Death. There God preserv'd them from being destroyed by the fiery Serpents and Scorpions, tho' sometimes he made use of them for their Correction: There he kept them from perishing for want of Water, following them with Water out of a Rock of Flint, v. 15. Out of which (saith Bishop Patrick) one would rather have expected Fire than Water. There he fed them with Manna, of which before, v. 3. taking care to keep them alive, that he might do them good at their latter end, v. 16. Note, God reserves the best till the last for his Israel. However he may seem to deal hardly with them by the Way, he will not fail to do them good at their latter end.

(3.) Forget not God's Hand in thy present Prosperity, v. 18. Remember, 'tis he that giveth thee Wealth; for he giveth thee Power to get Wealth. See here how God's giving, and our getting are reconcil'd, and apply it to Spiritual Wealth. 'Tis our Duty to get Wisdom, and above all our gettings, to get Understanding; and yet 'tis God's Grace that gives Wisdom, and when we have got it, we must not say, it was the might of our Hand that got it, but must own, 'twas God that gave us Power to get it, and therefore to him we must give the Praise, and consecrate the Use of it. The Blessing of the Lord on the Hand of the Diligent makes Rich both for this World, and for 'tother. He giveth thee power to get Wealth, not so much to gratify thee, and make thee easy, as that he may establish his Covenant. All God's Gifts are in pursuance of his Promises.

Lastly, He repeats the fair Warning he had oft given them of the Fatal Consequences of their Apostacy from God, v. 19, 20. Observe (1.) How he describes the Sin; 'tis forgetting God, and then worshipping other Gods. What Wickedness will not they fall into, that keep Thoughts of God out of their Minds? And when once the Affections are displaced from God, they will soon be misplaced upon Lying Vanities. (2.) How he denounces Wrath and Ruin against them for it; If you do so, ye shall surely perish, and the power and might of your Hands, you are so proud of, cannot help you. Nay, you shall perish, as the Nations that are driven out before you. God will make no more Account of you, notwithstanding his Covenant with you, and your Relation to him, than he doth of them, if you will not be Obedient and Faithful to him.—They that follow others in Sin, will certainly follow them to Destruction. If we do as Sinners do, we must expect to fare as Sinners fare.

CHAP. IX.

The Design of Moses in this Chapter, is, to convince the People of Israel of their Unworthiness to receive from God those great Favours that were now to be conferr'd upon them; writing this, as it were in Capital Letters, at the Head of their Charter. Not for your sake, be it known to you, Ezek. 36. 32. 1. He assures them of Victory over their Enemies, v. 1.—3. 2. He

cautions them not to attribute their Successes to their own Merit, but to God's Justice, which was engag'd against their Enemies, and his Faithfulness, which was engag'd to their Fathers, v. 4.—6. 3. To make it evident, that they had no Reason to boast of their own Righteousness, he rips up their Faults, shews Israel their Transgressions, and the House of Jacob their Sins. In general, they had been all along a provoking People, v. 7, 24. In particular, 1. In the matter of the Golden Calf, the Story of which, he largely relates, v. 8.—21. 2. He mentions some other instances of their Rebellion, v. 22, 23. And, 3. Returns at v. 25. to speak of the Intercession he had made for them at Horeb, to prevent their being Ruin'd for the Golden Calf.

Hear, O Israel: Thou art to pass over Jordan this day, to go in to possess nations greater and mightier than thy self, cities great and fenced up to heaven, 2 A people great and tall, the children of the Anakims, whom thou knowest, and of whom thou hast heard say, Who can stand before the children of Anak! 3 Understand therefore this day, that the LORD thy God is he which goeth over before thee as a consuming fire: he shall destroy them, and he shall bring them down before thy face: so shalt thou drive them out, and destroy them quickly, as the LORD hath said unto thee. 4 Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the LORD thy God hath cast them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness the LORD hath brought me in to possess this land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD doth drive them out from before thee. 5 Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart dost thou go to possess their land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. 6 Understand therefore, that the LORD thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it, for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiff-necked people.

The Call to Attention, v. 1. Hear, O Israel, intimates, this was a new Discourse, deliver'd at some distance of time after the former, probably, the next Sabbath-day.

1. He represents to them the formidable Strength of the Enemies, which they were now to encounter, v. 1. The Nations they were to dispossess, were mightier than themselves, not a Rude and Undisciplin'd Rout, like the Natives of America, that were easily made a Prey of. But should they Besiege them, they would find their Cities well fortified, according as the Art of Fortification then was: Should they engage them in the Field, they would find the People great and tall, of whom common Fame had reported, that there was no standing before them, v. 2. This representation, is much the same with that which the Evil Spies had made, Num. 13. 28, 33. But made with a very different Intention: That was design'd to drive them from God, and to discourage their Hope in him; This to drive them to God, and engage their Hope in him; since no Power less than that which is Almighty could secure and succeed them.

2. He assures them of Victory, by the Presence of God with them, notwithstanding the Strength of the Enemy, v. 3. Understand therefore what thou must trust to for Success, and which Way thou must look; 'tis the Lord thy God that goes before thee, not only as thy Captain, or Commander in Chief to give Direction, but as a consuming Fire, to do Execution among them.—Observe, He shall destroy them, and then thou shalt drive them out. Thou canst not drive them out, unless he destroy them, and bring them down. But he will not destroy them, and bring them down, unless thou set thyself in good earnest to drive them out. We must do our Endeavour in dependance upon God's Grace, and we shall have that Grace, if we do our Endeavour.

3. He cautions them not to entertain the least Thought of their own Righteousness, as if that had procur'd them this Favour at God's Hand.—Say not, for my Righteousness, either with regard to my good Character, or in recompence for any good Service; The Lord hath brought me in to possess this Land, v. 4. never think it is for thy Righteousness, or the uprightness of thy heart, that it is for and in Consideration either of thy good Conversation, or of thy good Disposition, v. 5. And again, v. 6.

v. 6. it is insisted on, because it is hard to bring People from a conceit of their own Merit, and yet very necessary that it be done, *understand*, know it, and believe it, and consider it, that *the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land for thy Righteousness*. Hadst thou been to come to it upon that Condition, thou hadst been for ever shut out of it, for *thou art a stiff-necked People*. Note, Our gaining possession of the Heavenly Canaan as it must be attributed to God's Power, and not to our own Might, so it must be ascrib'd to God's Grace, and not to our own Merit: In Christ we have both *Righteousness and Strength*, in him therefore we must glory, and not in ourselves, or any sufficiency of our own.

4. He intimates to them the true Reasons why God would take this good Land out of the Hands of the *Canaanites*, and settle it upon *Israel*, and they are borrow'd from his own Honour, not from *Israel's* Deserts. 1. He will be honour'd in the Destruction of Idolaters; They are justly look'd upon as Haters of him, and therefore he will visit their Iniquity upon them. 'Tis for the wickedness of these Nations that God drives them out, v. 4. and again, v. 5. All those whom God rejects are rejected for their own Wickedness; but none of those whom he accepts are accepted for their own Righteousness. 2. He will be honour'd in the Performance of his Promise to those that are in Covenant with him: God sware to the Patriarchs who lov'd him, and left all to follow him, that he would give this Land to their Seed; and therefore he would keep that promise of mercy for thousands of them that lov'd him and kept his Commandments; he would not suffer his Promise to fail. 'Twas for their Father's sakes that they were beloved, Rom. 11. 28. Thus Boasting is for ever excluded. See Eph. 1. 9, 11.

7 ¶ Remember and forget not how thou provokedst the LORD thy God to wrath in the wilderness: from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the LORD. 8 Also in Horeb ye provoked the LORD to wrath, so that the LORD was angry with you, to have destroyed you. 9 When I was gone up into the mount, to receive the tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant which the LORD made with you, then I abode in the mount forty days and forty nights, I neither did eat bread nor drink water: 10 And the LORD delivered unto me two tables of stone written with the finger of God, and on them was written according to all the words which the LORD spake with you in the mount, out of the midst of fire, in the day of the assembly: 11 And it came to pass at the end of forty days and forty nights, that the LORD gave me the two tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant. 12 And the LORD said unto me, Arise, get thee down quickly from hence; for thy people which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: they are quickly turned aside out of the way which I commanded them, they have made them a molten image. 13 Furthermore, the LORD spake unto me, saying, I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked People. 14 Let me alone, that I may destroy them, and blot out their name from under heaven: and I will make of thee a nation mightier and greater than they. 15 So I turned and came down from the mount, and the mount burned with fire: and the two tables of the covenant were in my two hands. 16 And I looked, and behold, ye had sinned against the LORD your God, and had made you a molten calf: ye had turned aside quickly out of the way which the LORD had commanded you. 17 And I took the two tables, and cast them out of my two hands, and brake them before your eyes. 18 And I fell down before the LORD as at the first, forty days and forty nights; I did neither eat bread nor drink water, because of all your sins which ye sinned, in doing wickedly in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger. 19 (For I was afraid of the anger, and hot displeasure wherewith

the LORD was wroth against you to destroy you) But the LORD hearkened unto me at that time also. 20 And the LORD was very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him: and I prayed for Aaron also the same time. 21 And I took your sin, the calf which ye had made, and burnt it with fire, and stamped it, and ground it very small, even until it was as small as dust: and I cast the dust thereof into the brook that descended out of the mount. 22 And at Taberah, and at Massah, and at Kibroth-hattaavah, ye provoked the LORD to wrath. 23 Likewise when the LORD sent you from Kadesh-barnea, saying, Go up and possess the land which I have given you; then you rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God, and ye believed him not, nor hearkened to his voice. 24 You have been rebellious against the LORD, from the day that I knew you. 25 Thus I fell down before the LORD forty days and forty nights, as I fell down at the first; because the LORD had said he would destroy you. 26 I prayed therefore unto the LORD, and said, O Lord GOD, destroy not thy people, and thine inheritance which thou hast redeemed through thy greatness, which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand. 27 Remember thy servants, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; look not unto the stubbornness of this people, nor to their wickedness, nor to their sin. 28 Left the land whence thou broughtest us out, say, Because the LORD was not able to bring them into the land which he promised them, and because he hated them, he hath brought them out to slay them in the wilderness. 29 Yet they are thy people and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest out by thy mighty power and by thy stretched out arm.

That they might have no Pretence to think that God brought them to Canaan for their Righteousness. He here shews them what a Miracle of Mercy it was, that they had not long e'er this be destroy'd in the wilderness, *Remember and forget not how thou provokest the Lord thy God*, v. 7. So far from purchasing his Favour, that thou hast many a Time laid thy self open to his Displeasure. Their Fathers Provocations are here charg'd upon them; for if God had dealt with their Fathers according to their Deserts, this Generation had never been, much less had they enter'd Canaan.— We are apt to forget our Provocations, especially when the smart of the Rod is over, and have need to be often put in mind of them, that we may never entertain any Conceit of our own Righteousness. St. Paul argues from the Guilt all Mankind is under, to prove, that we cannot be justified before God by our own Works, Rom. 3. 19, 20. If our Works condemn us, they will not justify us.

1. They had been a provoking People ever since they came out of Egypt, v. 7. Forty years long, from first to last, were God and Moses grieved with them. 'Tis a very sad Character Moses now at parting leaves of them; v. 24. *You have been rebellious from the day I knew you*. No sooner were they form'd into a People, but there was Faction form'd among them, which upon all Occasions made head against God and his Government. Tho' the Mosaic History records little more than the Occurrences of the first and last Year of the Forty, yet it seems by this general Account, that the rest of the Years were not much better, but one continued Provocation.

2. Even in Horeb they made a Calf and worshipped it, v. 8. &c. That was a Sin so heinous, and by several Aggravations made so exceeding sinful, that they deserv'd upon all Occasions to be upbraided with it. 'Twas done in the very place where the Law was given, by which they were expressly forbidden to worship God by Images; and while the Mountain was yet burning before their Eyes, and Moses was gone up to fetch them the Law in Writing. They turned aside quickly, v. 16.

3. God was very angry with them for their Sin. Let them not think that God overlook'd what they did amiss, and gave them Canaan for what was good among them: No, God had determin'd to destroy them, v. 8, could easily have done it, and have been no Loser by it; bespoke Moses to let him alone that he might do it, v. 13, 14. By this it appear'd how heinous their Sin was, for God is never angry with any, above what there is Cause for, as Men often are. Moses himself, tho' a

Friend and Favourite, trembled at the Revelation of God's Wrath from Heaven, against their Ungodliness and Unrighteousness, v. 19. I was afraid of the anger of the Lord; afraid perhaps not for them only, but for himself, Psalm 119. 120.

4. They had by their Sin broken Covenant with God, and forfeited all the Privileges of the Covenant, which Moses signified to them by breaking the Tables, v. 17. A Bill of Divorcement was given them, and from thence forward they might justly have been abandon'd for ever; so that their Mouth was certainly stop'd from pleading any Righteousness of their own. God had in effect disown'd them, when we said to Moses, v. 12. They are thy People, they are none of mine, nor shall they be dealt with as mine.

5. Aaron himself fell under God's Displeasure for it, tho' he was the Saint of the Lord, and was only brought by Surprise or Terror, to be Confederate with them in the Sin, v. 20. The Lord was very angry with Aaron. No Man's Place or Character can shelter him from the Wrath of God, if he have fellowship with the unfruitful Works of Darkness. Aaron that should have made Atonement for them, if the Iniquity would have been purg'd away by Sacrifice and Offering, did himself fall under the Wrath of God: So little did they consider what they did, when they drew him in.

6. 'Twas with great Difficulty, and very long Attendance, that Moses himself prevail'd to turn away the Wrath of God, and prevent their utter Ruin. He fasted and prayed full Forty Days and Forty Nights before he could obtain their Pardon, v. 18. And some think, twice Forty Days, v. 25. Because it is said, as I fell down before, whereas his Errand in the first Forty, was not of that Nature. Others think, 'twas but [one] Forty, tho' twice mention'd, and again, chap. 10. 10. But that was enough to make them sensible how great God's Displeasure was against them, and what a narrow turn they had for their Lives. And by this appears the Greatness of God's Anger against all Mankind, that no less a Person than his Son, and no less a Price than his own Blood would serve to turn it away. Moses here tells them the Substance of his Intercession for them. He was oblig'd to own their Stubbornness, and their Wickedness, and their Sin, v. 27. Their Character was bad indeed, when he that appear'd an Advocate for them, could not give them a good Word; and had nothing else to say in their Behalf, but that God had done great Things for them, which really did but aggravate their Crime, v. 26. That they were the Posterity of good Ancestors, v. 27. Which might also have been turn'd upon him, as making the Matter worse, and no better: And that the Egyptians would reproach God, if he should destroy them, as unable to perfect what he had wrought for them, v. 28. A Plea which might easily enough have been answered: No matter what the Egyptians say, while the Heavens declare God's Righteousness. So that the saving of them from Ruin at that time, was purely owing to the Mercy of God, and the Importunity of Moses, and not to any Merit of theirs, that could be offer'd so much as in Mitigation of their Offence.

7. To affect them the more with the Destruction they were then at the brink of, he describes the Destruction of the Calf they had made, very particularly, v. 21. He calls it their Sin; perhaps, not only because it had been the Matter of their Sin, but because the destroying of it, was intended for a Testimony against their Sin; and [an] Indication to them, what the Sinners themselves did deserve. They that made it, were like unto it, and had had no Wrong done them, if they had been thus stamp'd to Dust and consum'd, and scatter'd, and no Remains of them left. 'Twas Infinite Mercy that accepted the Destruction of the Idol, instead of the Destruction of the Idolaters.

8. Even after this fair escape that they had, in many other Instances, they provoked the Lord, again and again. He needed only to name the Places, for they carried the Memorials either of the Sin or of the Punishment of their Names, v. 22. At Taberah, Burning, where God set Fire to them for their Murmuring: At Massah, the Temptation, where they challeng'd Almighty Power to help them: And at Kibroth Hattaavah, the Graves of Lusts, where the Dainties they covered, were their Poison. And after these, their Unbelief and Distrust at Kadeshbarnai, which he had already told of, chap. 1. And here mentions again, v. 23. had certainly completed their Ruin, if they had been dealt with, according to their own Merits.

Now let them lay all this together, and it will appear, That whatever Favour God should hereafter shew them, in subduing their Enemies, and putting them in Possession of the Land of Canaan, it was not for their Righteousness. It is good for us often to remember against ourselves, with Sorrow and Shame, our former Sins, and to review the Records Conscience keeps of them, that we may see how much we are indebted to Free Grace, and may humbly own, that we never merited at God's Hand any thing but Wrath and the Curse.

CHAP. X.

Moses having in the foregoing Chapter minded them of their own Sin, as a Reason why they should not depend upon their own Righteousness, in this Chapter sets before them God's great Mercy to them, notwithstanding their Provocations, as a Reason why they should be more obedient for the Future. 1. He mentions divers Tokens of God's Favour and Reconciliation to them, never to be forgotten. (1.) The Renewing of the Tables of the Covenant, v. 1.—5. (2.) Giving Orders for their Progress towards Canaan, v. 6, 7. (3.) Choosing the Tribe of Levi for his own, v. 8, 9. And continuing the Priesthood after the Death of Aaron, v. 6. (4.) Owning and accepting the Intercession of Moses for them, v. 10, 11. 2. From hence he infers what Obligations they lay under to Fear, and Love, and serve God, which he presses upon them with many Motives, v. 12.—22.

1. **A**T that time the LORD said unto me, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first, and come up unto me into the mount, and make thee an ark of wood, 2 And I will write on the tables the words that were in the first tables which thou brakest, and thou shalt put them in the ark. 3 And I made an ark of shittim-wood, and hewed two tables of stone like unto the first, and went up into the mount, having the two tables in mine hand. 4 And he wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the ten commandments, which the LORD spake unto you in the mount, out of the midst of the fire, in the day of the assembly: and the LORD gave them unto me. 5 And I turned my self and came down from the mount, and put the tables in the ark which I had made, and there they be, as the LORD commanded me. 6 ¶ And the children of Israel took their journey from Beeroth of the children of Jaakan, to Mosera: there Aaron died, and there he was buried; and Eleazar his son ministred in the priests office in his stead. 7 From thence they journeyed unto Gudgodah; and from Gudgodah to Jotbath, a land of rivers of waters. 8 ¶ At that the LORD separated the tribe of Levi, to bear the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD to minister unto him, and to bless in his name unto this day. 9 Wherefore Levi hath no part nor inheritance with his brethren: the LORD is his inheritance, according as the LORD thy God promised him. 10 And I stayed in the mount, according to the first time, forty days and forty nights, and the LORD hearkened unto me at that time also, and the LORD would not destroy thee. 11 And the LORD said unto me, Arise, take thy journey before the people, that they may go in, and possess the land which I swore unto their fathers to give unto them.

There were four Things, in, and by which God shew'd himself Reconcil'd to Israel, and made them truly Great and Happy; and in which God's Goodness took Occasion from their Badness to make himself the more illustrious.

1. He gave them his Law; gave it them in Writing; as a standing Pledge of his Favour. Tho' the Tables that were first written were broken, because they had broken the Commandments, and God might justly break the Covenant; yet when his Anger was turned away, the Tables, were renew'd, v. 1. 2. Note, God's putting his Law in our Hearts, and writing it in our inward Parts, is the surest Evidence of our Reconciliation to God, and the best Earnest to our Happiness in him. Moses is bid to hew the Tables, for the Law prepares the Heart by Conviction and Humiliation for the Grace of God; but it is only that Grace that then writes the Law in it. Moses made an Ark of Shittim-wood, v. 3. A plain Chest, the same, I suppose, in which the Tables were afterward preserv'd: But Bezaleel is said to make it, Exod. 37. 1. because he afterwards finish'd it up, and over-laid it with Gold. Or, Moses is said to make it, because when he went up the second time into the Mount, he order'd it to be made by Bezaleel, against he came down. And tis observable, that for this Reason, the Ark was the first thing that God gave Orders about, Exod. 25. 10. And this left an Earnest to the Congregation, that the Tables should not miscarry this second time, as they had done the first. God will send his Law and Gospel to those whose Hearts

Hearts are prepar'd as Arks to receive them. Christ is the Ark in which now our Salvation is kept safe, that it may not be lost, as it was in the first *Adam*, when he had it in his own Hand.

Observe (1.) What it was that God wrote on the Two Tables; *The Ten Commandments*, v. 4. Or, *Ten Words*; intimating in how little a compass they were contain'd: They were not *Ten Volumes*, but *Ten Words*; 'twas the same with the first writing, and both the same that he spoke in the Mount. The Second Edition needed no Correction or Amendment. Nor did what he wrote, differ from what he spoke: The written Word is as truly the Word of God, as that which he spoke to his Servants the Prophets. (2.) What Care was taken of it. These Two Tables thus Engraven, were faithfully laid up in the Ark, *And there they be*, saith *Moses*, pointing 'tis probably towards the Sanctuary, v. 5. That good Thing which was committed to him; he transmitted to them, and left it pure and entire in their Hands, now let them look to it at their Peril. Thus we may say to the rising Generation, God has intrusted us with Bibles, Sabbaths, Sacraments, &c. as Tokens of his Presence and Favour, and *there they be*; we lodge them with you, 2 Tim. 1. 13, 14.

2. He led them forward towards Canaan, tho' they in their Hearts turned back towards Egypt, and he might justly have chosen their Delusions, v. 6, 7. He brought them to a Land of Rivers of Waters, out of a dry and barren Wilderness: Sometimes God supply'd their Wants by an ordinary course of Nature; when that fail'd, then by Miracles; and yet after this, when they were brought into a little Distress, we find them distrusting God, and murmuring; Numb. 20. 3, 4.

3. He appointed a standing Ministry among them, to deal for them in Holy Things. At that time, when *Moses* went up a second time to the Mount, or soon after, he had Orders to separate the Tribe of *Levi* to God and to his immediate Service, they having distinguish'd themselves by their Zeal against the Worshipers of the Golden Calf, v. 8, 9. The *Kohathites* carry'd the Ark; they, and the other *Levites* stood before the Lord, to minister to him, in all the Offices of the Tabernacle; and the Priests, who were of that Tribe, were to Bless the People. This was a standing Ordinance, which had now continu'd almost Forty Years, even unto this Day; and Provision was made for the perpetuating of it, by the settled Maintenance of that Tribe, which was such as gave them great Encouragement in their Work, and no Diversion, from it. The Lord is his Inheritance. Note, A settled Ministry is a great Blessing to a People, and a special Token of God's Favour. And since the particular Priest could not continue by reason of Death, God shew'd his Care of the People in securing a Succession, which *Moses* takes Notice of here, v. 6. When *Aaron* died, the Priesthood did not dye with him, but *Eleazar* his Son minister'd in his stead, and took care of the Ark, in which the Tables of Stone, those precious Stones, were deposited, that they should suffer no Damage; *There they be*, and he has the Custody of them. Under the Law, a Succession in the Ministry was kept up, by an Entail of the Office on a certain Tribe and Family. But now, under the Gospel, when the Effusion of the Spirit is more plentiful and powerful, the Succession is kept up by the Spirit's operation on Mens Hearts, qualifying Men for, and inclining Men to that Work, some in every Age, that the Name of *Israel* may not be blotter'd out.

4. He accepted *Moses* as an Advocate or Intercessor for them, and therefore constituted him their Prince and Leader, v. 10, 11. The Lord hearkened unto me, and said, Arise, go before the People. 'Twas a Mercy to them, that they had such a Friend, so faithful both to him that appointed him, and to them for whom he was appointed. 'Twas fit that he who had sav'd them from Ruin, by his Intercession in Heaven, should have the Conduct and Command of them. And herein he was a Type of Christ, who as he ever lives making Intercession for us, so he has all Power both in Heaven and in Earth.

12 ¶ And now *Israel*, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, 13 To keep the commandments of the LORD and his statutes which I command thee this Day for thy good? 14 Behold, the heaven, and the heaven of heavens is the LORD'S thy God, the earth also with all that therein is. 15 Only the LORD had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people; as it is this day. 16 Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff necked. 17 For the LORD

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your God is God of gods and Lords of lords, a great God, a mighty and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward. 18 He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, and giving him food and raiment. 19 Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. 20 Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name. 21 He is thy praise, and he is thy God that hath done for thee these great and terrible things which thine eyes hath seen. 22 Thy fathers went down into Egypt with threescore and ten persons; and now the LORD thy God hath made thee as the stars of heaven for multitude.

Here's a most pathetic Exhortation to Obedience, infer'd from the Premises, and urg'd with very powerful Arguments, and a great deal of persuasive Rhetorick. He brings it in like an Orator, with an Appeal to his Auditors, *And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee*, v. 12. Ask what he requires; as *David*, Psal. 116. 12. *What shall I render?* When we have received Mercy from God, it becomes us to enquire what Returns we shall make to him. Consider what he requires, and you will find 'tis nothing but what is highly Just and Reasonable in itself, and of unpeakable Benefit and Advantage to you. Let us see here what he doth require, and what a great deal of Reason there is, why we should do what he requires.

1. We are here most plainly directed in our Duty, both to God, to our Neighbour, and to Ourselves. (1.) We are here Taught our Duty to God, both in the Dispositions and Affections of our Souls, and in the Actions of our Lives; our Principles, and our Practices. (1.) We must Fear the Lord our God, v. 12. And again, v. 20. We must Adore his Majesty, Acknowledge his Authority, stand in Awe of his Power, and Dread his Wrath. This is Gospel-Duty, Rev. 14. 6, 7. (2.) We must Love him, be well-pleased that he is, desire that he may be ours, and delight in the Contemplation of him, and in Communion with him. Fear him as a Great God, and our Lord, Love him as a Good God, and our Father and Benefactor. (3.) We must walk in his Ways, i. e. The Ways which he has appointed us to walk in. The whole Course of our Conversation, must be conformable to his Holy Will. (4.) We must Serve him, v. 20. Serve him with all our Heart and Soul, v. 12. Devote ourselves to his Honour, put ourselves under his Government, and lay out ourselves to advance all the Interest of his Kingdom among Men. And we must be hearty and zealous in his Service, engage and employ our Inwardman in his Work, and what we do for him, must do it cheerfully, and with a good-will. (5.) We must keep his Commandments and his Statutes, v. 13. Having given up ourselves to his Service, we must make his Revealed Will our Rule in every thing; perform all he prescribes; forbear all he forbids; firmly believing that all the Statutes he commands us, are for our good. Besides the Reward of Obedience, which will be our unpeakable Gain, there is true Honour and Pleasure in Obedience. 'Tis really for our present good, to be Meek and Humble, Chaste and Sober, Just and Charitable, Patient and Contented; these make us easy, and safe, and pleasant, and truly great. (6.) We must give Honour to God, in Swearing by his Name, v. 20. So give him the Honour of his Omniscience, his Sovereignty, his Justice, as well as of his necessary Existence. Swear by his Name, and not by the Name of any Creature, or false God, whenever an Oath for Confirmation is call'd for. (7.) To him we must cleave, v. 20. Having chosen him for our God, we must faithfully and constantly abide with him, and never forsake him. Cleave to him as one we love and delight in; trust and confide in, and from whom we have great Expectations.

(2.) We are here Taught our Duty to our Neighbour, v. 19. Love ye the Stranger. And if the Stranger, much more our Brethren, as ourselves. If the *Israelites* that were such a peculiar People so particularly distinguish'd from all People, must be kind to strangers, much more must we, that are not inclos'd in such a Pale; we must have a tender concern for all that share with us in the Humane Nature, and as we have opportunity, that is, according to their Necessities, and our Abilities, we must do good unto all Men. Two Arguments are here urg'd to enforce this Duty. (1.) God's Common Providence, which extends itself to all Nations of Men, they being all made of one Blood. God loveth the stranger, v. 18. i. e. He giveth to all, Life, and Breath, and all Things, even to those that are Gentiles, and strangers to the Common-wealth of *Israel*, and to *Israel's* God. He knows those perfectly, whom

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we know nothing of. He gives Food and Raiment even to those, to whom he has not shew'd his Word and Statutes. God's common Gifts to Mankind oblige us to honour all Men. Or, it notes the particular Care Providence takes of Strangers in Distress, which we ought to praise him for, *Psal.* 146. 9. *The Lord preserveth the Strangers;* And to imitate him in, to serve him, and concur with him therein, being forward to make ourselves Instruments in his Hand of Kindness to Strangers. (2.) The afflicted Condition which the *Israelites* themselves had been in, when they were *Strangers* in Egypt. They that have themselves been in Distress, and have found Mercy with God, should sympathize most feelingly with those that are in the like Distress, and be ready to shew Kindness to them.-----The People of the *Jews*, notwithstanding those repeated Commands given them to be Kind to *Strangers*, conceiv'd a rooted Antipathy to the *Gentiles*, whom they look'd upon with the utmost Disdain, which made them envy them the Grace of God, and the Gospel of Christ, and that brought a final Ruin upon them.

(3.) Were he are Taught our Duty to ourselves, *v.* 16. *Circumcise the foreskin of your Hearts, i. e.* Cast away from you all corrupt Affections and Inclinations, which hinder you from Fearing and Loving God. *Mortify the Flesh* with the Lusts of it. Away with all *Filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness*, which obstructs the free Course of the Word of God to your Hearts.---Rest not in the Circumcision of the Body, which was only the Sign, and be *Circumcised in Heart*, which is the thing signified. See *Rom.* 2. 29. The Command of Christ goes farther than this, and obligeth us not only to cut off the *foreskin of the Heart*, which may easily be spar'd, but to cut off the *Right Hand*, and to pluck out the *Right Eye*, that is an Offence to us: The more Spiritual the Dispensation is, the more Spiritual we are oblig'd to be, and to go the closer in mortifying Sin.---And be no more stiff-necked, as they had been hitherto, *chap.* 9. 24. Be not any longer obstinate against Divine Commands and Corrections, but ready to comply with the Will of God in both. The Circumcision of the Heart, makes it ready to yield to God, and draw in his Yoke.

2. We are here most pathetically persuaded to our Duty. Let but Reason rule us, and Religion will.

1. Consider the Greatness and Glory of God, and therefore fear him, and from that principle serve and obey him. What is it that is thought to make a Man great, but great Honour, Power, and Possessions? Think then how great the Lord our God is, and greatly to be feared. (1.) He hath Great Honour, a Name above every Name, *v.* 17. He is *God of Gods*, and *Lord of Lords*. Angels are called Gods, so are Magistrates, and the *Gentiles* had Gods many, and Lords many, the Creatures of their own Fancy, but God is infinitely above all these nominal Deities. What an Absurdity would it be for them to go Worship other Gods, when the God to whom they had sworn Allegiance was the *God of Gods*? (2.) He has great Power. He is a *mighty God and terrible*, (*v.* 17.) *which regardeth not persons*. He has the Power of a Conqueror, and so he is terrible to those that resist him, and rebel against him. He has the Power of a Judge, and so he is just to all those that appeal to him, or appear before him. And it is as much the Greatness and Honour of a Judge to be impartial in his Justice, without respect to Persons or Bribes, as it is to a General to be terrible to the Enemy. Our God is both. (3.) He hath great Possessions.---Heaven and Earth are his, *v.* 14. And all the Hosts and Stars of both. Therefore he is able to bear us out in his Service, and to make up the Losses we sustain in our Duty to him. And yet therefore he has no need of us, or any thing we have, or can do; we are Undone without him; but He is Happy without us: Which makes the Condescensions of his Grace in accepting us and our Services, truly admirable. Heaven and Earth are his Possession, and yet the Lord's Portion is his People.

2. Consider the Goodness and Grace of God, and therefore Love him, and from that Principle Serve and Obey him. His Goodness is his Glory, as much as his Greatness.

1. He is Good to all. Whoever he finds miserable, of them he will be found merciful, *v.* 18. He executes the Judgment of the Fatherless and Widow. 'Tis his Honour to help the helpless, and to succour those that most need Relief, and that Men are apt to do injury to, or at least to put a slight upon. See *Psal.* 68. 4, 5.---146. 7, 9.

2. But truly God is good to Israel, in a special Manner, and therefore they are under special Obligations to him. He is thy Praise, and he is thy God, *v.* 21. Therefore love him and serve him, because of the Relation wherein he stands to thee. He is thy God, a God in Covenant with thee, and as such he is thy Praise, *i. e.* (1.) He puts honour upon thee; He is the God in whom thou may'st boast all the day long; that thou knowest him, and art known of him. If he be thy God, he is thy Glory. (2.) He expects honour from thee. He is thy Praise, *i. e.* he is the God whom thou art bound to praise; If he have not praise from thee, whence may he expect it? He inhabits the praises of Israel.

Consider 1. The gracious Choice he made of Israel, *v.* 15. he had a delight in thy fathers, and therefore chose their seed: Not that there was any thing in them to merit his Favour, or to recommend them to it, but so it seem'd good in his Eyes. He would be kind to them, tho' he had no need of them.

2. The Great things he had done for Israel, *v.* 21, 22. He minds them not only of what they had heard with their Ears, and which their Fathers had told them of, but of what they had seen with their eyes, and which they must tell their Children of, particularly that within a few Generations, Seventy Souls (for they were no more when Jacob went down into Egypt) increas'd to a great Nation, as the stars of heaven for multitude. And the more they were in Number, the more Praise and Service God expected from them; yet it prov'd as in the old World, that when they began to multiply, they corrupted themselves.

CHAP. XI.

With this Chapter Moses concludes his Preface to the Repetition of the Statutes and Judgments, which they must observe to do: He repeats the general Charge, *v.* 1. and having in the close of the foregoing Chapter begun to mention the great things God had done among them, in this 1. He instances in several of the great Works God had done before their Eyes, *v.* 2,---7. 2. He sets before them for the future, Life and Death, the Blessing and the Curse according as they did or did not keep God's Commandments. That they should certainly prosper if they were Obedient, should be bless'd with Plenty of all good things, *v.* 8,---15. and with Victory over their Enemies, and the Enlargement of their Coast thereby, *v.* 22,---25. But their Disobedience would undoubtedly be their Ruin, *v.* 16, 17. 3. He directs them what means to use that they might keep in mind the Law of God, *v.* 18,---21. And 4. Concludes all with a solemn putting them to their choices which they would have, the Blessing or the Curse, *v.* 26,---32.

1 Therefore thou shalt love the LORD thy God, and keep his charge, and his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments alway. 2 And know you this day: for I speak not with your children which have not known, and which have not seen the chastisement of the LORD your God, his greatness, his mighty hand, and his stretched out arm, 3 And his miracles, and his acts which he did in the midst of Egypt, unto Pharaoh the King of Egypt, and unto all his land, 4 And what he did unto the army of Egypt, unto their horses, and to their chariots, how he made the water of the Red sea to overflow them as they pursued after you, and how the LORD hath destroyed them unto this day. 5 And what he did unto you in the wilderness, until ye came into this place, 6 And what he did unto Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, the son of Reuben: how the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up, and their households, and their tents, and all the substance that was in their possession in the midst of all Israel. 7 But your eyes have seen all the great acts of the LORD, which he did.

Because God has made thee as the stars of heaven for multitude, so the Chapter before concludes, Therefore thou shalt love the Lord thy God, so this begins. Those whom God has built up into Families, whose beginning was small, but their latter end greatly encreaseth, should use that as an Argument with themselves why they should serve God. Thou shalt keep his charge, *i. e.* The Oracles of his Word, and Ordinances of his Worship, with which they were intrusted, and for which they were accountable. 'Tis a Phrase often us'd concerning the Office of the Priests and Levites, for all Israel was a Kingdom of Priests, a Holy Nation. Observe the Connection of these two: Thou shalt love the Lord, and keep his charge.---Since Love will work in Obedience, and that only is acceptable Obedience which flows from a Principle of Love, 1 John 5. 3.

He goes on to mention divers of the great and terrible Works of God which their eyes had seen, *v.* 7. This part of his Discourse he addresseth to the Seniors among them, the Elders in Age, and probably the Elders in Office were so, and were

were now his immediate Auditors; There were some among them that could remember their Deliverance out of Egypt, all above Fifty, and to them he speaks this, *not to the Children*, who knew it by hear-say only, v. 2. *Note*, God's Mercies to us when we were young, we should remember and retain the Impressions of when we are old.—What our Eyes have seen, especially in our early Days, has affected us, and should be improv'd by us long after.

They had seen what terrible Judgments God had executed upon the Enemies of Israel's Peace. 1. Upon *Pharaoh* and the *Egyptians* that *enslav'd* them. What a fine Country was ruin'd and laid waste by one Plague after another to force Israel's enlargement, v. 3. What a fine Army was intirely drown'd in the Red-sea, to prevent Israel's being re-enslav'd, v. 4. Thus did he give Egypt for their Ransom, Isa. 43. 3. Rather shall that famous Kingdom be destroy'd, than that Israel shall not be deliver'd.—2. Upon *Dathan* and *Abiram* that embroil'd them. Remember what he did in the Wilderness, v. 5. by how many necessary Chastisements (as they are call'd, v. 2.) they were kept from ruining themselves. Particularly when those daring *Reubenites* defied the Authority of *Moses*, and headed a dangerous Rebellion against God himself, which threaten'd the Ruin of the whole Nation, and might have ended in that, if the Divine Power had not immediately crush'd the Rebellion, by burying the Rebels alive; them, and all that was in their Possession, v. 6. What was done against them, tho' misinterpreted by the disaffected Party, Numb. 16. 41. was really done in Mercy to Israel. To be sav'd from the Mischief of Insurrections at Home is as great a Kindness to a People, and as obliging, as Protection from the Invasion of Enemies Abroad.

8 Therefore shall ye keep all the commandments which I command you this day, that ye may be strong, and go in and possess the land whither you go to possess it: 9 And that ye may prolong your days in the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers to give unto them, and to their seed, a land that floweth with milk and honey. 10 ¶ For the land whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs: 11 But the land whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven: 12 A land which the LORD thy God careth for: the eyes of the LORD thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year, even unto the end of the year. 13 ¶ And it shall come to pass, if you shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart, and with all your soul: 14 That I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oyl. 15 And I will send grafs in thy fields, for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full. 16 Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them: 17 And then the LORDS wrath be kindled against you, and he shut up the heaven that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit, and lest ye perish quickly from off the good land which the LORD giveth you.

Still he harps upon the same String, as loth to conclude till he had gain'd his Point. If thou wilt enter into Life, if thou wilt enter into Canaan, a Type of that Life, and find it a good Land indeed to thee, keep the commandments, keep all the Commandments which I command you this Day; love God, and serve him with all your Heart.

1. Because this was the way to get and keep Possession of the Promis'd Land. (1.) 'Twas the way to get Possession, v. 8. That ye may be strong for War, and so go in and possess it. So little did they know either of Hardship or Hazard in the Wars of Canaan, that he doth not say they should go in and fight for it, no, they had nothing in effect to do but go in and possess it. He doth not go about to teach them the Art of War, how to draw the Bow, and use the Sword, and keep Ranks,

that they might be strong and go in and possess the Land, no but let them keep God's commandments, and their Religion, while they were true to it, would be their Strength, and secure their Success. (2.) 'Twas the way to keep Possession, v. 9. That ye may prolong your Days in this Land, that your Eyes is upon.—Sin tends to the shortning of the Days of particular Persons, and the shortning the Days of a People's Prosperity; but Obedience will be a lengthening out of the Tranquility.

2. Because the Land of Canaan into which they were going had a more sensible Dependence upon the Blessing of Heaven than the Land of Egypt had, v. 10, 11, 12. Egypt was a Country fruitful enough, but it was all flat, and was water'd, not as other Countries with Rain. ('Tis said of Egypt, Zech. 14. 18. that it has no Rain) but by the over-flowing of the River Nile at a certain Season of the Year; to the improving of which there was necessary a great deal of the Art and Labour of the Husbandman, so that in Egypt a Man must bestow as much Coft and Pains upon a Field, as upon a Garden of Herbs. And this made them the more apt to imagin, that the Power of their own Hands got them this Wealth. But the Land of Canaan was an uneven Country, a Land of Hills and Vallies, which not only gave a more pleasant Prospect to the Eye, but yielded a greater Variety of Soils for the several Purposes of the Husbandman. 'Twas a Land that had no great Rivers in it, except Jordan, but drank Water of the Rain of Heaven. And so (1.) sav'd them a great deal of Labour. While the Egyptians were ditching and guttering in the Fields up to the Knees in Mud, to bring Water to their Land, which otherwise would soon become like the Heath in the Wilderness, the Israelites could sit in their Houses warm and easy, and leave it to God to water their Land with the former and the latter Rain, which is call'd the River of God, (Psalm 65. 9.) perhaps in Allusion to, and Contempt of the River of Egypt, which that Nation was so proud of. Note, The better God has provided by our outward Condition for our Ease and Convenience, the more we should abound in his Service: The less we have to do for our Bodies, the more we should do for God and our Souls. (2.) So he directed them to look upwards, to God, who giveth us Rain from Heaven, and fruitful Seasons, Acts 14. 17. and promised to be himself as the Dew unto Israel, Hof. 14. 5. Note 1. The greatest Comfort and Sweetness of any Mercy is to see it coming from Heaven, and the immediate Gift of Divine Providence. 2. The closer Dependence we have upon God, the more cheerful we should be in our Obedience to him. See how Moses here magnifies the Land of Canaan, above all other Lands, that the Eyes of God were always upon it, i. e. They should be so, to see that nothing was wanting, while they kept close to God and Duty; its Fruitfulness should be not so much the happy Product of its Soil, but the immediate Fruit of the Divine Blessing; and it appears to have been so by its present State, for 'tis said to be at this Day, now God is departed from it, as barren a Spot of Ground as perhaps any under Heaven. Call it not Naomi, call it Marah.

3. Because God would certainly bless them with an Abundance of all good Things, if they would love him and serve him, v. 13, 14, 15. I will give you the Rain of your Land in due Season, so that they should neither want it when the Ground call'd for it, nor have it in Excess: But the former Rain which fell at Seed-time, and the latter Rain, which fell before the Harvest, Amos 4. 7. This represented all the seasonable Blessings God would bestow upon them, especially Spiritual Comforts which should come as the latter and former Rain, Hof. 6. 3. And the Earth thus water'd, produc'd (1.) Fruits for the Service of Man, Corn, and Wine, and Oyl, Psalm 104. 13, 14, 15. (2.) Grafs for the Cattle, that they also might be Serviceable to Man; that he might eat of them and be full, v. 15. Godliness hath here the Promise of the Life that now is, But the Favour of God shall put Gladness into the Hearts more than the Increase of Corn, and Wine, and Oyl will.

4. Because their Revolt from God to Idols would certainly be their Ruin, v. 16, 17. Take heed that your Hearts be not deceived. All that forsake God, to set their Affections upon, or pay their Devotion to any Creature, will find themselves wretchedly deceiv'd to their own Destruction, and this will aggravate it, that it was purely for want of taking heed. A little Care would have prevented their being impos'd upon by the great Deceiver.—To awaken them to take heed, Moses here tells them plainly, that if they should turn aside to other Gods, 1. They would provoke the Wrath of God against them, and who knows the power of that Anger? 2. Good Things would be turn'd away from them; the Heaven would withhold its Rain, and then of Course the Earth would not yield its Fruit. 3. Evil Things would come upon them, they would perish quickly from off this good Land. And the better the Land was, the more Grievous it would be to perish from it. The Goodness of the Land would not be their Security, when the Badness of the Inhabitants had made them ripe for Ruin.

18 ¶ Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. 19 And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. 20 And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates: 21 That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the LORD swore unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth. 22 ¶ For if ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you to do them, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him; 23 Then will the LORD drive out all these nations from before you, and you shall possess greater nations, and mightier than yourselves. 24 Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread, shall be yours: from the wilderness, and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea, shall your coast be. 25 There shall no man be able to stand before you: for the LORD your God shall lay the fear of you, and the dread of you upon all the land that ye shall tread upon, as he hath said unto you.

Here 1. He repeats the Directions he had given for their Guidance and Assistance in their Obedience, and for the keeping up of Religion among them, v. 18, 19, 20. which is much to the same Purpose with what we had before, chap. 6. 6, &c. Let us all be directed by the three Rules here given. (1.) Let our Hearts be fill'd with the Word of God. Lay up these Words in your Heart and in your Soul. The Heart must be the Treasury or Store-house, in which the Word of God must be laid up, to be us'd upon all Occasions. We cannot expect good Practices in the Conversation, unless there be good Thoughts, good Affections, and good Principles in the Heart. (2.) Let our Eyes be fix'd upon the Word of God. Bind these Words for a Sign upon your Hand, which is always in View, (Isa. 49. 16.) and as Frontlets betwixt your Eyes, which you cannot avoid the Sight of; let them be as ready and familiar to you, and have your Eye as constantly upon them, as if they were written upon your Door-posts, and could not be over-look'd either when you go out, or when you come in. Thus we must lay God's Judgments before us, having a constant Regard to them, as the Guide of our Way, as the Rule of our Work, Psal. 119. 30. (3.) Let our Tongues be employ'd about the Word of God. Let it be the Subject of our familiar Discourse, where-ever we are; especially, with our Children, who must be taught the Service of God, as the one Thing needful, much more needful, than either the Rules of Decency, or the Calling they must live by in this World. Great Care and Pains must be taken to acquaint Children betimes, and to affect them with the Word of God, and the wondrous Things of his Law. Nor will any Thing contribute more to the Prosperity and Perpetuity of Religion in a Nation, than the good Education of Children: If the Seed be Holy, 'tis the Substance of a Land.

2. He repeats the Assurances he had before given them, in God's Name, of Prosperity and Success, if they were obedient. 1. They should have a happy Settlement, v. 21. Their Days should be multiplied, and when they were fulfilled, the Days of their Children likewise, should be many, as the Days of Heaven, i. e. Canaan should be sure to them and their Heirs for ever, as long as the World stands, if they did not by their own Sin throw themselves out of it.

2. It should not be in the Power of their Enemies to give them any Disturbance, or make them upon any Account uneasy: If ye will keep God's Commandments, and be careful to do your Duty, v. 22. God will not only crown the Labours of the Husbandmen with Plenty of the Fruits of the Earth; but he will own and succeed the more glorious Undertakings of the Men of War; Victory shall attend your Arms, which way soever they turn; God will drive out these Nations, and put you in Possession of their Land, v. 23, 24. Their Territories should be enlarg'd to the utmost Extent of the Promise, Gen. 15. 18. And all their Neighbours should stand in Awe of them, v. 25. Nothing contributes more to the making a Nation Considerable Abroad, Valuable to its Friends, and Formidable to its Enemies, than Religion reigning in it; for who can be against those that have God for them? And

he is certainly for those, that are sincerely for him, Prov. 14. 34.

26 ¶ Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse: 27 A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: 28 And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods which ye have not known. 29 And it shall come to pass when the LORD thy God hath brought thee in unto the land whither thou goest to possess it, that thou shalt put the blessing upon mount Gerizim, and the curse upon mount Ebal. 30 Are they not on the other side Jordan, by the way where the sun goeth down in the land of the Canaanites, which dwell in the champain over against Gilgal, beside the plains of Moreh? 31 For ye shall pass over Jordan to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God giveth you, and ye shall possess it and dwell therein. 32 And ye shall observe to do all the statutes and judgments which I set before you this day.

Here Moses concludes his general Exhortation to Obedience; and his Management is very affecting, and such as one would think, should have engag'd them for ever to God, and should have left the Impression upon them, never to be worn out. 1. He sums up all his Arguments for Obedience in two Words, *The Blessing, and the Curse*, v. 26. i. e. The Rewards and the Punishments, as they stand in the Promises and the Threatnings, which are the great Sanctions of the Law, taking hold of Hope and Fear, those two Handles of the Soul, by which it is caught, held, and manag'd. These two, the Blessing and the Curse, he set before them, that is, 1. He explain'd them, that they might know them; he instanc'd in the Particulars contain'd both in the Blessing and in the Curse, that they might see the more fully how desirable the Blessing was, and how dreadful the Curse. (2.) He confirm'd them that they might believe them; made it Evident to them, by the Proofs he produc'd of his own Commission, that the Blessing was not a Fool's Paradise, nor the Curse a Bug-bear, but both real Declarations of the Purpose of God concerning them. (3.) He put them to their Choice, which of these they would have. So fairly doth he deal with them, and so far is he from putting out the Eyes of these Men, as he was charg'd, Numb. 16. 14. They and we are plainly told, on what Terms we stand with Almighty God. 1. If we be Obedient to his Laws, we may be sure of a Blessing, v. 27. But, 2. If we be Disobedient, we may be as sure of a Curse, v. 28. Say ye to the Righteous, for God hath said it, and all the World cannot unfay it, that it shall be well with them: But woe to the wicked, it shall be ill with them.

2. He appoints a publick and solemn Proclamation to be made of the Blessing and Curse which he had set before them upon the two Mountains of Gerizim and Ebal, v. 29, 30. We have more particular Directions for this Solemnity, chap. 27. 11. And an Account of the Performance of it, Josh. 8. 33, &c. It was to be done, and was done, presently upon their coming into Canaan, that when they first took Possession of that Land, they might know upon what Terms they stood. The Place where this was to be done, is particularly described by Moses, tho' he never saw it, which is one Circumstance among many, that evidences his Divine Instructions. 'Tis said to be near the Plain, or Oaks, or Meadows of Moreh, which was one of the first Places that Abram came to in Canaan; so that in sending them thither to hear the Blessing and the Curse, God minded them of the Promise he made to Abram in that very Place, Gen. 12. 6, 7. The mention of this Appointment here, serves (1.) For the Encouragement of their Faith in the Promise of God, that they should be Masters of Canaan quickly. Do it (saith Moses) on the other side Jordan, v. 30. For you may be confident you shall pass over Jordan, v. 31. The Institution of this Service to be done in Canaan, was an Assurance to them, that they should be brought into Possession of it, and a Token like that which God gave to Moses, Exod. 3. 12. Ye shall serve God upon this Mountain. And (2.) It serves for an Engagement upon them to be Obedient, that they might escape that Curse, and obtain that Blessing, which besides what they had already heard, they must shortly be Witnesses to the solemn Publication of, v. 32. Ye shall observe to do the Statutes and Judgments, that you may not in that Solemnity be Witnesses against yourselves.

C H A P. XII.

Moses at this Chapter comes to the particular Statutes which he had to give in Charge to Israel, and he begins with those which relate to the Worship of God; and particularly those which explain the Second Commandment, about which God is in a special manner jealous, (1.) They must utterly destroy all Relicks and Remains of Idolatry, v. 1, 3. (2.) They must keep close to the Tabernacle, v. 4, 5. The former Precept was intended to prevent all false Worship: The latter to preserve the Worship God had instituted. By this latter Law, 1. They are commanded to bring all their Offerings to the Altar of God, and all their Holy Things to the Place which he should chuse, v. 6, 7, 11, 12, 14, 18, 26, 27, 28. 2. They are forbidden in general, to do as they now did in the Wilderness, v. 8, 11. And as the Canaanites had done, v. 29, 31. And in particular, to eat the Hallowed Things at their own Houses, v. 13, 17, 18. Or, to forsake the instituted Ministry, v. 19. 3. They are permitted to eat Flesh, as common Food at their own Houses, provided they did not eat the Blood, v. 15, 16. And again, 20, 26.

THese are the statutes and judgments which ye shall observe to do in the land which the LORD God of thy fathers giveth thee to possess it, all the days that ye live upon the earth. 2 Ye shall utterly destroy all the places wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree. 3 And you shall overthrow their altars, and break their pillars, and burn their groves with fire, and you shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy the names of them out of that place. 4 Ye shall not do so unto the LORD your God.

From those great Original Truths, That there is a God, and that there is but one God, arise those great Fundamental Laws, That that God is to be worshipp'd, and He only, and that therefore we are to have no other Gods before him: That's the first Commandment, and the second is the Guard upon it, or a Hedge about it, To prevent a Revolt to false Gods, we are forbidden to worship the true God, in such a Way and Manner as the false Gods were worshipp'd; and are commanded to observe the instituted Ordinances of Worship, that we may adhere to the proper Object of Worship. For this Reason, Moses is very large in his Exposition of the second Commandment. What is contain'd in this, and the four following Chapters, mostly refers to that. These are Statutes and Judgments which they must observe to do, v. 1. (1.) In the Days of their Rest and Prosperity, when they should be Masters of Canaan. We must not think, that our Religion is instituted only to be our Work in the Years of our Servitude, our Entertainment in the Places of our Solitude, and our Consolation in Affliction only; No, when we come to possess a good Land, still we must keep up the Worship of God, in Canaan, as well as in a Wilderness, when we are grown up, as well as when we are Children; when we are full of Buiness, as when we have nothing else to do. (2.) All their Days, As long as ye live upon the Earth. While we are here in our State of Trial, we must continue in our Obedience, even to the End, and never leave our Duty, nor grow weary of well-doing.

Now 1. They are here charg'd to abolish and extirpate all those Things that the Canaanites had serv'd their Idol Gods with, v. 2, 3. Here's no mention of Idol-Temples, which countenanceth the Opinion some have, that the Tabernacle Moses rear'd in the Wilderness, was the first Habitation that ever was made for Religious Uses; and that from it Temples took their rise. But the Places that had been us'd, and were now to be levell'd, were Inclosures for their Worship on Mountains and Hills, as if the Height of the Ground would give Advantage to the Ascent of their Devotions, and under Green-Trees, either because pleasant, or because awful: And whatever makes the Mind easy, and reverend, contracts and composes it, was thought to befriend Devotion. The solemn Shade and Silence of a Grove, is still admir'd by those that are dispos'd to Contemplation. But the Advantages these Retirements gave to the Gentiles Worship of their Idols, was, that they conceal'd those Works of Darknes, which could not bear the Light, and therefore they must all be destroy'd, with the Altars, Pillars and Images: that had been us'd by the Natives in the Worship of their Gods, so as the very Names of them might be buried in Oblivion; and not only not be remember'd with Respect, but not remember'd at all. They must thus consult, (1.) The Reputation of their Land; Let it never be said of this Holy Land, that it had been thus polluted, but let all these Dunghills be carry'd away, as Things they were asham'd of. (2.) The Safety of their Religion;

Let none be left remaining, lest profane, unthinking People, especially in degenerate Ages, should make use of them in the Service of the God of Israel. Let these Pest-houses be demolish'd, as things they were afraid of.— He begins the Statutes that relate to Divine Worship with this, because there must first be an Abhorrence of that which is Evil, before there can be a steady Adherence to that which is good, Rom. 12. 9. The Kingdom of God, must be set up both in Persons and Places, upon the Ruins of the Devil's Kingdom; for they cannot stand together, nor can there be any Communion between Christ and Belial.

2. They are charg'd not to translate the Rites and Usages of Idolaters of the Worship of God; no, not under Colour of beautifying and improving it, v. 4. Ye shall not do so to the Lord your God, i. e. You must not think to do Honour to him, by offering Sacrifices on Mountains and Hills, erecting Pillars, planting Groves, and setting up Images: No, you must not indulge a luxurious Fancy in your Worship, nor think, whatever pleaseth that, will please God: He is above all Gods, and will not be worshipp'd as other Gods are.

5 But unto the place which the LORD your God shall chuse out of all your tribes, to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come: 6 And thither ye shall bring your burnt-offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave-offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your free-will-offerings, and the firstlings of your herds, and of your flocks, 7 And there ye shall eat before the LORD your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that you put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the LORD thy God hath blessed thee. 8 Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes. 9 For ye are not as yet come to the rest, and to the inheritance which the LORD your God giveth you. 10 But when ye go over Jordan, and dwell in the land which the LORD your God giveth you to inherit, and when he giveth you rest from all your enemies round about, so that ye dwell in safety: 11 Then there shall be a Place which the LORD your God shall chuse to cause his name to dwell there, thither shall ye bring all that I command you; your burnt-offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave-offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the LORD. 12 And ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God, ye, and your sons, and your daughters, and your men-servants, and your maid-servants, and the Levite that is within your gates, forasmuch as he hath no part nor inheritance with you. 13 Take heed to thy self that thou offer not thy burnt-offerings in every place that thou seest. 14 But in the place which the LORD shall chuse in one of thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt-offerings, and there thou shalt do all that I command thee. 15 Notwithstanding, thou mayst kill and eat flesh in all thy gates, whatsoever thy soul lusteth after according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee: the unclean and the clean may eat thereof, as of the roe-buck, and as of the hart. 16 Only ye shall not eat the blood; ye shall pour it upon the earth as water. 17 ¶ Thou mayst not eat within thy gates the tithe of thy corn, or of thy wine, or of thy oyl, or the firstlings of thy herds, or of thy flock, nor any of thy vows which thou vowest, nor thy free-will-offerings, or heave-offering of thine hand: 18 But thou must eat them before the LORD thy God, in the place which the LORD thy God shall chuse, thou and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite that is within thy gates: and thou shalt

shalt rejoyce before the LORD thy God : in all that thou puttest thine hands unto. 19 Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite as long as thou livest upon the earth. 20 ¶ When the LORD thy God shall enlarge thy border as he hath promised thee, and thou shalt say I will eat flesh (because thy soul longeth to eat flesh) thou mayest eat flesh whatsoever thy soul lusteth after. 21 If the place which the LORD thy God hath chosen to put his name there, be too far from thee; then thou shalt kill of thy herd and of thy flock, which the LORD hath given thee, as I have commanded thee, and thou shalt eat in thy gates whatsoever thy soul lusteth after. 22 Even as the roebuck and the hart is eaten, so thou shalt eat them : the unclean and the clean shall eat of them alike. 23 Only be sure that thou eat not the blood : for the blood is the life, and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh. 24 Thou shalt not eat it ; thou shalt pour it upon the earth as water. 25 Thou shalt not eat it, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, when thou shalt do *that which is right* in the sight of the LORD. 26 Only thy holy things which thou hast, and thy vows, thou shalt take and go unto the place which the LORD shall chuse. 27 And thou shalt offer thy burnt-offerings, the flesh and the blood, upon the altar of the LORD thy God : and the blood of thy sacrifices shall be poured out upon the altar of the LORD thy God, and thou shalt eat the flesh. 28 Observe and hear all these words which I command thee, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee for ever, when thou doest *that which is good and right* in the sight of the LORD thy God. 29 ¶ When the LORD thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee, whither thou goest to possess them, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their land : 30 Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee, and that thou enquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise. 31 Thou shalt not do so unto the LORD thy God : for every abomination to the LORD which he hateth, have they done unto their gods : for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods. 32 What thing soever I command you, observe to do it : thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.

There is not any one particular Precept (as I remember) in all the Law of Moses, so largely press'd and inculcated, as this, by which they are all ty'd to bring their Sacrifices to that one Altar which was set up in the Court of the Tabernacle, and there to perform all the Rituals of their Religion ; for as to Moral Services, *then*, no doubt, as *now*, Men might pray every where, as they did in their Synagogues. The command to do this, and the Prohibition of the contrary, are here repeated again and again, as we teach Children : And yet we are sure, there is in Scripture no vain Repetition : But all this Stress is laid upon it, (1.) Because of the strange Proneness there was in the hearts of that People to Idolatry and Superstition, and the Danger of their being seduc'd by the many Temptations which they would be surrounded with. (2.) Because of the great Use which the Observance of this Appointment would be of to them, both to prevent the introducing of corrupt Customs into their Worship, and to preserve among them Unity and Brotherly Love ; that meeting all in one Place, they might continue both of one Way, and of one Heart. (3.) Because of the significancy of this Appointment. They must keep to one Place, in Token of their Belief of those two great Truths, which we find together, 1 Tim. 2. 5. That there is One God, and one Mediator between God and Man. It not only serv'd to keep up the Notion of the Unity of the Godhead, but was an Imitation to them (tho' they could not stedfastly

discern it) of the *one only Way* of Approach to God, and Communion with him, in and by the *Messiah*.

Let us now reduce this long Charge to its proper Heads.

1. It is here promis'd, that when they were settled in *Canaan*, when they had rest from their Enemies, and dwelt in safety, God would chuse a certain Place, which he would appoint to be the Center of their Unity, to which they should bring all their Offerings, v. 10, 11. Observe, (1.) If they must be ty'd to one Place, they should not be left in doubt concerning it, but should certainly know what Place it was. Had Christ intended under the Gospel to make any one Place such a Seat of Power, as *Rome* pretends to be, we should not have been so much in the Dark as we are, nor so far to seek about the Nomination of the Place. (2.) God doth not leave it to them to chuse the Place, lest the Tribes should have quarrell'd about it; each striving for their Secular Advantage to have it among them; but he reserves the Choice to himself, as he doth the Designation of the Redeemer, and the Institution of Holy Ordinances. (3.) He doth not appoint the Place now, as he had appointed Mount *Gerizim* and *Ebal*, for the pronouncing of the Blessings and Curses, Chap. 11. 29. but reserves the doing of it till hereafter, that hereby they might be made to expect further Directions from Heaven, and a Divine Conduct after *Moses* should be remov'd.

The Place God would chuse is said to be the Place where he would put his Name, i. e. which he would have to be call'd his, where his Honour should dwell, where he would manifest himself to his People, and make himself known, as Men do by their Names, and where he would receive Addresses, by which his Name is both prais'd and call upon. 'Twas to be his Habitation, where, as King of Israel, he would keep Court, and be found by all those that reverently sought him. The Ark was the Token of God's Presence, and where that was put, there God put his Name, and that was his Habitation : It contain'd the Tables of the Law; for none must expect to receive Favours from God's Hand, but those that are willing to receive the Law from his Mouth. The Place God first chose for the Ark to reside in, was *Shiloh* : And after that had sinn'd away its Honour, we find the Ark at *Kirjath-jearim*, and other Places, but at length, in *David's* Time, it was fix'd at *Jerusalem*, and God said concerning *Solomon's* Temple, more expressly than ever he had said concerning any other Place, *This I have chosen for a House of Sacrifice*, 2 Chron. 7. 12. Compare Chap. 6. 5. Now under the Gospel, we have no Temple that sanctifies the Gold; no Altar that sanctifies the Gift, but Christ only. And as to the places of Worship, the Prophets foretold, That in every Place the Spiritual Incense shall be offer'd, Mal. 1. 11. And our Saviour hath declar'd, that those are accepted as true Worshipers, that worship God in Sincerity and Truth, without regard either to this Mountain, or *Jerusalem*, John 4. 21.

2. They are commanded to bring all their Burnt-Offerings and Sacrifices to this Place that God would chuse, v. 6. And again, v. 11. Thither shall ye bring all that I command you. And v. 14. There thou shalt offer thy Burnt-Offerings. And v. 27. The Flesh and the Blood must be offered upon the Altar of the Lord thy God. And of their Peace-Offerings, here call'd their Sacrifices, tho' they were to eat the Flesh, yet the Blood was to be pour'd out upon the Altar. By this they were taught, that Sacrifices and Offerings God did not desire, nor accept for their own sake, nor for any intrinsic Worth in them, as natural Expressions of Homage and Adoration : But they receiv'd their Virtue purely from the Altar on which they were offer'd, as it typified Christ ; whereas Prayers and Praises, as much more necessary and valuable, were to be offered every Day by the People of God wherever they were. A devout Israelite might honour God, and keep up Communion with him, and obtain Mercy from him, tho' he had not an Opportunity, perhaps for many Months together, of bringing a Sacrifice to his Altar. But this signified the Obligation we Christians are under, to offer up all our Spiritual Sacrifices to God in the Name of Jesus Christ, hoping for Acceptance only upon the Score of his Mediation, 1 Pet. 2. 5.

3. They are commanded to feast upon their Hallowed Things, before the Lord with holy Joy. They must not only bring to the Altar the Sacrifices that were to be offer'd to God, but they must bring to the Place of the Altar, all those Things which they were appointed by the Law to eat and drink, to the Honour of God, in token of their Communion with him, v. 6. Their Tithes, Heave-offerings of their Hand, i. e. their first-fruits, their Vows, and Free-will-offerings, and Firstlings, all those things which were to be Religiously made use of, either by themselves, or by the Priests and Levites, must be brought to the Place which God would chuse ; as all the Revenues of the Crown, from all parts of the Kingdom, are brought into the Exchequer. And v. 7. There ye shall eat before the Lord, and rejoice in all that you put your Hands unto. And again, v. 12. Ye shall rejoyce before the Lord, Ye and your Sons and your Daughters. — Observe here, 1. That what we do in the Service of God, and to his Glory, redounds to our Benefit, if it be not our own Fault. They that Sacrifice to God, are welcome to eat before him, and to feast

feast upon their Sacrifices: He *Supps with us*, and we *with him*, Rev. 3. 20. If we glorify God, we edify ourselves, cultivate our own Minds through the Grace of God, by the increase of our Knowledge and Faith, the enlivening of devout Affections, and the confirming of gracious Habits and Resolutions: Thus is the Soul nourish'd. 2. That work for God should be done with holy Joy and Cheerfulness. Ye shall eat and rejoice, v. 7. And again, v. 12. and v. 18. (1.) Now while they were before the Lord, they must rejoice, v. 12. 'Tis the Will of God, that we should serve him with gladness, and none displeased him more than they that cover'd his Altar with Tears, Mal. 2. 13. See what a good Master we serve, that has made it our Duty to sing at our Work. Even the Children and Servants must rejoice with them before God, that the Services of Religion might be a Pleasure to them, and not a Task or Drudgery. 2. They must carry away with them the grateful Relish of that Delight they found in Communion with God, and must rejoice in all that they put their Hands unto, v. 7. Some of the Comfort they had had in the Business of Religion, they must take with them into their common Employments, and being thus strengthen'd in Soul, whatever they did they must do it heartily, and cheerfully. And this holy pious Joy in God and his Goodness, with which we are to rejoice evermore, would be the best Preservative against the Sin and Snare of vain and carnal Mirth, and a Relief against the Sorrows of the World.

4. They are Commanded to be kind to the Levites. Did they feast with Joy? The Levites must feast with them, and rejoice with them, v. 12. And again, v. 18. And a general Caution, v. 19. Take heed, that thou forsake not the Levite as long as thou livest. There were Levites that attended the Altar as Assistants to the Priests, and these must not be forsaken, that is, the Service they perform'd must be constantly adher'd to; No other Altars must be set up, but that which God appointed; for that would be to forsake the Levites: but this here seems to be spoken of the Levites that were dispers'd in the Country, to instruct the People in the Law of God, and to assist them in their Devotions; for 'tis the Levites within their Gates, that they are here commanded to make much of. 'Tis a great Mercy to have Levites near us, within our Gates, that we may ask the Law at their Mouth, and at our Feast, to be a Check upon us, to restrain Excesses. And 'tis the Duty of People to be kind to their Ministers, that give them good Instructions, and set them good Examples. As long as we live, we shall need their Assistance, till we come to that World, where Ordinances will be superfluous, and therefore as long as we live, we must not forsake the Levites. The Reason given, v. 12. is, because the Levite has no Part nor Inheritance with you; So that he cannot grow Rich by Husbandry, or Trade; let him therefore share with you in the Comfort of your Riches. They must give the Levites their Tythes and Offerings, settled on them by the Law, because they had no other Maintenance.

5. They are allow'd to eat common Flesh, but not the Flesh of their Offerings, in their own Houses wherever they dwell. What was any way devoted to God, they must not eat at home, v. 13. 17. But what was not so devoted, they might kill, and eat of at their Pleasure, v. 15. And this Permission is again repeated, v. 20, 21, 22. It should seem, that while they were in the Wilderness, they did not eat the Flesh of any of those kind of Beasts that were us'd in Sacrifice, but what was kill'd at the Door of the Tabernacle, and Part of it presented to God as a Peace-Offering, Lev. 17. 3, 4. But when they came to Canaan, where they must live at a great Distance, from the Tabernacle, they might kill what they pleas'd for their own Use, of their Flocks and Herds, without bringing Part to the Altar. This Allowance is very express, and repeated, lest Satan should take Occasion from that Law which forbade the eating of their Sacrifices at their own Houses, to suggest to them, as he did to our first Parents, hard thoughts of God, as if he grudg'd them the Enjoyment of what he had given them; Thou may'st eat whatsoever thy Soul lusteth after. There is a natural regular Appetite, which it is lawful to gratify with Temperance and Sobriety, not taking too great a Pleasure in the Gratification, nor being Unclean, if it be cross'd. The unclean which might not eat of the holy things, yet might eat of the same Sort of Flesh when it was only us'd as common Food. The Distinction between clean Persons and unclean was Sacred, and design'd for the preserving of the Honour of their Holy Feasts, and therefore must not be brought into their ordinary Meals.

This Permission hath a double Restriction.

1. They must eat according to the Blessing which God had given them, v. 15. Note, It is not only our Wisdom, but our Duty, to live according to our Estates, and not to spend above what we have. As 'tis unjust on the one Hand to hoard what should be laid out; so it is much more unjust, to lay out more than we have; for what is not our own, must needs be another's, who is thereby robb'd and defrauded. And this, I say, is much more unjust; because it is easier afterwards to distribute what has been unduly spar'd, and so to make a sort of Restitution for the Wrong, than it is to repay to Wife and Children, and Creditors, what has been unduly spent. Between these two Extremes,

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let Wisdom find the mean, and then let Watchfulness and Resolution keep it.

2. They must not eat Blood, v. 16. and again, v. 23. Only be sure that thou eat not the Blood, v. 24. Thou shalt not eat it, and v. 25. Thou shalt not eat it that it may go well with thee. When they could not bring the Blood to the Altar, to pour it out there before the Lord, as belonging to him, they must pour it out upon the Earth, as not belonging to them, because it was the Life, and therefore as an Acknowledgment belong'd to him who gives Life, and as an Attonement belong'd to him to whom Life is forfeited. Bp. Patrick thinks one Reason why they were forbidden thus strictly the eating of Blood, was to prevent the Superstitions of the old Idolaters about the Blood of their Sacrifices, which they thought their Demons delighted in, and by eating of which they imagin'd that they had Communion with them.

6. They are forbidden to keep up either their own corrupt Usages in the Wilderness, or the corrupt Usages of their Predecessors in the Land of Canaan.

1. They must not keep up those ill customs which they had got in the Wilderness, and which were conniv'd at in Consideration of the present unsettledness of their Condition, v. 8, 9. Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day. Never was there a better Governour than Moses, and one would think never a better Opportunity of keeping up good Order and Discipline than now among the People of Israel, when they lay so closely encamp'd under the Eye of their Governour, and yet it seems there was much amiss, and many Irregularities among them. We must never expect to see any Society perfectly pure and right, and as it should be, till we come to the Heavenly Canaan. They had Sacrifices, and Religious Worship, Courts of Justice, and Civil Government, and by the stoning of the Man that gather'd Sticks on the Sabbath day, it appears there was great strictness us'd in guarding the most weighty Matters of the Law; but being frequently upon the Remove, and always at Uncertainty, (1.) They could none of them observe the Solemn Feasts, and the Rites of Cleansing, with the exactness that the Law requir'd: And (2.) Those among them that were dispos'd to do amiss, had Opportunity given them to do it, unobserv'd by the frequent Interruptions which their Removes gave to the Administration of Justice, But (saith Moses) when ye come to Canaan, ye shall not do as we do here. Note, When the People of God are in an unsettled Condition, that may be tolerated, and dispens'd with, which would by no Means be allow'd at another Time. Cases of Necessity are to be consider'd while the Necessity continues, but that must not be done in Canaan, which was indulg'd in the Wilderness. While a House is in the Building, a great deal of Dirt and Rubbish is suffer'd to lie by it, which must all be taken away when the House is built. Moses was now about to lay down his Life and Government, and it is a Comfort to him to foresee that Israel would be better in the next Reign, than they had been in his.

2. They must not worship the Lord by any of those Rites or Ceremonies which the Nations of Canaan had made Use of in the Service of their Gods, v. 29.—32. They must not so much as enquire into the Modes and Forms of Idolatrous Worship. What Good will it do them to Know those Depths of Satan, Rev. 2. 24? 'Tis best to be ignorant of that which there is Danger of being infected by. They must not introduce the Customs of Idolaters, (1.) Because it would be absurd to make those their Patterns whom God had made their Slaves and Captives, cut off and destroy'd from before them. The Canaanites had not flourish'd and prosper'd so much in the Service of their Gods, as that the Israelites should be invited to take up their Customs. Those are wretchedly befotted indeed, who will walk in the Way of Sinners, after they have seen their End. (2.) Because some of their Customs were most barbarous and inhuman, and such as trampled not only upon the Light and Law of Nature, but upon Natural Affection itself, as Burning their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods, v. 31. The very Mention of which is sufficient to make it Odious, and possess us with a Horror of it. (3.) Because their idolatrous Customs were an Abomination to the Lord, and the translating of them into his Worship, would make even that an Abomination, and an Affront to him by which they should give him Honour, and by which they hoped to obtain his Favour. The Case is bad indeed when the Sacrifice itself is become an Abomination, Prov. 15. 8. He therefore concludes, v. 32. with the same Caution concerning the Worship of God, which he had before given concerning the Word of God (Chap. 4. 2.) Ye shall not add thereto any Inventions of your own, under Pretence of making the Ordinance either more Significant, or more Magnificent, nor diminish from it, under Pretence of making it more easy and practicable, or of setting aside that which may be spar'd, but observe to do all that, and that only which God has commanded. We may then hope in our Religious Worship to obtain the Divine Acceptance, when we observe the Divine Appointment. God will have his own Work done in his own Way.

C H A P. XIII.

Moses is still upon that necessary Subject, Concerning the Peril of Idolatry; In the close of the foregoing Chapter he had caution'd them against the Peril that might arise from their Predecessors the Canaanites. In this Chapter he cautions them against the Rise of Idolatry from among themselves; They must take heed lest any should draw them to Idolatry. (1.) By the presence of Prophecy, v. 1. (2.) By the presence of Friendship and Relation, v. 6. (3.) By the presence of Numbers, v. 12. -- 18. But in all these cases the Temptation must be resolutely resisted, and the Tempters punished and cut off.

IF there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, 2 And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods (which thou hast not known) and let us serve them; 3 Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. 4 Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and you shall serve him and cleave unto him. 5 And that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death (because he hath spoken to turn you away from the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the LORD thy God commanded thee to walk in) so shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee.

Here's 1. A very strange Supposition, v. 1, 2. (1.) 'Tis strange that there should arise any among themselves, especially any pretending to Vision and Prophecy that should move them to go and serve other gods. Was it possible that any who had so much Knowledge of the Methods of Divine Revelation as to be able to personate a Prophet, should yet have so little Knowledge of the Divine Nature and Will, as to go himself, and entice his Neighbours after other gods? Could an Israelite ever be guilty of such Impiety? Could a Man of Sense ever be guilty of such Absurdity? We see it in our own Day, and therefore may think it the less strange; Multitudes that profess both Learning and Religion, yet exciting both themselves and others, not only to Worship God by Images, but to give Divine Honour to Saints and Angels, which is no better than going after other gods to serve them; Such is the Power of strong Delusions. -- (2.) 'Tis yet more strange that the Sign or Wonder given for the Confirmation of this false Doctrine should come to pass. Can it be thought that God himself should give any Countenance to such a vile Motion? Did ever a false Prophet work a true Miracle? 'Tis only suppos'd here for two Reasons, (1.) To strengthen the Caution here given against hearkening to such a one. Tho' it were possible that he should work a true Miracle, yet you must not believe him if he tells you you must serve other Gods, for the Divine Law against that is certainly perpetual and unalterable. The Supposition is like that, Gal. 1. 8. If we or an Angel from Heaven preach any other Gospel to you, which doth not prove it possible that an Angel should Preach another Gospel, but strongly expresseth the certainty and perpetuity of that which we have received. So here (2.) 'Tis to fortify them against the Danger of Impostures, and lying wonders, (2 Thes. 2. 9.) suppose the Credentials he produceth be so artfully counterfeited, that you cannot discern the Cheat, nor disprove them, yet if they be intended to draw you to the Service of other Gods, that alone is sufficient to disprove them; no Evidence can be admitted against so clear a Truth, as that of the Unity of the Godhead, and so plain a Law, as that of worshipping the one only living and true God. We cannot suppose that the God of Truth should set the Seal of Miracles to a Lye, to so gross a Lye as is suppos'd in that Temptation, Let us go after other Gods. But if it be ask'd why this false Prophet is permitted to counterfeit this Broad-Seal, 'tis answer'd here, v. 3. The Lord your God proveth you. -- He suffers you to be set upon by such a Temptation, to try your Constancy, that both they that are Perfect, and they that are False and Corrupt may be made manifest. 'Tis to prove you, therefore see that you acquit yourselves well in the Trial, and stand your Ground.

2. Here's a very necessary Charge given in this Case. 1. Not

to yield to the Temptation, v. 3. Thou shalt not hearken to the Words of that Prophet. Not only thou shalt not do the Thing he tempts thee to, but thou shalt not so much as patiently hear the Temptation, but reject it with the utmost Disdain and Detestation. Such a Suggestion as this is not to be so much as parly'd with, but the Ear must be stop't against it; Get thee behind me Satan; Some Temptations are so grossly vile that they will not bear a Debate, nor may we so much as give them the Hearing. -- What follows, v. 4. Ye shall walk after the Lord, may be look'd upon, 1. As prescribing a Preservative from the Temptation: Keep close to your Duty and you keep out of Harm's way. God never leaves us till we leave him. Or, 2. As furnishing us with an Answer to the Temptation; say, it is written, Thou shalt walk after the Lord, and cleave unto him, and therefore what have I to do with Idols?

2. Not to spare the Tempter, v. 5. That Prophet shall be put to death, both to punish him for the Attempt he hath made, the Seducer must dye, tho' none were seduced by him. A Design upon the Crown is Treason; And to prevent his doing further mischief. This is call'd putting away the Evil. -- There's no way of removing the Guilt but by removing the Guilty; If such a Criminal be not punish'd, they that should do it make themselves responsible. And thus the Mischief must be put away; The Infection must be kept from spreading, by cutting off the gangren'd Limb, and putting away the Mischief-makers. Such dangerous Diseases as these must be taken in time.

6 ¶ If thy brother the son of thy mother or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, let us go and serve other gods (which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers; 7 Namely, of the gods of the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth) 8 Thou shalt not consent unto him nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him. 9 But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. 10 And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die: because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. 11 And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this is, among you.

Further Provision is made by this Branch of the Statute, against receiving the Infection of Idolatry from those that are near and dear to us.

1. It is the Policy of the Tempter to send his Sollicitations by the Hand of those we love, whom we least suspect of any ill Design upon us, and whom we are desirous to please, and apt to conform ourselves to. -- The Enticement here is suppos'd to come from a Brother or Child, that are near by Nature; from a Wife or Friend that are near by Choice; and are to us as our own Souls, v. 6. Satan tempted Adam by Eve, and Christ by Peter. We are therefore concern'd to stand upon our Guard against an ill Proposal, when the Person that proposeth it can pretend to an Interest in us, that we may never sin against God in complement to the best Friend we have in the World. The Temptation is suppos'd to be private, he will intice thee secretly, implying that Idolatry is a Work of Darkness, which dreads the Light, and covets to be conceal'd; and which the Sinner promiseth himself, and the Tempter promiseth him Secrecy and Security in. -- Concerning the false Gods propos'd to be serv'd, (1.) The Tempter suggests, that the worshipping of these Gods was the common Practice of the World; and if they limited their Adorations to an invisible Deity, they were Singular, and like no Body, for they were the Gods of the People round about them, and indeed of all the Nations of the Earth, v. 7. This Suggestion draws many away from Religion and Godliness, that 'tis an unfashionable thing, and they make their Court to the World, and the Flesh, because these are the Gods of the People that are round about them. (2.) Moses suggests in Opposition to this, that it had not been the Practice of their Ancestors; they are Gods which thou hast not known, thou nor thy Fathers. Those that are born of Godly Parents and have been educated in pious Exercises, when they are enticed to a vain loose careless Way of Living, should remember that those are Ways which they have not known, they and their Fathers. And will they thus degenerate?

2. It

2. It is our Duty to prefer God and Religion before the best Friends we have in the World. 1. We must not in compliance to our Friends, break God's Law, v. 8. *Thou shalt not consent to him, nor go with him to his Idolatrous Worship, no not for Company, or Curiosity, or to gain a better Interest in his Affections.* 'Tis a general Rule, *If Sinners intice thee, Consent thou not.* Prov. 1. 10. 2. We must not in Compassion to our Friends obstruct the course of God's Justice. He that offers such a Thing, must not only be look'd upon as an Enemy, or dangerous Person, whom one would be afraid of, and *swear the Peace upon*, but as a Criminal or Traitor, who in Zeal for our Sovereign Lord, his Crown and Dignity, we are bound to *inform against*, and cannot conceal without incurring the Guilt of a Great Mistrifion, v. 9. *Thou shalt surely kill him.* By this Law the Persons inticed were bound to prosecute the Seducer, and to give Evidence against him before the proper Judges, that he might suffer the Penalty of the Law, and that *without delay*, which the *Jews* say is here intended in that Phrase, as 'tis in the Hebrew, *Killing thou shalt kill him*, neither the Prosecution nor the Execution must be deferr'd, and he that was first in the former must be first in the latter, to shew that he stood to his Testimony, *Thy hand shall be first upon him, to mark him out as an Anathema*, and then, the Hands of all the People to *put him away as an accursed thing*.—The Death he must die was that which was look'd upon among the *Jews* as the severest of all other. He must be *ston'd*; And his Accusation written is, That he has sought to *thrust thee away*, by a kind of Violence from the Lord thy God, v. 10. Those are certainly our worst Enemies that would *thrust us from God* our best Friend; and whatever draws us to sin separates between us and God, 'Tis a Design upon our Life, and to be resented accordingly. And Lastly, Here's the good Effect of this necessary Execution, v. 11. *All Israel shall hear and fear.* They ought to hear and fear, for the Punishment of Crimes committed is design'd in *terrorem*, for the Prevention of the like. And 'tis to be hoped they will hear and fear, and by the severity of the Punishment, especially when it is at the Prosecution of a Father, a Brother, or a Friend, will be made to conceive a Horror of the Sin, as exceeding sinful, and to be afraid of incurring the like Punishments themselves. *Smite the Scornor* that sins presumptuously, and the Simple that's in Danger of sinning carelessly will beware.

12 ¶ If thou shalt hear say in one of thy cities, which the LORD thy God hath given thee to dwell there, saying, 13 *Certain men, the Children of Belial, are gone out from among you, and have withdrawn the inhabitants of their city, saying, Let us go and serve other gods (which ye have not known)* 14 Then shalt thou enquire and make search, and ask diligently: and behold, if it be truth, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought among you: 15 Thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly, and all that is therein, and the cattle thereof with the edge of the sword. 16 And thou shalt gather all the spoil of it into the midst of the street thereof, and shalt burn with fire the city, and all the spoil thereof every whit, for the LORD thy God: and it shall be an heap for ever, it shall not be built again. 17 And there shall cleave nought of the cursed thing to thine hand: that the LORD may turn from the fierceness of his anger, and shew thee mercy, and have compassion upon thee, and multiply thee, as he hath sworn unto thy fathers; 18 When thou shalt hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep all his commandments which I command thee this day, to do that which is right in the eyes of the LORD thy God.

Here the Case is put of a City revolting from it's Allegiance to the God of Israel, and serving other gods;

1. The Crime is suppos'd to be committed, (1.) By one of the Cities of Israel, that lay within the Jurisdiction of their Courts; The Church then judg'd them only that were within, 1 Cor. 5. 12, 13. And even when they were order'd to preserve their Religion in the first Principles of it, by Fire and Sword, yet they were not allow'd by Fire and sword to propagate it. They that are born within the Allegiance of a Prince, if they take up Arms against him are dealt with as Traitors, but foreign Invaders are not so. The City that's here become *Idola-*

trous is suppos'd formerly to have *Worshipped* the True God, but now to be *withdrawn* to other Gods, which intimates how great the Crime is, and how sore the Punishment will be of those, that after they have known the way of righteousness turn a' de from it, 2 Pet. 2. 21.—(2.) 'Tis suppos'd to be committed by the generality of the Inhabitants of the City, for we may think, that if a considerable number did retain their Integrity, those only that were guilty were to be destroy'd, and the City was to be spar'd for the sake of the Righteous in it, for *shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right*? No doubt he shall. (3.) They are suppos'd to be drawn to Idolatry by *certain men the children of Belial*, Men that would *endure no Yoke*, so it signifies; that neither fear God, nor regard Man, but shake off all Restraints of Law and Conscience, and are perfectly lost to all manner of Virtue, these are they that say, *Let us serve other Gods*, that will not only allow, but will countenance and encourage our Immoralities. *Belial* is put for the Devil, 2 Cor. 6. 15. and the Children of Belial are his Children. These *withdraw* the Inhabitants of the City; for a little of thisold Leaven when it is entertain'd, soon leavens the whole lump.

2. The Cause is order'd to be try'd with a great deal of Care, v. 14. *Thou shalt enquire and make search.* They must not proceed upon Common Fame, or take the Information by hear-say, but must examine the Proofs, and not give Judgment against them unless the Evidence was clear, and the Charge fully made out. God himself before he destroy'd *Sodom* is said to *come down and see whether its Crimes* were according to the Clamor, Gen. 18. 21. In judicial Processes 'tis requisite that Time, and Care and Pains be taken to find out the Truth, and that Search be made without any Passion, Prejudice or Partiality. The Jewish Writers say, that tho' particular Persons who were Idolaters might be judg'd by the inferior Courts, the Defection of a City must be try'd by the Great Sanhedrim; and if it appear that they are *thrust away to Idolatry*, they send two Learned Men to them to admonish and reduce them. If they repent, all is well; if not, then all Israel must go up to war against them, to testify their Indignation against Idolatry, and to stop the spreading of the Contagion.

3. If the Crime were prov'd, and the Criminals were *incorrigible*, the City was to be *wholly destroy'd*. If there were a few Righteous men in it, no doubt they would remove themselves and their Families out of such a dangerous Place, and then all the Inhabitants, Men, Women and Children must be *put to the sword*, v. 15. all the Spoil of the City, both Shop-goods, and the Furniture of Houses must be brought into the Market-place, and burn'd, and the City itself must be laid in Ashes, and never built again, v. 16. The Soldiers are forbidden upon Pain of Death, to convert any of the Plunder to their own Use, v. 17. 'twas a devoted thing, and dangerous to meddle with it, as we find in the Case of *Achan*.—Now 1. God enjoyns this Severity to shew what a jealous God he is in the Matters of his Worship, and how great a Crime it is to *serve other gods*. Let Men know that God will not give his Glory to another, nor his Praise to graven Images. 2. He Expects that Magistrates having their Honour and Power from Him, should be concern'd for his Honour, and use their Power for Terror to evil doers, else they bear the sword in vain. 3. The faithful Worshippers of the True God must take all Occasions to shew their Just Indignation against Idolatry, much more against Atheism, Infidelity, and Irreligion. 4. 'Tis here intimated, that the best Expedient for the turning away of God's Anger from the Land, is to execute Justice upon the Wicked of the Land, v. 17. that the Lord may turn from the fierceness of his anger, which was ready to break out against the whole Nation, for the Wickedness of that one Apostate City.—'Tis promis'd that if they will thus root Wickedness out of their Land, God will multiply them. They might think it *impolitic*, and against the Interest of their Nation, to ruin a whole City, for a Crime relating purely to Religion, and that they should be more sparing of the Blood of Israelites; fear not that (saith Moses) God will multiply you the more; The Body of your Nation will lose nothing by the letting out of this corrupt Blood. Lastly, Tho' we do not find this Law put in Execution in all the History of the Jewish Church (*Gibeon* was destroy'd, not for Idolatry, but Immorality) yet for the Neglect of the Execution of it upon the Inferior Cities, that served Idols, God Himself by the Army of the *Caldeans* put it in Execution upon *Jerusalem*, the Head City, which for it's Apostacy from God was utterly destroy'd and laid waste, and lay in ruins Seventy Years. Tho' Idolaters may escape the Punishment from Men, (nor is this Law in this Letter of it binding now, under the Gospel) yet the Lord our God will not suffer them to escape his righteous Judgments. The New Testament speaks of Communion with Idolaters as a Sin which above any other provokes the Lord to jealousy, and dares him as if we were stronger than he, 1 Cor. 10. 21, 22.

C H A P. XIV.

Moses in this Chapter teaches them, (1.) To distinguish themselves from their Neighbours, by a singularity, (1.) In their Mourning, v. 1. 2. (2.) In their Meat, v. 3.—21. (2.) To devote themselves unto God, and in Token of that to give him his Dues out of their Estates, the yearly Tithe; and that every third Year, for the maintenance of their Religious Feasts, the Levites and the Poor, v. 22.—29.

YE are the children of the LORD your God : ye shall not cut your selves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead. 2 For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth. 3 ¶ Thou shalt not eat any abominable thing. 4 These are the beasts which ye shall eat : the ox, the sheep, and the goat, 5 The hart and the roe-buck, and the fallow-deer, and the wild goat, and the pygarg, and the wild ox, and the chamois, 6 And every beast that parteth the hoof, and cleaveth the cleft into two claws, and cheweth the cud amongst the beasts; that ye shall eat. 7 Nevertheless, these ye shall not eat, of them that chew the cud, or of them that divide the cloven hoof; as the camel, and the hare, and the coney : for they chew the cud, but divide not the hoof; therefore they are unclean unto you. 8 And the swine because it divideth the hoof, yet cheweth not the cud, is unclean unto you: ye shall not eat of their flesh, nor touch their dead carcase. 9 ¶ These ye shall eat of all that are in the waters : all that have fins and scales shall ye eat: 10 And whatsoever hath not fins and scales, ye may not eat : it is unclean unto you. 11 ¶ Of all clean birds ye shall eat. 12 But these are they of which ye shall not eat : the eagle, and the ossifrage, and the ospray, 13 And the glede, and the kite, and the vulture after his kind, 14 And every raven after his kind. 15 And the owl, and the night-hawk, and the cuckow, and the hawk after his kind, 16 The little owl, and the great owl, and the swan, 17 And the pelican, and the gier-eagle, and the cormorant, 18 And the stork, and the heron, after her kind, and the lapwings, and the bat. 19 And every creeping thing that flieth, is unclean unto you: they shall not be eaten. 20 But of all clean fowls ye may eat. 21 ¶ Ye shall not eat of any thing that dieth of itself: thou shalt give it unto the stranger that is within thy gates, that he may eat it, or thou mayest sell it unto an alien: for thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God. Thou shalt not seeth a kid in his mothers milk.

Moses here tells the People of Israel,

1. How God had dignified them, as a peculiar People with three distinguishable Privileges which were their Honour, and Figures of those Spiritual Blessings in Heavenly Things, with which God has in Christ blessed us. (1.) Here's Election, the Lord hath chosen thee, v. 2. Not for their own Merit, or for any Good-works fore-seen, but because he would magnify the Riches of his Power and Grace among them. He did not chuse them because they were by their own Dedication and Subjection a peculiar People to him, above other nations; but he chose them that they might be so, by his Grace; and thus were believers chosen, Eph. 1. 4. (2.) Here's Adoption, v. 1. Ye are the children of the Lord your God, form'd by him into a People, own'd by him as his People; nay his Family, a People near unto him, nearer than any other. Israel is my Son, my First-born; not because he needed Children, but because they were Orphans, and needed a Father. Every Israelite indeed, is a Child of God, Partaker of his Nature and Favour, his Love and Blessing; Behold what

manner of Love the Father has bestow'd upon us! (3.) Here's Sanctification, v. 2. Thou art a holy People. Separated and set apart for God, devoted to his Service, design'd for his Praise, govern'd by a holy Law, grac'd by a Holy Tabernacle, and the Holy Ordinances relating to it. God's People are oblig'd to be Holy; and if they be Holy, are oblig'd to be Holy; and if they be Holy, are oblig'd to the Grace of God that makes them so. The Lord has set them apart for himself, and qualified them for his Service, and the Enjoyment of him, and so has made them Holy to Himself.

2. How they ought to distinguish themselves, by a sober Singularity from all the Nations that were about them. And God having thus advanc'd them, let not them debase themselves, by admitting the Superstitious Customs of Idolaters, and by making themselves like them, put themselves upon the level with them. Be ye the Children of the Lord your God; so the Seventy read it, as a Command, i. e. Carry yourselves as becomes the Children of God, and do nothing to disgrace the Honour, and forfeit the Privileges of the Relation.

In two Things particularly, they must Distinguish themselves.

1. In their Mourning. Ye shall not cut yourselves, v. 1. That forbids, (as some think) not only their cutting themselves at their Funerals, either to express their Grief, or with their own Blood to appease the Internal Deities; but their wounding and mangling themselves in the Worship of their Gods, as Baal's Prophets did, 1 Kin. 18. 28. Or their marking themselves by Incisions in their Flesh, for such and such Deities, which in them, above any, would be an inexcusable Crime, who in the Sign of Circumcision, bore about with them in their Bodies the Marks of the Lord Jehovah.—So that,

1. They are forbidden to deform or hurt their own Bodies upon any Account.—Methinks this is like a Parent's Charge to his Children, that are foolish, careless and wilful, and are apt to play with Knives, Children, ye shall not cut yourselves. This is the Intention of those Commands which oblige us to deny ourselves; the true meaning of them, if we understand them aright, would appear to be, Do yourselves no harm: And this is also the Design of those Providences which most cross us, to remove from us those things by which we are in Danger of doing ourselves harm. Knives are taken from us, lest we cut ourselves. They that are Dedicated to God, as a holy People, must do nothing to disfigure themselves; the Body is for the Lord, and is to be us'd accordingly.

2. They are forbidden to disturb and afflict their own Minds with inordinate Grief for the Loss of near and dear Relations. Ye shall not express or exasperate your Sorrow, even upon the most mournful Occasions, by cutting yourselves and making baldness between your Eyes, like Men inrag'd, or resolutely harden'd in Sorrow for the dead, as those that have no hope, 1 Thel. 4. 13. 'Tis an excellent Passage, which Mr. Ainsworth here quotes from one of the Jewish Writers, who understands this as a Law against immoderate Grief for the Death of our Relations, If your Father, (for instance) dye, ye shall not cut yourselves, that is, you shall not sorrow more than is meet, for you are not fatherless, you have a Father, who is great, living, and permanent, even the Holy, Blessed God, whose Children ye are, v. 1. But an Infidel (saith he) when his Father dies, hath no Father that can help him in time of need; for he hath said to a Stock, thou art my Father, and to a Stone, thou hast brought me forth, (Jer. 2. 27.) therefore he weeps, cuts himself, and makes him bald. We that have a God to hope in, and a Heaven to hope for, must bear up ourselves with that hope under every Burden of this kind.

2. They must be singular in their Meat. Many sorts of Flesh, which were wholesome enough, and which other People did commonly eat, they must Religiously abstain from, as unclean. This Law we had before, Lev. 11. 2. where it was largely open'd. It seems plainly by the Coherence here, to be intended as a Mark of peculiarity; for their Observance of it would make them to be taken Notice of in all mixt Companies as a separate People, and preserve them from mingling themselves to their idolatrous Neighbours.

1. Concerning Beasts, here is a more particular enumeration of those which they were allow'd to eat, than was in Leviticus, to shew that they had no Reason to complain for their being restrain'd from eating Swine's Flesh, and Hares, and Rabbits (which were all that were then forbidden, but are now commonly us'd) when they were allow'd so great a variety, not only of that which we call Butcher's Meat, v. 4. which alone was offer'd in Sacrifice, but of Venison, which they had great plenty of in Canaan, the Hart, and the Roe-buck, and the Fallow-deer, v. 5. which tho' never brought to God's Altar, was allow'd them at their own Table. See chap. 12. 22. When of all these, (as Adam of every Tree of the Garden) they might freely eat, those were inexcusable, who to gratify a perverie Appetite, or (as should seem) in Honour of their Idols, and in Participation of their Idolatrous Sacrifices eat Swine's Flesh, and Broth of abominable things (made so by this Law) was in their Vessels, Isa. 65. 4.

2. Concerning Fish there's only one general Rule given, That whatsoever had not Fins and Scales, (as Shell-fish, and Eels,

Eels, besides Leeches, and other Animals in the Water, that are not proper Food) was *unclean and forbidden*, v. 9. 10.

3. No general Rule is given concerning Fowl, but those particularly mention'd, that were to be unclean to them, and there are few or none of them which are here forbidden, that are now commonly eaten; and whatsoever is not expressly forbidden, is allow'd, v. 11.—20. *Of all clean Fowls you may eat.*

They are further forbidden (1.) To eat the Flesh of any Creature that dy'd of itself, because the Blood was not separated from it, and besides the Ceremonial Uncleaness it lay under, from Lev. 11. 39. it is not wholesome Food, nor ordinarily us'd among us, except by the Poor. And (2.) To *teeth a Kid in it's Mothers Milk*, either to gratify their own Luxury, supposing it a dainty Bit, or in conformity to some Superstitious Custom of the Heathen. The Chaldee Paraphrasts read it, *Thou shalt not eat Flesh-meats, and Milk-meats together.* And so it would forbid the Use of Butter, as Sawce to any Flesh.—Now as to all these Precepts concerning their Food, (1.) It is plain in the Law itself, that they belong'd only to the Jews, and were not *Moral*, nor of perpetual Use, because not of perpetual Obligation; for what they might not eat themselves, they might give to a Stranger, a Proselyte of the Gate, that had renounc'd Idolatry, and therefore was permitted to live among them, tho' not circumcis'd; or, they might sell to an Alien, a mere Gentile that came into their Country for Trade, but might not settle in it, v. 21. They might feed upon that which an Israelite might not touch; which is a plain Instance of their Peculiarity, and their being a *holy People*, (2.) It is plain in the Gospel, that they are now antiquated and repeal'd: For every Creature of God is good, and nothing now to be refus'd, or call'd *common and unclean*, 1 Tim. 4. 4.

22 Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year. 23 And thou shalt eat before the LORD thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oyl, and the firstlings of thy herds, and of thy flocks: that thou mayest learn to fear the LORD thy God always. 24 And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it, or if the place be far from thee which the LORD thy God shall choose to set his name there, when the LORD thy God hath blessed thee: 25 Then shalt thou turn it into money, and bind up the money in thine hand, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose. 26 And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and thou shalt eat there before the LORD thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou and thine household. 27 And the Levite that is within thy gates, thou shalt not forsake him: for he hath no part nor inheritance with thee. 28 ¶ At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates. 29 And the Levite (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee) and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates; shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest.

We have here a Part of the Statute concerning Tythes: The Products of their Ground were twice Tith'd, so that putting both together, a fifth Part was devoted to God out of their Increase, and only four Parts of five were for their own common Use; and they could not but own they sate upon an easy Rent, especially, since God's part was dispos'd of to their own Benefit and Advantage. The first Tithe, was for the Maintenance of their Levites, who taught them the good Knowledge of God, and ministr'd to them in Holy Things, this is suppos'd as *anciently due*, and is entail'd upon the Levites as an Inheritance, by that Law, Numb. 18. 24. &c. But 'tis the second Tithe that is here spoken of, which was to be taken out of the Remainder, when the Levites had had theirs.

1. They are here charg'd to separate it, and set it apart for God, v. 22. *Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed.*—The Levites took care of their own, but the separating of this was left to the Owners themselves; the Law encouraging them to be honest, by reposing a Confidence in them, and so trying their Fear of God. They are bid to *Tithe truly*, i. e. to be sure to do it, and to do it faithfully, and carefully, that God's part might not be diminish'd either with design, or by oversight. Note, We must be sure to give God his full Dues out of our Estates, for being but Stewards of them, it is requir'd that we be Faithful, as those that must give Account.

2. They are here directed how to dispose of it, when they had separated it. Let every Man lay by as God prospers him, and gives him Success, and then let him lay out in pious Uses as God gives him Opportunity; And it will be the easier to lay out, and the Proportion more satisfying, when first we have laid by. This second Tithe may be dispos'd of, 1. In Works of Piety, for the two first Years after the Year of Release.—They must bring it up either in Kind, or the full Value of it, to the Place of the Sanctuary, and there must spend it in Holy Feasting, before the Lord. If they could do it with any Convenience they must bring it in Kind, v. 23. But if not they might turn it into Money, v. 24, 25. and that Money must be laid out in something to Feast upon before the Lord.—The comfortable cheerful using of what God hath given us with Temperance and Sobriety, is really the Honouring of God with it. Contentment, Holy Joy, and Thankfulness make every Meal a Religious Feast.—The end of this Law we have, v. 23. *That thou mayest learn to fear the Lord thy God always*; 'Twas to keep them tight and firm to their Religion. (1.) By acquainting them with the Sanctuary, the Holy Things, and the solemn Services that were there perform'd; what they read the Appointment of in their Bibles, it would do them Good to see the Observance of in the Tabernacle; 'twould make a deeper Impression upon them, which would keep them out of the Snares of the Idolatrous Customs. Note, It will have a good Influence upon our Constancy in Religion, never to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, Heb. 10. 25. By the Comfort of the Communion of Saints, we may be kept to our Communion with God. (2.) By using them to the most pleasant and delightful Services of Religion. Let them rejoice before the Lord that they may learn to fear him always. The more Pleasure we find in the Ways of Religion, the more likely we shall be to persevere in those Ways.—One thing they must remember in their pious Entertainments, to bid their Levites welcome to them. Thou shalt not forsake the Levite, v. 27. Let him never be a Stranger to thy Table, especially when thou eatest before the Lord.

2. Every third Year this Tithe must be dispos'd of at Home in Works of Charity, v. 28, 29. Lay it up within thy own gates; and let it be given to the Poor; who knowing the Provision this Law had made for them, no doubt would come to seek it; And that they might make the Poor Familiar to them, and not disdain their Company, they are here directed to welcome them to their Houses; thither let them come, and eat and be satisfied. In this charitable Distribution of the second Tythe, they must have an Eye to the Poor Ministers, and add to their Encouragement by entertaining them, next to Poor Strangers, not only for the supply of their Necessities, but to put a respect upon them, and so to invite them to turn Proselytes; and next to the Fatherless and Widow, who tho' perhaps they may have a competent Maintenance left them, yet cannot be suppos'd to live so plentifully and comfortably as they had done in Months past, and therefore countenance them, and help to make them easy by inviting them to this Entertainment. God has a particular Care for Widows and Fatherless, and he requires that we should have so too. 'Tis his Honour and will be ours to help the helpless. And if we thus serve God, and do good with what we have, 'tis promis'd here, that the Lord our God will bless us in all the work of our hand. Note, 1. The Blessing of God is all in all to our outward Prosperity, and without that Blessing the Work of our hands which we do will bring nothing to pass. 2. The way to obtain that Blessing is to be Diligent and Charitable. The Blessing descends upon the Working hand; Expect not that God should bless thee in thy Idleness, and love of Ease, but in all the work of thine hand: 'Tis the hand of the Diligent with the Blessing of God upon it that makes rich, Prov. 10. 4. 22. And it descends upon the giving hand; He that thus scatters, certainly encreases, And the liberal Soul will be made fat. 'Tis an undoubted Truth, tho' little believed, that to be Charitable to the Poor, and to be free and generous in the support of Religion, and any good Work is the surest and safest way of thriving. What is lent to the Lord will be repaid with abundant Interest. Ezek. 44. 30.

CHAP. XV.

In this Chapter Moses gives Orders (1.) concerning the Release of Debts every seventh Year, v. 1.—6. with a Caution that there be no hindrance to Charitable Lending, v. 7.—11. (2.) Concerning

cerning the Release of Servants, after Seven Years Service, v. 12.---18. (3.) Concerning the Sanctification of the Firstlings of Cattle to God, v. 19.---23.

AT the end of every seven years thou shalt make a release. 2 And this is the manner of the release: Every creditor that lendeth ought unto his neighbour, shall release it, he shall not exact it of his neighbour, or of his brother, because it is called the LORDS release. 3 Of a foreigner, thou mayest exact it again: but that which is thine with thy brother, thine hand shall release: 4 Save when there shall be no poor among you: for the LORD shall greatly bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it: 5 Only if thou carefully hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all these commandments which I command thee this day. 6 For the LORD thy God blefseth thee, as he promised thee, and thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow; and thou shalt reign over many Nations, but they shall not reign over thee. 7 ¶ If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren, within any of thy gates, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: 8 But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth. 9 Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release is at hand: and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought, and he cry unto the LORD against thee, and it be sin unto thee. 10 Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto. 11 For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor and to thy needy, in thy land.

Here's (1. A Law for the Relief of poor Debtors, such (we may suppose) as were insolvent. Every seventh Year, was a Year of Release, in which the Ground rested from being Tilled, Servants were discharged from their Services; and among other Acts of Grace, this was one, That they that had borrow'd Money, and had not been able to pay it before, should this Year be releas'd from it; and tho' if they were able, they were afterwards bound in Conscience to repay it, yet from thenceforth the Creditor should never recover it by Law. Many good Expositors think, it forbids the exacting of the Debt in the Year of Release, because no Harvest being gather'd in that Year, it could not be expected that Men should pay their Debts then, but that afterwards it might be sued for, and recovered; So that the Release did not extinguish the Debt, but only stay the Process for a Time. But others think, it was a Release of the Debt for ever; and that seems more probable; yet under certain Limitations express'd, or imply'd. 'Tis suppos'd, that the Debtor was an Israelite, v. 3. An Alien could not take the Benefit of this Law. And that he was Poor, v. 4. That he did not borrow for Trade or Purchase, but for the Subsistence of his Family; and that now he could not pay it without reducing himself to Poverty, and coming under a necessity of seeking Relief in other Countries, which might be his Temptation to revolt from God. The Law is not that the Creditor shall not receive the Debt, if the Debtor, or his Friends for him can pay it; but he shall not exact it, by a Legal Process. The Reasons of this Law are, (1.) To put an Honour upon the Sabbatical Year, because it is call'd the Lord's Release, v. 2. That was God's Year for their Land, as the Weekly Sabbath was God's Day for themselves, their Servants and Cattle; and as by the resting of their Ground, so by the Release of the Debts, God would teach them to depend upon his Providence. This Year of Release typified the Grace of

the Gospel, in which is proclaim'd the acceptable Year of the Lord, and by which we obtain the Release of our Debts, that is, the Pardon of our Sins, and we are taught to forgive Injuries, as we are, and hope to be forgiven of God. (2.) 'Twas to prevent the falling of any Israelite into extremum Poverty; so the Margin reads, v. 4. To the end there shall be no Poor among you, none miserably and scandalously Poor, to the Reproach of their Nation and Religion; the Reputation of which they ought to preserve. (3.) God's Security is here given, by a Divine Promise, That whatever they lost by their poor Debtors it should be made up to them in the Blessing of God upon all they had and did, v. 4, 5, 6. Let them take Care to do their Duty, and then God would bless them with such great increase, that what they might lose by bad Debts, if they generously remitted them, should not be mis'd, out of their Stock, at the Year's end. Not only the Lord shall bless thee, v. 4. but he doth bless thee, v. 6. 'Tis altogether inexcusable, if God has given us Abundance, so that we have not only enough, but to spare, and yet we are rigorous and severe in our Demands from our poor Brethren; for our Abundance should be the supply of their Wants, that at least there may not be such an inequality as is between two Extreams, 2 Cor. 8. 14. They must also consider, that their Land was God's Gift to them, and all their Increase was the Fruit of God's Blessing upon them, and therefore they were bound in Duty to him to use and dispose of their Estates as he should order and direct them. And (lastly,) if they would remit what little Sums they had Lent to their Poor Brethren, it is promis'd that they should be able to Lend Great Sums to their rich Neighbours, even to many Nations, v. 6. and should be enrich'd by those Loans. Thus the Nations should become subject to them, and dependant on them, as the Borrower is Servant to the Lender, Prov. 22. 7. To be able to Lend, and not to have need to Borrow, we must look upon as a great Mercy, and a good Reason why we should do good with what we have, lest we provoke God to turn the Scales.

2. Here's a Law in Favour of poor Borrowers, that they might not suffer Damage by the former Law. Men would be apt to argue, If the Case of a Man be so with his Debtor, that it the Debt be not paid before the Year of Release it shall be lost, 'twere better not to Lend: No, saith this Branch of the Statute, Thou shalt not think such a Thought. 1. It is taken for granted, that there would be Poor among them, who would have Occasion to borrow, v. 7. And that there would never want some such Objects of Charity, v. 11. The Poor shall never cease out of thy Land. Tho' not such as were reduc'd to extremum Poverty, yet such as would be behind-hand, and would have Occasion to Borrow; of such Poor he here speaks; and such we have always with us; so that a charitable Disposition may soon find a Charitable Occasion. 2. In such a Case we are here commanded to lend or give, according to our Ability, and the Necessity of the Case is. Thou shalt not harden thy Heart, nor shut thy Hand, v. 7. If the Hand be shut, it is a sign the Heart is harden'd; for if the Clouds were full of Rain, they would empty themselves, Eccles. 11. 3. Bowels of Compassion would produce liberal Distributions, Jam. 2. 16. Thou shalt not only stretch out thy hand to him, to reach him something, but thou shalt open thy hand wide unto him, to lend him sufficient, v. 8. Sometimes there is as much Charity in prudent lending as in giving, as it obliges the Borrower to Industry and Honesty, and may put him into a Way of helping himself.--- We are sometimes tempted to think, when an Object of Charity presents itself, we may chuse whether we will give any thing, or nothing; little, or much; whereas it is here an express Precept, v. 11. I command thee, not only to give, but to open thy hand wide, to give liberally. 3. Here's a Caviat against that Objection which might arise against charitable Lending, from the foregoing Law for the Release of Debts, v. 9. Beware that there be not a Thought, a covetous ill-natur'd Thought, in thy Belial Heart, The Year of Release is at hand, and therefore I will not lend, what I must then be sure to lose, lest thy poor Brother whom thou refuseth to lend to, complain to God, and it will be Sin, a great Sin, to thee.---Note, (1.) The Law is Spiritual, and lays a Restraint upon the Thoughts of the Heart.--- We mistake, if we think Thoughts are free from the Divine Cognizance and Check. (2.) That's a wicked Heart indeed, that raiseth evil Thoughts from the good Law of God, as theirs did, who because God had oblig'd them to the Charity of forgiving, deny'd the Charity of giving. (3.) We must carefully watch against all those secret Suggestions which would divert us from our Duty, or discourage us in it.--- Those that would keep from the Act of Sin, must keep out of their Minds the very Thought of Sin. (4.) When we have an Occasion of charitable lending, if we cannot trust the Borrower, we must trust God, and lend hoping for nothing again in this World, but expecting it would be recompens'd in the Resurrection of the Just, Luke 6. 35.--- 14. 14. (5.) It's a dreadful thing to have the cry of the Poor against us, for God has his Ear open to that Cry, and in Compassion to them will be sure to Reckon with those that deal hardly with them. (6.) That which we think is our Prudence, oft proves Sin to us; He that refus'd to lend, because the Year of Release was

at hand, thought he did wisely, and that Men would praise him as doing well for himself, (Psal. 49. 18.) But he is here told that he did wickedly, and God would condemn him as doing ill to his Brother, and we are sure that the Judgment of God is according to Truth; And that which he saith is *Sin to us*, will certainly be *Ruin to us*, if it be not repented of. 4. Here's a Command to give cheerfully, whatever we give in Charity; v. 10. *Thine ears shall not be grieved when thou givest*. Be not loth to part with thy Money on so good an Account, nor think it lost: Grudge not a Kindness to thy Brother; And distrust not the Providence of God, as if thou shouldst want that thyself which thou givest in Charity; But on the contrary let it be a Pleasure and a Satisfaction of Soul to thee to think that thou art honouring God with thy Substance, doing good, making thy Brother easy, and laying up for thyself a good Security for the time to come. What thou doest, do freely, for God loves a cheerful Giver, 2 Cor. 9. 7. 5. Here's a Promise of a Recompence in this Life, for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee. Covetous People say, Giving undoes us; no, giving cheerfully in Charity will enrich us, 'twill fill the barns with plenty, Prov. 3. 10, and the Soul with true Comfort, 1/a. 58. 10, 11.

12 ¶ And if thy brother an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years; then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee. 13 And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty: 14 Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy wine-press: of that wherewith the LORD thy God hath blessed thee, thou shalt give unto him. 15 And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bond-man in the land of Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to day. 16 And it shall be if he say unto thee, I will not go away from thee (because he loveth thee, and thine house, because he is well with thee) 17 Then thou shalt take an aul, and thrust it through his ear unto the door, and he shall be thy servant for ever: and also unto thy maid-servant thou shalt do likewise. 18 It shall not seem hard unto thee, when thou sendest him away free from thee; for he hath been worth a double hired servant to thee, in serving thee six years: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all that thou doest.

Here's 1. A Repetition of the Law that had been given concerning Hebrew Servants, which either had sold themselves for Servants, or were sold by their Parents through extreme Poverty, or were sold by the Court of Judgment for some Crime committed. The Law was (1.) That they should serve but six Years, and in the seventh should go out free, v. 12. compare Exod. 21. 2. And if a Year of Jubilee happen'd before he serv'd out his time, that would be his Discharge. God's Israel were a free People, and must not be compell'd to perpetual Slavery; Thus are God's Spiritual Israel call'd unto Liberty. (2.) That if when their six Years service was expir'd they had no Mind to go out free, but would rather continue in Service, as taking less care, tho' more pains, than their Masters, in that Case they must lay themselves under an Obligation to serve for ever, that is, for Life, by having their Ears bor'd to the door-post, v. 16. 17. compare Exod. 21. 6. If hereby a Man disgrac'd himself with some as of a mean and servile Spirit, that had not a due sense of the Honour and Pleasure of Liberty, yet we may suppose with others he got Reputation as of a quiet contented Spirit, humble and diligent, and loving, and not given to change.

2. Here's an Addition to this Law, requiring them to put some small Stock into their Servants hands to set up with for themselves, when they sent them out of their Service, v. 13. 14. 'Twas to be suppos'd they had nothing of their own, and that their Friends had little or nothing for them, else they would have been redeem'd before they were discharg'd by Law: They had no Wages for their Service, and all they got by their Labour was their Masters's, so that their Liberty would do them little good, having nothing to begin the World upon, therefore they are here commanded to furnish them liberally with Corn and Cattle; No certain Measure is prescrib'd, that's left to the Masters Generosity, who probably would have respect to the Servants Merit, and Necessity; but the Jewish Writers say, he could not give less than the Va-

lue of Thirty Shekels of Silver, but as much more as he pleas'd. The Maid-servants tho' they were not to have their Ears bor'd, if they were minded to stay; yet if they went out free, they were to have a gratuity given them, for to that those Words refer, v. 17. *Unto thy maid-servant thou shalt do likewise*.

The Reasons for this are taken from the Law of Gratitude. They must do it, 1. In gratitude to God, who had not only brought them out of Egypt, (v. 15.) but brought them out greatly enrich'd with the Spoils of the Egyptians. Let not them send their Servants out Empty, for they were not sent Empty out of the House of bondage. God's tender Care of us, and Kindness to us obligeth us to be careful of, and kind to those that have a Dependence upon us. Thus we must render according to the Benefit done unto us. 2. In gratitude to their Servants, v. 18. Grudge not to give him a little out of thine abundance, for he hath been worth a double hired Servant to thee. The Days of an Hiring at most were but three Years, Isa. 16. 14. but he hath served thee six years, and without any Wages as the hired Servant hath. Masters and Landlords ought to consider what need they have of, and what Ease and Advantage they have by their Servants and Tenants, and should not only be just but kind to them. To these Reasons 'tis added, as before in this Chapter, v. 4, 6, 10. *The Lord thy God shall bless thee*. Then we may expect Family Blessings, the springs of Family Prosperity, when we make conscience of our Duty to our Family Relations.

19 ¶ All the firstling males that come of thy herd, and of thy flock, thou shalt sanctify unto the LORD thy God: thou shalt do no work with the firstling of thy bullock, nor shear the firstling of thy sheep. 20 Thou shalt eat it before the LORD thy God year by year, in the place which the LORD shall choose, thou and thy household. 21 And if there be any blemish therein, as if it be lame, or blind, or have any ill blemish, thou shalt not sacrifice it unto the LORD thy God. 22 Thou shalt eat it within thy gates: the unclean and the clean person shall eat it alike, as the roe-buck, and as the hart. 23 Only thou shalt not eat the blood thereof: thou shalt pour it upon the ground as water.

Here's 1. A Repetition of the Law concerning the Firstlings of their Cattle, that if they were Males, they were to be Sanctified to the Lord, v. 19. in remembrance of and in thankfulness for the sparing of the First-born of Israel, when the First born of the Egyptians, both of Man and Beast, were slain by the destroying Angel, Exod. 13. 1, 15. on the eighth Day it was to be given to God, Exod. 22. 30. and to be divided between the Priest and the Altar, Num. 18. 17, 18.

2. An Addition to that Law, for the further Explication of it, directing them what to do with the Firstlings. (1.) That were Females. Thou shalt do no work with the Female Firstlings of the Cow, nor share those of the Sheep, v. 19. of them the Learn'd Bp. Patrick understands it. Tho' the Female Firstlings were not so entirely sanctified to God, as the Males, nor so early as at Eight days Old, yet they were not to be converted by the Owners to their own Use as their other Cattle, but must be offer'd to God as Peace-Offerings, or us'd in a Religious Feast, at the Years end, v. 20. *Thou shalt eat it before the Lord thy God*, as directed, chap. 12. 17.

(2.) But what must they do with those that were blemish'd, ill blemish'd? v. 21. Were it Male or Female, it must not be brought near the Sanctuary, nor us'd either for Sacrifice, or for Holy Feasting, for it would not be fit to Honour God with, nor to typify Christ, who is a Lamb without blemish: Yet it must not be rear'd, but kill'd and eaten at their own Houses as common Food, v. 22. Only they must be sure not to eat it with the blood, v. 23. The frequent Repetition of which Caution intimates what need the People had of it, and what stress God laid upon it. What a Mercy it is that we are not under this Yoke! We are not dieted, as they were; we make no Difference between a first Calf, or Lamb, and the rest that follow: Let us therefore answer the Gospel meaning of this Law, devoting ourselves and the first of our time and strength to God, as a kind of First-Fruits of his Creatures; and using all our Comforts and Enjoyments to his Praise, and under the Direction of his Law as we have them all by his Gift.

CHAP. XVI.

In this Chapter we have, 1. A Repetition of the Laws concerning the three yearly Feasts; in particular, that of the Passover, v. 1.---8. That of Pentecost, v. 9.---12. That of Tabernacles,

nacles, v. 13.—15. And the general Law concerning the Peoples Attendance on them, v. 16, 17. 2. The Institution of an Inferior Magistracy, and general Rules of Justice given to those that were called into Office, v. 18.—20. 3. A Covenant against Groves and Images, v. 21, 22.

1 **O**bserve the month of Abib, and keep the passover unto the LORD thy God: for in the month of Abib the LORD thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night. 2 Thou shalt therefore sacrifice the passover unto the LORD thy God, of the flock and the herd, in the place which the LORD shall choose to place his name there. 3 Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it: seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith, *even* the bread of affliction: (for thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt in haste) that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt, all the days of thy life. 4 And there shall be no leavened bread seen with thee in all thy coasts seven days, neither shall there any thing of the flesh which thou sacrificedst the first day at even, remain all night until the morning. 5 Thou mayest not sacrifice the passover within any of thy gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee. 6 But at the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place his name in, there thou shalt sacrifice the passover at even, at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt. 7 And thou shalt roast and eat it in the place which the LORD thy God shall choose: and thou shalt turn in the morning, and go unto thy tents. 8 Six days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day shall be a solemn assembly to the LORD thy God: thou shalt do no work therein. 9 ¶ Seven weeks shalt thou number unto thee: begin to number the seven weeks from *such time as* thou beginnest to put the sickle to the corn. 10 And thou shalt keep the feast of weeks unto the LORD thy God, with a tribute of a free-will-offering of thine hand, which thou shalt give unto the LORD thy God, according as the LORD thy God hath blessed thee. 11 And thou shalt rejoice before the LORD thy God, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite that is within thy gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are among you, in the place which the LORD thy God hath chosen to place his name there. 12 And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bond-man in Egypt: and thou shalt observe and do these statutes. 13 ¶ Thou shalt observe the feast of tabernacles seven days, after that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine. 14 And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within thy gates. 15 Seven days thou shalt keep a solemn feast unto the LORD thy God, in the place which the LORD shall choose: because the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thy increase, and in all the works of thine hands, therefore thou shalt surely rejoice. 16 ¶ Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God, in the place which he shall choose: in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty. 17 Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee.

Much of the Communion between God and his People Israel was kept up, and a Face of Religion preserv'd on the Nation by the three Yearly Feasts, the Institution of which, and the Laws concerning them we have several times met with already; And here they are repeated.

1. The Law of the Passover; so great a Solemnity, that it made the whole Month in the midst of which it was placed, considerable, v. 1. *Observe the Month Abib.* Tho' one Week only of that Month was to be kept as a Festival, yet their Preparations before must be so Solemn, and their Reflections upon it, and Improvements of it afterwards so serious as to amount to an Observation of the whole Month.—The Month of *Abib*, or of *new Fruits* (as the *Chaldees* translates it) answer to our *March*, (or part of *March*, and part of *April*) and was by a special Order from God in remembrance of the Deliverance of Israel out of Egypt made the beginning of their year, *Exod.* 12. 2. which before was reckon'd to begin in *September*.

This Month they were to keep the Passover, in Remembrance of their being brought out of Egypt by night, v. 1. The *Chaldees* Paraphrast (because they came out of Egypt by day light,) there being an express Order that they should not stir out of their Doors till Morning, *Exod.* 12. 22. One of them expounds it thus, *He brought the out of Egypt, and did wonders by night.* The other, and thou shalt eat the Passover by night. The Laws concerning it are, (1.) That they must be sure to sacrifice the Passover in the Place that God should choose, v. 2. and in no other Place, v. 5, 6, 7. The Passover was itself a Sacrifice, hence Christ as our Passover is said to be sacrificed for us, 1 Cor. 5. 7. and many other Sacrifices were offered during the seven Days of the Feast, *Num.* 28. 19, &c. which are included here, for they are said to be sacrific'd of the Flock and the Herd, whereas the Passover itself was only of the Flock, either a Lamb, or a Kid: Now no sacrifice was accepted but from the Altar that Sanctified it, 'twas therefore necessary they should go up to the Place of the Altar; for tho' the Paschal Lamb was entirely eaten by the Owners, yet it must be kill'd in the Court, the Blood sprinkled, and the inwards burn'd upon the Altar.—By confining them to the appointed Place, he kept them to the appointed Rule, which they would have been apt to vary from, and to introduce foolish Inventions of their own, had they been permitted to offer these Sacrifices within their own Gates, from under the Inspection of the Priests.—They were also hereby directed to have their Eye up unto God in the Solemnity, and the Desire of their Hearts towards the remembrance of his Name, being appointed to attend there where he had chosen to place his Name, v. 2, and 6.—But when the Solemnity was over, they might turn and go unto their tents, v. 7. Some think they might if they pleas'd return the very morning after the Paschal Lamb was kill'd and eaten, the Priests and Levites being sufficient to carry on the rest of the Weeks Work; But the first Day of the Seven is so far from being the Day of their Dispersion, that 'tis expressly appointed for a Holy Convocation, *Lev.* 23. 7. *Num.* 28. 18. therefore we must take it as *Jonathan's* Paraphrase expounds it, *In the Morning after the end of the Feast thou shalt go to thy Cities.*—And 'twas the Practice to keep together the whole Week, 2 Chr. 35. 17.

(2.) That they must eat unleavened bread for seven Days, and no leavened bread must be seen in all their Coasts, v. 3, 4, 8.—The Bread they were confin'd to is here call'd *Bread of Affliction*, because neither grateful to the Taste, nor easie of Digestion, and therefore proper to signify the Heaviness of their Spirits in their Bondage, and to keep in Remembrance the Hast in which they came out, the Case being so urgent that they could not stay the leavening of their Bread, they took with them for their March. The Jewish Writers tell us, that the Custom at the Passover Supper was, that the Master of the Family brake this leavened Bread, and gave to every one a Piece of it, saying, *This is* (i. e. this signifies, Represents, or Commemorates, which explains that saying of our Saviour, *This is my Body*) *the Bread of Affliction which your Fathers did eat in the Land of Egypt.*—The Gospel meaning of this Feast of Unleavened Bread the Apostle gives us, 1 Cor. 5. 9. *Christ our Passover being sacrificed for us, and we having participated of the Blessed Fruits of that Sacrifice to our Comfort, let us keep the Feast in a Holy Conversation, free from the leaven of Malice towards our Brethren, and Hypocrisy towards God, and with the unleavened Bread of Sincerity and Love.*—Lastly, Observe concerning the Passover, for what End it was instituted, that thou may'st remember the day when thou camest forth out of Egypt, not only on the Day of the Passover, or during the Seven Days of the Feast, but all the days of thy Life, v. 3. as a constant Inducement to Obedience. Thus we celebrate the Memorial of Christ's Death at some times, that we may remember it at all times, as a Reason why we should live to him that died for us, and rose again.

2. Seven Weeks after the Passover, the Feast of Pentecost was to be observ'd.—Concerning which they are here directed, 1. From whence to number their Seven Weeks, from the time thou beginnest to put the sickle to the corn, v. 9. i. e. from the Morrow after the first Day of the Feast of unleavened Bread, for on that Day (tho' 'tis probable the People did not begin their Harvest till the Feast was ended) Messengers were sent to

to reap a Sheaf of Barley, which was to be offer'd to God as the First-fruits, *Lev. 23. 10.*—Some think it implies a particular Care Providence would take of their Land, with respect to the Weather, that their Harvest should be always ripe, and ready for the Sickle, just at the same time. How they were to keep this Feast. (1.) They must bring an Offering to God, *v. 10.* 'Tis here call'd a *Tribute of a Free-will Offering.*—'Twas required of them as a *Tribute* to their Sovereign Lord and Owner, under whom they held all they had, and yet because the Law did not determine the *Quantum*, but it was left to every Mans Generosity what he would bring, and whatever he brought he must give it cheerfully, it is therefore call'd a *Free-will Offering.* 'Twas a grateful Acknowledgement of the Goodness of God to them in the Mercies of their Corn Harvests now finished, and therefore must be according as God had blessed them. Where God sows plentifully, he expects to reap accordingly. (2.) They must rejoice before God, *v. 11.* Holy Joy is the Heart and Soul of thankful Praises, which are as the Language and Expression of Holy Joy. They must rejoice in their receivings from God, and in their Returns of Service and Sacrifice to him; Our Duty must be our Delight as well as our Enjoyments.— They must have their very Servants to rejoice with them, for remember (*v. 12.*) that thou wast a bond-man, and wouldst have been very thankful if thy Taskmasters would have given thee some Time and Cause for rejoicing; And thy God did bring thee out to keep a Feast with gladness; therefore be pleasant with thy Servants and make them easy. And it should seem those general Words, *Thou shalt observe and do these statutes* are added here for a particular Reason, Because this Feast was kept in remembrance of the giving of the Law upon Mount Sinai, fifty Days after they came out of Egypt; Now the best Way of expressing our Thankfulness to God for his Favour to us in giving us his Law, is to observe and do according to the Precepts of it.

3. They must keep the Feast of Tabernacles, *v. 13, 14, 15.* Here's no Reputation of the Law concerning the Sacrifices that were to be offer'd in great abundance at this Feast, which we had at large, *Numb. 29. 12. &c.* Because the Care of these belong'd to the Priests and Levites who had not so much need of a Repetition as the People had, and because the Spiritual part of the Service which consisted in Holy Joy, was most pleasing to God, and was to be the perpetual Duty of a Gospel Conversation which this Feast was typical of. Observe what Stress is laid upon it here, *Thou shalt rejoice in thy Feast, v. 14. and because the Lord shall bless thee, thou shalt surely rejoice, v. 15.* Note, 1. It is the will of God that his People should be a cheerful People. If they that were under the Law must rejoice before God, much more must we that are under the Grace of the Gospel, which makes it our Duty not only, as here, to rejoice in our Feasts, but to rejoice evermore; to rejoice in the Lord always.— 2. When we rejoice in God ourselves, we should do what we can to others also to rejoice in him, by comforting the Mourners, and supplying the Necessitous, that even the stranger, the Fatherless, and the Widow may rejoice with us. See *Job 29. 13.* 3. We must rejoice in God, not only because of what we have received, and are receiving from him daily, but because of what he hath promised, and we expect to receive yet further from him, because he shall bless thee, therefore thou shalt rejoice. Those that make God their Joy may rejoice in hope, for he is faithful that has promis'd.

Lastly, The Laws concerning the three solemn Feasts are summ'd up, *v. 16, 17.* as often before, *Exod. 23. 16, 17.*—34. 23. The General commands concerning them are, (1.) That all the Males must then make their personal Appearance before God, that by their frequent meeting to Worship God at the same Place, and by the same Rule they might be kept faithful and constant to that Holy Religion which was establish'd among them.— (2.) That none must appear before God Empty, but every Man must bring some Offering or other, in token of a Dependence upon God, and Gratitude to him. And God was not unreasonable in his Demands, let every Man but give as he was able, and no more was expected. The same is still the Rule of Charity, *1 Cor. 16. 2.* They that give to their power, shall be accepted, but they that give beyond their Power, are counted worthy of double Honour, *2 Cor. 8. 3.* as the Poor Widow that gave all she had, *Luke 21. 4.*

18 ¶ Judges and Officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates which the LORD thy God giveth thee throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgment. 19 Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous. 20 That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. 21 ¶

VOL. I.

Thou shalt not plant thee a grove of any trees near unto the altar of the LORD thy God, which thou shalt make thee. 22 Neither shalt thou set thee up any image; which the LORD thy God hateth.

Here's 1. Care taken for the due Administration of Justice among them, that Controversies might be determin'd. Matters in variance adjust'd, the injur'd righted, and the injurious punish'd. While they were encamp'd in the Wilderness, they had Judges and Officers according to their Numbers, Rulers of Thousands, and Hundreds; *Exod. 18. 25.* when they came to Canaan, they must have them according to their Towns and Cities, in all their Gates; for the Courts of Judgment sit in the Gates.

Now 1. Here's a Commission given to these inferior Magistrates. Judges to try and pass Sentence, and Officers to execute their Sentences, shalt thou make thee. However the Persons were pitch'd upon, whether by the Nomination of the Sovereign, or by the Election of the People, the Powers were ordain'd of God, *Rom. 13. 1.* And it was great Mercy to the People thus to have Justice brought to their Doors that it might be more Expedite, and less Expensive; A Blessing we of this Nation ought to be very thankful for. Pursuant to this Law besides the great Sanhedrin that sat at the Sanctuary consisting of 70 Elders and a President, there was in the larger Cities, such as had in them above 120 Families, a Court of 23 Judges; in the smaller Cities a Court of 3 Judges. See this Law reviv'd by *Jehosaphat, 2 Chron. 19. 5, 8.*

2. Here's a Command given to these Magistrates to do Justice in Execution of the Trust reposed in them. Better not Judge at all, than not Judge with just Judgment; according to the Direction of the Law, and the Evidence of the Fact. The Judges are here caution'd not to do wrong to any, (*v. 19.*) nor to take any Gifts, which would tempt them to do wrong. This Law had been given before, *Exod. 23. 8.* And they are charg'd to do Justice to all, *v. 20.* That which is altogether just shalt thou follow. Adhere to the Principles of Justice; Act by the Rules of Justice, Countenance the Demands of Justice, Imitate the Patterns of Justice, and pursue with Resolution that which appears to be just. Justice, Justice shalt thou follow. This is that which the Magistrate is to have in his Eye, on this he must be intent, and to this all Personal Regards must be Sacrific'd, to do right to all, and wrong to none.

2. Care taken for the preventing of all Conformity to the Idolatrous Customs of the Heathen, *v. 21, 22.* They must not only not joyn with the Idolaters in their Worship, nor Visit their Groves, nor bow before the Images which they had set up, but (1.) they must not plant a Grove, nor so much as a Tree, near God's Altar, lest they should make it look like the Altars of the False Gods. They made Groves the Places of their Worship, either to make it secret, but that which is true and good desires the Light rather; or to make it Solemn; but the Worship of the true God has enough in itself to make it so, and needs not the Advantage of such a Circumstance. (2.) They must not set up any Image, Statue, or Pillar to the Honour of God, for 'tis a thing which the Lord hates; nothing belies or reproaches him more, nor tends more to corrupt and debauch the Minds of Men than Representing and Worshipping that God by an Image who is an Infinite and Eternal Spirit.

CHAP. XVII.

The Charge of this Chapter is (1.) Concerning the Purity and Perfection of all those Animals that were offer'd in Sacrifices, *v. 1.* (2.) Concerning the Punishment of those that worship'd Idols, *v. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.* (3.) Concerning Appeals from the Inferior Courts to the great Sanhedrin, *v. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.* (4.) Concerning the Choice and Duty of a King, *v. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20.*

1 ¶ Thou shalt not sacrifice unto the LORD thy God any bullock or sheep, wherein is blemish, or any evil-favouredness: for that is an abomination unto the LORD thy God. 2 ¶ If there be found among you within any of thy gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, man or woman that hath wrought wickedness in the sight of the LORD thy God, in transgressing his covenant, 3 And hath gone and served other Gods, and worshipp'd them, either the sun, or moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded; 4 And it be told thee, and thou hast heard of it, and enquired diligently, and behold, it be true, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought in

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Israel : 5 Then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman (which have committed that wicked thing) unto thy gates, *even* that man or that woman, and shalt stone them with stones, till they die. 6 At the mouth of two witnesses or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death, be put to death ; *but* at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death. 7 The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people : so thou shalt put the evil away from among you.

Here's, 1. A Law for preserving the Honour of God's Worship, by providing that no Creature that had any Blemish should be Offered in Sacrifice to him, *v. 1.* This Caveat we have often met with. *Thou shalt not Sacrifice that which has any blemish*, which renders it unsightly, or any evil matter, or thing, as the following Word might better be render'd, any Sickness, or Weakness tho' not discernible at first View : 'Tis an abomination to God. God is the Best of Beings, and therefore whatsoever he is serv'd with ought to be the best in its Kind. And the Old Testament Sacrifices in a special Manner must be so, because they were Types of Christ, who is a *Lamb without blemish or Spot*, 1 *Pet. 1. 9.* Perfectly pure from all Sin, and all appearance of it. In the latter times of the Jewish Church when by the Captivity in *Babylon* they were cur'd of Idolatry, yet they were Charg'd with Profaneness in the Breach of this Law, that they Offer'd the *Blind and the Lame and the Sick for Sacrifice*, *Mal. 1. 8.*

2. A Law for the punishing of those that Worshipped false Gods. 'Twas made a Capital Crime to seduce others to Idolatry, *Chap. 13.* here it is made no less to be seduced. If the *Blind* thus mislead the blind, both must fall into the Ditch. Thus God would possess them with a dread of that Sin, which they must conclude exceeding *Sinful*, when so many Sanguinary Laws were made against it, and would deter those from it that would not otherwise be perswaded against it : And yet the Law which works death prov'd ineffectual.

See here 1. What the Crime was against which this Law was level'd, *serv'g or Worshipping other Gods*, *v. 3.* That which was the most ancient and Plausible Idolatry is instanc'd in, *Worshipping the Sun, Moon, and Stars*, and if that were so detestable a thing, much more was it so to Worship *stocks and stones*, or the Representations of mean and contemptible Animals. Of this 'tis said (1.) That it is what God had not commanded. He had again and again forbidden it, but it is thus express'd, to intimate that if there had been no more against it, this had been enough, for in the worship of God his Institution and Appointment must be our Rule and Warrant ; And that God never commanded his Worshippers to *debase* themselves so far as to do Homage to their Fellow Creatures : Had God commanded them to do it, they might justly have complain'd of it as a Reproach and Disparagement to them ; yet when he has forbidden it, they will from a Spirit of contradiction put this Indignity upon themselves. (2.) That it is *Wickedness in the sight of God*, *v. 2.* Be it never so ingeniously Palliated, he hates it : 'Tis a Sin in itself exceeding heinous and the highest Affront that can be done to Almighty God. (3.) That it is a *Transgression of the Covenant*. 'Twas on this Condition that God took them to be his peculiar People, that they should serve and Worship him only as their God, so that if they gave Honour to any other which was due to him alone, the Covenant was void, and all the Benefit of it forfeited. Other Sins were Transgressions of the Command, but this was a Transgression of the Covenant. 'Twas Spiritual Adultery which breaks the Marriage Bond. (4.) That 'tis *Abomination in Israel*, *v. 4.* Idolatry was bad enough in any, but it was particularly abominable in *Israel*, a People so blest'd with peculiar Discoveries of the Will and Favour of the only true and living God.

2. How it must be tried. Upon Information given of it, or any Ground of suspicion that any Person whatsoever, *Man or Woman*, had served other Gods, (1.) Enquiry must be made, *v. 4.* Tho' it appear not certain at first, it may afterwards upon search appear so : And if it can possibly be discover'd it must not be unpunish'd ; if not, yet the very enquiry concerning it would possess the Country with dread of it. (2.) Evidence must be given in, *v. 6.* How heinous and dangerous soever the Crime is, yet they must not punish any for it, unless there were good proof against them by two witnesses at least. They must not under pretence of Honouring God wrong an innocent Man. This Law which requires two Witnesses in case of Life we had before, *Numb. 35. 30.* 'tis quoted, *Mat. 18. 16.*

3. What Sentence must be pass'd and Executed. So great a Punishment as Death, so great a Death as stoning, must be inflicted on the Idolater, be it *Man or Woman*, for the Infirmary of the weaker Sex would be no Excuse, *v. 3.* The Place of

Execution must be the *Gate of the City*, that the Shame might be the greater to the Criminal, and the Warning them are publick to all others.---The Hands of the witnesses in this as in other Cases must be first upon him, that is, they must cast the first Stone at him, thereby avowing their Testimony and Solemnly imprecating the Guilt of his Blood upon themselves if their Evidence were false. This Custom might be of use to deter Men from false Witness-bearing. The Witnesses are really, and therefore 'twas requir'd they should be *Actually* the Death of the Malefactor. But they must be follow'd, and the Execution completed by the hands of all the People, who were thus to testify their Detestation of the Crime, and to put the Evil away from among them, as before, *chap. 13. 9.*

8 ¶ If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between stroke and stroke, *being* matters of controversy within thy gates : then shalt thou arise, and get thee up into thee place which the LORD thy God shall choose ; 9 And thou shalt come unto the Priests, the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days, and enquire, and they shall shew thee the sentence of judgment. 10 And thou shalt do according to the sentence which they of that place (which the LORD shall choose) shall shew thee, and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they inform thee : 11 According to the sentence of the Law which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgment which they shall tell thee thou shalt do : thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall shew thee, to the right hand nor to the left. 12 And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest (that standeth to minister there before the LORD thy God) or unto the judge, even that man shall die : and thou shalt put away the evil from *Israel*. 13 And all the people shall hear and fear, and do no more presumptuously.

Courts of Judgment were order'd to be erected in every City, *chap. 16. 18.* and they were empowered to hear and determin Causes according to Law, both those which we call *Pleas of the Crown*, and those between party and party, and we may suppose that ordinarily they ended the matters that were brought before them, and their Sentence was definitive : But 1. It is here taken for granted that sometimes a Case might come into their Court too difficult for those Inferior Judges to determin, who could not be thought to be so learned in the Laws as those that presided in the higher Courts. So that (to speak in the Language of our Law) they must find a *special Verdict*, and take time to advise before the giving of Judgment, *v. 8.* If there arise a matter too hard for thee in Judgment, which it would be no dishonour to the Judges to own the Difficulty of, suppose it between *Blood and Blood*, the Blood of a Person which cried and the Blood of him that was charg'd with the Murder which was demanded ; when it was doubtful upon the Evidence whether it was Wilful, or Casual : Or between *Plea and Plea*, the Plea, that is the Bill, or Declaration of the Plaintiff, and the Plea of the Defendant ; between *stroke and stroke*, in Actions of Assault and Battery ; in these and the like Cases, tho' the Evidence were plain, yet Doubts might arise about the Sense and meaning of the Law, and the Application of it to the particular Case.

2. These Difficult Cases, which hitherto had been brought to *Moses* according to *Jeshro's* Advice were after his Death to be brought to the Supreme Power, wherever it was lodg'd, whether in a Judge, when there was such an extraordinary Person raised up, and qualified for that great Service, as *Othniel*, *Deborah*, *Gideon*, &c. Or in the High-Priest, when he was by the Eminency of his Gifts called of God to preside in publick Affairs, as *Eli* ; Or, (If no singular Person were mark'd by Heaven for this Honour,) then in the Priests and Levites, (or in the Priests that were Levites) that not only attended the Sanctuary, but met in Council, to receive Appeals from the Inferior Courts, who might reasonably be suppos'd not only to be best qualified by their Learning and Experience, but to have the best Assistance of the Divine Spirit to decide Doubts, *v. 9, 11, 12.* They are not appointed to consult the *Urim and Thummim*, for 'tis suppos'd that was to be consulted only in Cases relating to the Publick, either the Body of the People, or the Prince : But in ordinary Cases, the Wisdom and Integrity of those that sat at the Stern must be relied on, their Judgment concerning the meaning of the Law must be Acquiesced in.

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and the Sentence must be paid accordingly: And tho' their Judgment had not the Divine Authority of an Oracle, yet besides the Moral Certainty it had, as the Judgment of Knowing, Prudent and Experienc'd Men, it had the Advantage of a Divine Promise implied in those Words, *v. 9. they shall show thee the Sentence of Judgment*, and the Support of a Divine Institution, by which they were made the Supreme Judicature of the Nation.

3. The Definitive Sentence given by the Judge, Priest, or Great Council must be obey'd by the Parties concern'd, upon pain of Death. *Thou shalt do according to their Sentence*, *v. 10.* thou shalt observe to do it, thou shalt not decline from it, (*v. 11.*) *to the right Hand or to the Left*. Note, It is for the Honour of God, and the Welfare of a People, that the Authority of the Higher Power be supported, and the due Order of Government observ'd; that those be obey'd who are appointed to rule, and that every Soul be subject to them in all those Things that fall within their Commission. Tho' the Party thought himself injur'd by the Sentence (as every Man is apt to be partial in his own Cause) yet he must needs be subject, must stand to the Award, how unpleasing soever, and bear or lose, or pay according to it, *not only for Wrath but also for Conscience sake*.— But if an Inferiour Judge contradict the Sentence of the Higher Court, and will not execute the Orders of it, or a private Person refuse to confirm himself to their Sentence, the Contumacy must be punish'd with Death, tho' the Matter were never so small in which the Opposition was made, *That Man shall die, and all the People shall hear and fear*, *v. 12, 13*. See here, (1.) The Evil of Disobedience, Rebellion and Stubbornness, from a Spirit of Contradiction and Opposition to God, or those in Authority under him, from a Principle of Contempt, and Self-will'dness, are as Witchcraft and Idolatry. To differ in Opinion from Weakness and Infirmary may be excus'd, and must be born with; but to do presumptuously, in Pride, and Wickedness, (as the ancient Translations explain it) this is to take up Arms against the Government, and is an Affront to him by whom the Powers that be are ordain'd. (2.) The Design of Punishment that others may bear and fear, and not do the like. Some would be so considerate as to infer the Heinousness of the Offence, from the Grievousness of the Penalty, and therefore would deprecate it: And others would so far consult their own Safety, as to cross their Humours by conforming to the Sentence, rather than to sin against their own Heads, and forfeit their Lives by going contrary to it. From this Law the Apostle infers the Soreness of the Punishment they will be thought worthy of, that trample on the Authority of the Son of God, *Heb. 10, 28, 29*.

14 ¶ When thou art come unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a King over me, like as all the nations that are about me: 15 Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee whom the LORD thy God shall chuse: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother. 16 But he shall not multiply Horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply Horses: forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way. 17 Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold. 18 And it shall be when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book, out of that which is before the priests the Levites. 19 And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them: 20 That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom; he, and his children in the midst of Israel.

After the Laws which concern'd Subjects, fitly follow the Laws which concern Kings: For they that rule others, must themselves remember that they are under Command. Here are Laws given.

VOL. I.

1. To the Electors of the Empire, what Rules they must go by in making their Choice, *v. 14, 15*. It is here suppos'd that the People would, in Process of Time, be desirous of a King, whose Royal Pomp and Power would be thought to make their Nation look great among their Neighbours. Their having a King is neither promis'd as a Mercy, nor commanded as a Duty, nothing could be better for them than the Divine Regiment they were under, but it is permitted them, if they desir'd it; so that Care was taken that the Ends of Government were answer'd, and God's Laws duly observ'd and put in execution, they shall not be ty'd to any one Form of Government, but shall be welcome to have a King. Tho' something irregular is suppos'd to be the Principle of the Desire, that they might be like the Nations (whereas God many Ways distinguish'd them from the Nations) yet God would indulge them in it, because he intended to serve his own Purposes by it, in making the Regal Government, Typical of the Kingdom of the Messiah. (2.) They are directed in their Choice. If they will have a King over them, as God forelaw they would, (tho' it do not appear that ever the Motion was made till almost 400 Years after) then they must (1.) ask Counsel at God's Mouth, and make him King whom God should chuse; and happy it was for them that they had an Oracle to consult in so weighty an Affair, and a God to chuse for them who knows infallibly whatever Man is, and will be. Kings are God's Vicegerents, and therefore 'tis fit he should have the chusing of them; God had himself been in a particular manner Israel's King, and if they set another over them under him, 'twas necessary he should nominate the Person. Accordingly when the People desired a King, they apply'd themselves to Samuel, a Prophet of the Lord; and afterwards David, Solomon, Jeroboam, Jehu, and others were chosen by Prophets: And the People are reprov'd for not observing this Law, *Hos. 8. 4. They have set up Kings, but not by me*. In all Cases God's Choice, if we can but know it, must direct, determine and over-rule ours. (2.) They must not chuse a Foreigner under Pretence of strengthening their Alliances, or of the extraordinary Fitness of the Person left a strange King should introduce strange Customs, or Usages contrary to those that were establish'd by the Divine Law: But he must be one from among thy Brethren; that he may be a Type of Christ, who is Bone of our Bone, *Heb. 2. 14*.

2. Laws are here given to the Prince that should be elected for the due Administration of the Government.

1. He must carefully avoid every thing that would divert him from God and Religion. Riches, Honours and Pleasures, are the three great Hindrances of Godliness, (the Lust of the Flesh, the Lusts of the Eye, and the Pride of Life) especially to those in high Stations. Against these therefore the King is here warn'd. 1. He must not gratify the Love of Honour, by multiplying Horses, *v. 16*. He that rode upon a Horse (a stately Creature) in a Country where Asses and Mules were generally us'd, look'd very great, and therefore tho' he might have Horses for his own Saddle, and Chariots, yet he must not set Servants on Horseback, *Ecc. 10. 7*. Nor have many Horses for his Officers and Guards; when God was their King, his Judges rode on Asses, *Judg. 5. 10, 12, 14*. Nor must he multiply Horses for War, lest he should trust too much to them, *Psal. 20. 7, 33. 17. Hos. 14. 3*. The Reason here given against his multiplying Horses, is, because it would raise a greater Correspondence with Egypt, (which furnish'd Canaan with Horses, *1 King. 10. 28, 29*) than it was fit the Israel of God should have, who were brought hence with such a high Hand. *Ye shall return no more that way*, for fear of being infected with the Idolatries of Egypt, (*Lev. 18. 3*) to which they were very prone. Note, We should take heed of that Commerce or Conversation, by which we are in Danger of being drawn into Sin. If Israel must not return to Egypt, they must not trade with Egypt; Solomon got no good by it. 2. He must not gratify the Love of Pleasure by multiplying Wives, *v. 17*. As Solomon did to his undoing, *1 King. 11. 1*. that his Heart being set upon them, turn not away from Business, and every thing that's serious, and especially from the Exercise of Piety and Devotion, to which nothing is a greater Enemy than the Indulgence of the Flesh. 3. He must not gratify the Love of Riches, by greatly multiplying Silver and Gold.— A competent Treasury is allow'd him, and he is not forbidden to be a good Husband of it; but (1.) He must not greatly multiply Money, so as to oppress his People by raising it, (as Solomon seems to have done, *1 King. 12. 4*) nor so as deceive himself, by trusting to it, and setting his Heart upon it, *Psal. 62. 10*. (2.) He must not multiply it to himself. David multiply'd Silver and Gold, but it was for the Service of God, (*1 Chron. 29. 4*) not for himself; for his People, not for his own Family.

2. He must carefully apply himself to the Law of God, and make that his Rule. This must be to him better than all Riches, Honours, and Pleasures, than many Horses or many Wives, better than Thousands of Gold and Silver.

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1. He must write himself a Copy of the Law, out of the Original which was in the Custody of the Priests that attended the Sanctuary, v. 18. Some think he was to write only this Book of *Deuteronomy*, which is an Abstract of the Law, and the Precepts of which, being mostly Moral and Judicial, concern'd the King, more than the Laws in *Leviticus* and *Numbers*; which the Priests were chiefly bound to acquaint themselves with. Others think he must transcribe all the five Books of *Moses*, which are call'd the Law; and which were preserv'd together as the Foundation of their Religion. Now (1.) Tho' the King might be presum'd to have very fair Copies by him from his Ancestors, yet besides those, he must have one of his own: It might be presum'd, theirs might be worn with constant Use, he must have a fresh one to begin the World with. (2.) Tho' he had Secretaries about him, whom he might employ to write this Copy, and who perhaps could write a better Hand than he, yet he must do it himself, with his own Hand, for the Honour of the Law, and that he might think no Act of Religion below him, to enure himself to Labour and Study, and especially that he might thereby be oblig'd to take a particular Notice of every Part of the Law, and by writing it, might imprint it in his Mind. *Note*, It is of great Use for each of us to write down what we observe as most affecting and edifying to us out of the Scriptures, and good Books, and the Sermons we hear. A prudent Pen may go far towards making up the Deficiencies of the Memory, and the furnishing of the Treasures of the good Householder with Things new and old. (3.) He must do this even when he sits upon the Throne of his Kingdom; supposing he had not done it before. When he begins to apply himself to *Business*, he must apply himself to this in the first Place. He that sits upon the Throne of a Kingdom cannot but have his Hands full. The Affairs of his Kingdom both at Home and Abroad, call for a larger Share of his Time and Thoughts, and yet he must write himself a Copy of the Law. Let not those that call themselves *Men of Business* think that will excuse them from making Religion their *Business*, nor let *Great Men* think it any Disparagement to them to write for themselves those *Great Things* of God's Law which he hath written to them, Hof. 8. 12.

2. Having a Bible by him of his own writing, he must not think it enough to keep it in his Cabinet, but he must read therein all the Days of his Life, v. 19. 'Tis not enough to have Bibles, but we must use them, use them daily, as the Duty and Necessity of every Day requires: Our Souls must have their constant Meals of that *Manna*, and if well digested, 'twill be true Nourishment and Strength to them. As the Body is receiving Benefit by its Food continually, and not only when it's eating, so doth the Soul by the Word of God, if it meditate therein Day and Night, Psal. 1. 2. And we must persevere in the use of the written Word of God, as long as we live. Christ's Scholars never learn above their Bibles; but will have constant Occasion for them till they come to that Knowledge where Knowledge and Love will both be made perfect.

3. His Writing and Reading were all nothing if he did not reduce to Practice what he wrote and read, v. 19. 20. The Word of God is not design'd merely to be an Entertaining Subject of Speculation, but to be a commanding Rule of Conversation. Let him know,

1. What Dominion his Religion must have over him, and what Influence it must have upon him. (1.) It must possess him with a very reverend and awful Regard to the Divine Majesty and Authority.---- He must learn, (and thus the most Learned must be ever learning) to fear the Lord his God, and as high as he is, must remember that God is above him, and whatever Fear his Subjects owe to him, that and much more he owes to God, as his King. (2.) It must engage him to a constant Observance of the Law of God, and a conscientious Obedience to it, as the Product of that Fear.---- He must keep all the Words of this Law. (He is *Custus utriusque Tabulae*) not only to take Care that others do them, but to do them himself as an humble Servant to the God of Heaven, and a good Example to his Inferiors. (3.) It must keep him humble; how much soever he is advanc'd, let him keep his Spirit low, and let the Fear of his God prevent the Contempts of his Brethren: and let his Heart be lifted up above them, so as to carry himself haughtily or disdainfully towards them, and to trample upon them. Let him not conceit himself better than they, because he is bigger, and makes a fairer Shew, but let him remember that he is the Minister of God to them for good, (major singulis, but minor universis). It must prevent his Errors, either on the right Hand or on the Left: (for there are Errors on both Hands) and keep him right in all Instances to his God, and to his Duty.

2. What Advantage his Religion would be of to him. They that fear God and keep his Commandments will certainly fare the better for it in this World. The greatest Monarch in the World may receive more Benefit by Religion than by all the Wealth and Power of his Monarchy. 'Twill be of Advantage, (1.) To his Person. He shall prolong his Days in his Kingdom. We find in the History of the Kings of Judah that generally the best Reigns were the longest, except when God

shortened them for the Punishment of the People; as *Josiah's*. (2.) To his Family; his Children shall also prosper. Entail Religion upon Posterity, and God will entail a Blessing upon it.

CHAP. XVIII.

In this Chapter (1.) The Rights and Revenues of the Church are settled, and Rules given concerning the Levites Ministration and Maintenance, v. 1.---8. (2.) The Caution against the Idolatrous abominable Customs of the Heathen is repeated, v. 9.---14. (3.) A Promise is given them of the Spirit of Prophecy to continue among them, and to center at last in Christ the Great Prophet, v. 15.---18. Wrath threatned against those that despise Prophecy, v. 19. or counterfeits it, v. 20. and a Rule given for the Tryal of it, v. 21, 22.

THE priests, the Levites, and all the tribe of Levi, shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel: they shall eat the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and his inheritance. 2 Therefore shall they have no inheritance among the brethren: the LORD is their inheritance, as he hath said unto them. 3 ¶ And this shall be the priests due from the people, from them that offer a sacrifice, whether it be ox or sheep, and they shall give unto the priest the shoulder, and the maw. 4 The first-fruit also of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thy oyl, and the first of the fleece of thy sheep shalt thou give him. 5 For the LORD thy God hath chosen him out of all the tribes, to stand to minister in the name of the LORD, him and his sons for ever. 6 ¶ And if a Levite come from any of thy gates out of all Israel, where he sojourn'd, and come with all the desire of his mind unto the place which the LORD shall choose; 7 Then he shall minister in the name of the LORD his God, as all his brethren the Levites do, which stand there before the LORD. 8 They shall have like portions to eat, beside that which cometh of the sale of his patrimony.

Magistracy and Ministry are two Divine Institutions of admirable Use for the Support and Advancement of the Kingdom of God among Men: Laws concerning the former we had in the close of the foregoing Chapter, Directions are in this given concerning the latter. Land-marks are here set between the Estates of Priests and People. 1. Care is taken that the Priests entangle not themselves with the Affairs of this Life, nor enrich themselves with the Wealth of this World, they have better Things to mind. They shall have no Part nor Inheritance with Israel, i. e. no Share either in the Spoils taken in War, or in the Land that was to be divided by Lot, v. 1. Their Warfare and Husbandry are both Spiritual, and enough to fill their Hands both with Work and Profit, and to content them. The Lord is their Inheritance, v. 1. *Note*, Those that have God for their Inheritance, according to the new Covenant, should not be greedy of great Things in the World; neither gripe what they have, nor grasp at more, but look upon all present Things with the indifference which becometh those that believe God to be All-Sufficient.

2. Care is likewise taken that they want not any of the Comforts and Conveniences of this Life. Tho' God who is a Spirit is their Inheritance, it doth not therefore follow that they must live upon the Air; No, 1. The People must provide for them. They must have their Due from the People, v. 3. Their Maintenance must not depend upon the Generosity of the People, but they must be by Law entitl'd to it. He that is taught in the Word ought in Justice to communicate to him that teacheth him: And he that has the Benefit of solemn Religious Assemblies to contribute to the comfortable Support of those that preface in such Assemblies. (1.) The Priests that in their Courses serv'd at the Altar had their Share of the Sacrifices, viz. the Peace-Offerings, that were brought while they were in Waiting; besides the Breast and Shoulder which were appointed them before, Lev. 7. 32, 33, 34. The Cheeks and Maw are here order'd to be given them; so far was the Law from diminishing what was already granted, that it gave them an Augmentation. (2.) The First-fruits which arose within such a Precinct were brought in, as it should seem, to the Priests that resided among them, for their Maintenance in the Country.

The

The first of their Corn and Wine for Food, and the first of their Fleece for Cloathing, v. 4. For the Priests, who were employ'd to teach others, ought themselves to learn, having Food and Raiment, to be therewith content. — The First-fruits were devoted to God, and he constituted the Priests his Receivers: And if God reckons what is in general given to the Poor lent to him, to be repaid with Interest, much more what is in particular given to poor Ministers. There is a good Reason given for this constant Charge upon their Estates, v. 5. because the Levites were chosen of God, and his Choice must be own'd and countenanc'd, and those honour'd by us whom he honour'd; and because they stood to minister, and ought to be recompens'd for their Attendance and Labour, especially since it was in the Name of the Lord, by his Warrant, in his Service, and for his Praise, and his Charge entail'd upon his Seed, for ever; those who were thus engag'd, and thus employ'd, ought to have all due Encouragement given them, as some of the most needful useful Members of their Common wealth.

2. The Priests must not themselves stand in one another's Light. If a Priest, that by the Law was oblig'd to serve at the Altar, only in his turn, and was paid for that, should out of his great Affection to the Sanctuary devote himself to a constant Attendance there, and quit the Ease and Pleasure of the City in which he had his Lot, for the Satisfaction of serving the Altar, the Priests, whose Turn it was to attend, must admit him both to joy in the Work, and to Share in the Wages, and not grudge him either the Honour of the one, or the Profit of the other, tho' it might break in upon them, v. 6, 7, 8. Note, A hearty pious Zeal to serve God and his Church, tho' it may a little encroach upon a settled Order, and there may be somewhat in it that looks irregular, yet ought to be gratified, and not discourag'd. He that appears to have a hearty Affection to the Sanctuary, and loves dearly to be employ'd in the Service of it, in God's Name let him minister, he shall be as welcome to God as the Levites, whose Course it was to minister, and should be so to them. The settling of the Courses was intended rather to secure those to the Work that were not willing to do so much, than to exclude any that were willing to do more. — And he that thus serves as a Volunteer, shall have as good Pay as the prest'd Men, besides that which comes of the sale of his Patrimony. The Church of Rome obliges those who leave their Estates to go into a Monastery, to bring the Profits of their Estate with them, into the common Stock of the Monastery, for Gain's their Godliness; but here it is order'd, that the pious Devoto should reserve to himself the Produce of his Patrimony; for Religion and the Ministry were never appointed of God, however they have been abus'd by Men to serve a secular Interest.

9 ¶ When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. 10 There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, 11 Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer: 12 For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations, the Lord thy GOD doth drive them out from before thee. 13 Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God. 14 For these nations which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the LORD thy God hath not suffered thee so to do.

One would not think there had been so much need, as it seems there was, to arm the People of Israel against the Infection of the Idolatrous Customs of the Canaanites. Was it possible that a People so bless'd with Divine Institutions should ever admit the brutish and barbarous Inventions of Men and Devils? Were they in any Danger of making those their Tutors and Directors in Religion, whom God had made their Captives and Tributaries? It seems there was, and therefore after many the like Cautions, they are here charg'd not to do after the Abominations of those Nations, v. 9.

1. Some Particulars are instanc'd in. As (1.) The consecrating of their Children to Moloch, an Idol that represented the Sun, by making them to pass through the Fire, and sometimes consuming them as Sacrifices in the Fire, v. 10. See the Law against this before, Lev. 18. 21. (2.) Using Arts of Divination to get the unnecessary Knowledge of Things to come; Enchantments, Witchcrafts, Charms, &c. By which that Power and Knowledge which is peculiar to God, was attributed to

the Devil, to the great Reproach both of God's Counsels and of his Providence, v. 10, 11. One would wonder such Arts and Works of Darknes, so senseless and absurd, so impious and profane, could be found in a Country where Divine Revelation shone so clear, yet we find Remains of them even there where Christ's Holy Religion is known and profess'd; such are the Powers and Policies of the Rulers of the Darknes of this World. But let those that give good heed to Fortune-tellers, or go to Wizzards for the Discovery of Things Secret, that use Spells for the Cures of Diseases, are in any League or Acquaintance with familiar Spirits, or say a Confederacy with those that are, let them know that they can have no Fellowship with God, while thus they have Fellowship with Devils. 'Tis amazing to think there should be any Pretenders of this Kind in such a Land, and Day of Light, as we live in.

2. Some Reasons are given against their Conformity to the Customs of the Gentiles. — 1. Because it would make them abominable to God. The Things themselves being hateful to him, those that do them are an Abomination; and miserable is that Creature that is become odious to his Creator, v. 12. See the Malignity and Mischievousness of Sin: That must needs be an evil Thing indeed which provokes the God of Mercy to detest the Work of his own Hands. 2. Because these abominable Practices had been the Ruin of the Canaanites, which Ruin they were not only the Witnesses but the Instruments of. It would be the most inexcusable Folly, as well as the most unpardonable Impiety, for them to practice themselves those very Things for which they had been employ'd so feverently to chastise others. Did the Land spew out the Abominations of the Canaanites, and shall Israel lick up the Vomit? 3. Because they were better taught, v. 13, 14. 'Tis an Argument like that of the Apostles against Christians walking as the Gentiles walked, Ephes. 4. 17, 18. *Ye have not so learned Christ.* — 'Tis true these Nations whom God gave up to their own Hearts Lusts, and suffer'd to walk in their own Ways, Acts 14. 19. did thus corrupt themselves, but thou art not thus abandon'd by the Grace of God, the Lord thy God has not suffer'd thee to do so, thou art instructed in Divine Things, and hast fair Warning given thee of the Evil of those Practices, and therefore whatever others do, 'tis expected that thou shouldst be perfect with the Lord thy God, i. e. that thou shouldst give Divine Honours to him, to him only and to no other, and not mix any of the Superstitious Customs of the Heathen with his Institutions. One of the Chaldee Paraphrasts here takes Notice of God's furnishing them with the Oracle of Urim and Thummim as a Preservative from all unlawful Arts of Divination. They were Fools who would go to consult the Father of Lies, when they had such a ready way of consulting the God of Truth.

15 ¶ The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken. 16 According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb, in the Day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God; neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. 17 And the LORD said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. 18 I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. 19 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him. 20 But the prophet which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. 21 And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? 22 When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.

Here's 1. The Promise of the Great Prophet, with a Command to receive him, and hearken to him. Now

1. Some think 'tis the Promise of a Succession of Prophets, that should for many Ages be kept up in Israel. Besides the Priests and Levites, their ordinary Ministers, whose Office it was to teach Jacob God's Law, they should have Prophets, extraor-

extraordinary Ministers, to reprove them for their Faults, and mind them of their Duty, and to foretel Things to come, Judgments for Warning, and Deliverances for their Comfort. Having these Prophets, (1.) They need not use Divinations, nor consult with Familiar Spirits, for they might enquire of God's Prophets even concerning their *private Affairs*, as *Saul* did when he was in quest of his *Father's Asses*, 1 Sam. 9. 6. (2.) They could not miss the way of their Duty through Ignorance or Mistake, nor differ in their Opinions about it, having Prophets among them, whom in every difficult doubtful Case they might *Advise with and appeal to*. These Prophets were like *unto Moses* in some Respects, tho' far inferior to him, Deut. 34. 10.

2. Whether a Succession of Prophets be included in his Promise or no, we are sure it is *primarily* intended as a Promise of Christ, and it is the clearest Promise of him that is in all the Law of *Moses*. 'Tis expressly applied to our Lord Jesus as the Messiah promis'd, *Act*. 3. 22. and 7. 37. and the People had an Eye to this Promise when they said concerning him, *This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the World*, Joh. 6. 14. and it was *his Spirit* that spake in all the other Prophets, 1 Pet. 1. 11. Observe

1. What it is that is here promis'd concerning Christ; What God promis'd *Moses* at Mount Sinai, which he relates, v. 18. he promiseth the People, v. 15. in God's Name. (1.) That there should come a *Prophet*, great above all the Prophets, by whom God would make known himself and his Will to the Children of Men more fully and clearly than ever he had done before. He is the *Light of the World*, as Prophecy was of the Jewish Church, *Joh*. 8. 12. He is the *Word* by whom God speaks to us, *Joh*. 1. 1. *Heb*. 1. 1. (2.) That God would raise him up from the midst of them. In his Birth he should be one of that Nation, should live among them, and be sent to them. In his Resurrection he should be raised up at *Jerusalem*, and from thence his Doctrine should go forth to all the World. Thus God having raised up his Son Christ Jesus, sent him to bless us. (3.) That he should be like *unto Moses*, only as much above him, as the other Prophets came short of him: *Moses* was such a Prophet as was a Law-giver to *Israel*, and their Deliverer out of *Egypt*, and so was Christ; he not only teaches, but rules and saves. *Moses* was the Founder of a new Dispensation, by Signs and Wonders and mighty Deeds, and so was Christ, by which he prov'd himself a Teacher come from God. Was *Moses* faithful? So was Christ; *Moses* as a *Servant*, but Christ as a *Son*. (4.) That God would put his Words in his Mouth, v. 18. What Messages God had to send to the Children of Men, he would send them by him, and give him full Instructions what to say and do as a Prophet. Hence our Saviour saith, *Joh*. 7. 16. *My Doctrine is not mine originally, but his that sent me*. So that this great Promise is perform'd; this Prophet is come, even Jesus, 'tis he that should come, and we are to look for no other.

2. The Agreeableness of this Design'd Dispensation with the Peoples avowed Choice and Desire at Mount Sinai, v. 16. 17. There God had spoken to them in Thunder and Lightning, out of the midst of the Fire and thick darkness; every Word made their Ears tingle, and their Hearts tremble, and the whole Congregation ready to die with fear: In this Fright they beg'd hard that God would not speak to them in this Manner any more, they could not bear it, 'twould drive them out of their Wits; but that he would speak to them by Men like themselves, by *Moses* now, and afterwards by other Prophets like unto him; Well, saith God, it shall be so; They shall be spoken to by Men whose Terrors shall not make them afraid; and to crown the Favour beyond what they were able to ask or think, in the fulness of time, the Word itself should be made *Flesh*, and they should see his Glory as of the only begotten of the Father, not as at Mount Sinai full of Majesty and Terror, but full of Grace and Truth, *Joh*. 1. 14. Thus in answer to the Request of those who were struck with Amazement by the Law God promis'd the Incarnation of his Son, tho' we may suppose it far from the Thoughts of them that made that Request.

3. A Charge and Command given to all People to hear and believe, hear and obey this great Prophet here promis'd, *unto him ye shall hearken*, v. 15. and whoever will not hearken to him shall be surely and severely reckon'd with for his Contempt, v. 19. I will require it of him. God himself applies this to our Lord Jesus in the Voice that came out of the excellent Glory, *Mat*. 17. 5. *Here ye him*, i. e. this is he concerning whom it was said by *Moses* of old, *unto him ye shall hearken*; And *Moses* and *Elias* then stood by and assented to it. The Sentence here pass'd on those that hearken not to this Prophet is repeated, and ratified in the New Testament. *He that believeth not the Son, the wrath of God abideth on him*, *Joh*. 3. 36. And how shall we escape if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven? *Heb*. 12. 25. The Chaldee Paraphrase here reads it, *My word shall require it of him*; which can be no other than a Divine Person, Christ the eternal Word, to whom the Father has committed all Judgments, and by whom he will at the last day judge the World.

Whoever turns a deaf Ear to Jesus Christ, It is at their Peril, the same that is the Prophet is to be *their Judge*, *Joh*. 12. 48.

2. Here's a Caution against false Prophets.

1. By way of threatening against the Pretenders themselves, v. 30. Whoever sets up for a Prophet, and produceth either a Commission from a false God, as the Prophets of *Baal*, or a false and counterfeit Commission from the True God, it shall be deem'd and adjudg'd no less than High Treason against the Crown and Dignity of the King of Kings, and that Traitor shall be put to death (v. 20.) viz. by the Judgment of the great Sanhedrim, which in process of Time sat at *Jerusalem*: And therefore our Saviour saith, That a Prophet could not perish but as *Jerusalem*, and lays the Blood of the Prophets at *Jerusalem's* Door, *Luke* 13. 33, 34. whom therefore God himself would punish, yet these false Prophets were supported.

2. By way of Direction to the People, that they might not be impos'd upon by Pretenders; of which there were many, as appears, *Jer*. 23. 35. *Ezek*. 13. 6. 1. 1 Kings 22. 6. It is a very proper Question which they are suppos'd to ask, v. 21. Since it is so great a Duty to hearken to the true Prophets, and yet so great a Danger of being misled by false Prophets, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? By what Marks may we discover a Cheat? *Note*, It highly concerns us to have a right Touch-stone wherewith to try the Word we hear, that we may no what that Word is which the Lord has not spoken. Whatever is directly repugnant to Sense, to the Light and Law of Nature, and to the plain Sense of the written Word, we may be sure is not that which the Lord hath spoken; nor that which gives Countenance and Encouragement to Sin, or has a manifest tendency to the Destruction of Piety or Charity; Far be it from God that he should contradict himself. The Rule here given in answer to this Enquiry was adapted chiefly to that State, v. 22. If there was any Cause to suspect the Sincerity of a Prophet, let them observe if he gave them any Sign, or foretold something to come, and the Event was not according to his Prediction, they might be sure he was not sent of God. This doth not refer so much to the foretelling of Mercies and Judgments, tho' as to those and the difference between the Predictions of Mercies and Judgments, there is a Rule of discerning between Truth and Falshood laid down by the Prophet, *Jer*. 28. 8, 9. but rather to the giving of Signs on purpose to confirm their Mission. Tho' the Sign did come to pass, yet that would not serve to prove their Mission, if they call'd them to serve other Gods; That Point had been already settled, *Deut*. 13. 1, 2, 3. But if the Sign did not come to pass, that would serve to disprove their Mission. When *Moses* cast his Rod upon the Ground ('tis Bp. Patrick's Explication of this) and said it should become a Serpent, if it had not accordingly been turn'd into a Serpent, *Moses* had been a false Prophet: If when *Elijah* call'd for Fire from Heaven to consume the Sacrifice, none had come, he had been no better than the Prophets of *Baal*. *Samuel's* Mission, was prov'd by this, That God let none of his Words fall to the ground. 1 Sam. 3. 19, 20. And by the Miracles Christ wrought, especially by that great Sign he gave of his Resurrection the Third Day, which came to pass as he foretold, it appear'd that he was a Teacher come from God. Lastly, They are bid not to be afraid of a false Prophet; i. e. not to be afraid of the Judgments such a one might denounce to amaze People, and strike a Terror upon them; Nor to be afraid of executing the Law upon him, when upon a strict and impartial Scrutiny it appear'd that he was a False Prophet. This Command not to fear a false Prophet, implies that a True Prophet who prov'd his Commission by clear and undeniable Proofs was to be fear'd, and it was at their Peril if they offer'd him any Violence, or put any Slight upon him.

C H A P. XIX.

The Laws which *Moses* had been hitherto repeating and urging most-ly concern'd the Acts of Religion and Devotion towards God, but here he comes more fully to press the Duties of Righteousness between Man and Man. This Chapter relates, (1.) To the Sixth Commandment, Thou shalt not kill. v. 1.—13. (2.) To the Eighth Commandment, Thou shalt not steal. v. 14. (3.) To the Ninth Commandment, Thou shalt not bear false Witness, v. 15.—21.

W HEN the LORD thy God hath cut off the nations, whose land the LORD thy God giveth thee, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their cities, and in their houses; 2 Thou shalt separate three cities for thee in the midst of thy land

land which the LORD thy God giveth thee to possess it. 3 Thou shalt prepare thee a way, and divide the coasts of their land (which the LORD thy God giveth thee to inherit) into three parts that every slayer may flee thither. ¶ 4 And this is the case of the slayer, which shall flee thither, that he may live: Whoso killeth his Neighbour ignorantly, whom he hated not in time past, 5 As when a man goeth into the wood with his neighbour, to hew wood, and his hand fetcheth a stroke with the ax to cut down the tree, and the head slippeth from the helve, and lighteth upon his neighbour, that he die; he shall flee unto one of those cities, and live: 6 Left the avenger of the blood pursue the slayer, while his heart is hot, and overtake him, because the way is long, and slay him, whereas he was not worthy of death, in as much as he hated him not in time past. 7 Wherefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt separate three cities for thee. 8 And if the LORD thy God enlarge thy coast (as he hath sworn unto thy Fathers) and give thee all the land which he promised to give unto thy fathers; 9 (If thou shalt keep all these commandments to do them, which I command thee this day, to love the LORD thy God, and to walk ever in his ways) then shalt thou add three cities mo for thee, beside these three: 10 That innocent blood be not shed in thy land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and so blood be upon thee. 11 ¶ But if any man hate his neighbour, and lie in wait for him, and rise up against him, and smite him mortally that he die, and flee into one of these cities: 12 Then the elders of his city shall send and fetch him thence, and deliver him into the hand of the avenger of blood, that he may die. 13 Thine eye shall not pity him, but thou shalt put away the guilt of innocent blood from Israel, that it may go well with thee.

It was one of the Precepts given to the Sons of Noah, that *who so sheddeth mans blood, by man shall his blood be shed*, that is by the *Avenger of Blood*, Gen. 9. 6. Now here we have the Law settled between Blood and Blood, between the Blood of the *Murderer*, and the Blood of the *Murderer*, and effectual Provision made,

1. That the *Cities of Refuge* should be a Protection to him that slew another casually, so that he should not die for that as a Crime which was not his Voluntary Act, but only his Unhappiness. The Appointment of these *Cities of Refuge* we had before, *Exod. 21. 13.* and the Law laid down concerning them at large, *Numb. 35. 10. &c.* 'Tis here repeated; And Direction giving concerning three things. (1.) The Appointing of three *Cities in Canaan* for this Purpose. *Moses* had already appointed three on that side *Jordan*, which he saw the Conquest of, and now he bids them when they were settled in the other Part of the Country to appoint three more, *v. 1, 2, 3, 7.* The Country was to be divided into three Districts, as near as might be, equal, and a *City of Refuge* in the Centre of each, so that every Corner of the Land might have one *within reach*. Thus *Christ* is not a *Refuge* at a Distance which we must *Ascend to Heaven*, or go down to the deep for, but the Word is *nigh us*, and *Christ* in the Word, *Rom. 10. 8.* The Gospel brings Salvation to our door, and there it knocks for Admission.—And to make the Flight of the Delinquent the more easy, the Way must be prepar'd that led to the *City of Refuge*. Probably they had *Caulays* or *Street-ways* leading to those *Cities*, and the *Jews* say, that the *Magistrates of Israel* upon one certain Day in the Year, sent out *Messengers* to see that those Roads were in good repair, and they were to remove stumbling Blocks, mend Bridges that were broken, and where two Ways met, they were to set up a *Mercurial Post*, with a Finger to point the right Way, on which was engraven great Letters, *Miklas; Miklas; Refuge, Refuge.* In Allusion to this, Gospel Ministers are to shew People the Way to *Christ*, and to Assist and direct them in flying by Faith to him for *Refuge*. They must be ready to remove their Prejudices, and help them over their Difficulties. And blessed be God, the way of holiness to all that seek it faithfully is a *high-way*, so plain that the way-faring Men who fools shall not err therein.

(2.) The Use to be made of these *Cities*, *v. 4, 5, 6. (1.)* It is suppos'd, it might so happen, that a Man might be the Death of his Neighbour without any Design upon him, either from a sudden Passion, or a Malice premeditated, but purely by Accident, as by the flying off of an ax-head, which is the Instance here given, with which every Case of this Kind was to be compar'd and by it judg'd. See how humane Life lies expos'd daily, and what Deaths we are oft in, and what need therefore we have to be always ready, our Souls being continually in our Hands. How are the Sons of Men snar'd in an evil time; when it fall suddenly upon them, (*Ecc. 9. 12.*) an evil time indeed it is, when this happens, not only to the slain, but also to the slayer. (2.) It is suppos'd that the Relations of the Person slain would be forward to *avenge the Blood*; in Affection to their Friend, and in Zeal for Publick Justice. Tho' the Law did not allow the avenging of any other Affront or Injury with Death, yet the *Avenger of Blood*; the Blood of a Relation, shall have great Allowances made for the Heat of his Heart, upon such a Provocation as that, and his killing the Manslayer, tho' he was so by Accident only, should not be accounted Murderer, if he did it before he got to the *City of Refuge*, tho' it is own'd he was not worthy of Death. Thus would God possess People with great Horror and Dread of the Sin of Murder: if mere Chance medley did thus expose a Man, surely he that wilfully doth violence to the Blood of any Person, whether from an old grudge, or upon a sudden Provocation, must flee to the Pit, and let no man stay him, *Prov. 28. 17.* yet the New Testament represents the Sin of Murder as more heinous and more dangerous than even this Law doth, *1 John 3. 15. Ye know that no murderer has Eternal Life abiding in him.* (3.) It is provided, that if an Avenger of Blood should be so unreasonable as to demand Satisfaction for Blood shed by Accident only, then the *City of Refuge* should protect the Slayer. Sins of Ignorance indeed do expose us to the Wrath of God, but there is Relief provided, if by Faith and Repentance we make use of it. *Paul* that had been a Persecutor obtain'd Mercy because he did it Ignorantly; And *Christ* pray'd for his Crucifiers, *Father forgive them for they know not what they do.*

(3.) The Appointing of three *Cities* more for this Use, in Case God should hereafter enlarge their Territories, and the Dominion of their Religion; that all those Places which came under the Government of the Law of *Moses* in other Instances might enjoy the Benefit of that Law in this Instance, *v. 8, 9, 10.* Here is 1. an Intimation of God's gracious Intention to enlarge their Coast, as he had promis'd to their Fathers, if they did not by their Disobedience forfeit the Promise; the Condition of which is here carefully repeated, that if it were not perform'd the Reproach might lie upon them, and not on God. He promis'd to give it, if thou shalt keep all these Commandments; not otherwise. 2. A Direction to them to appoint three *Cities* more in their new Conquest, which the number intimates should be as large as those their first Conquests were, wherever the Border of *Israel* went; this Privilege must attend it that innocent blood be not shed; *v. 10.* Tho' God is the Saviour and Preserver of all Men, and has a tender Regard to all Lives, yet the Blood of *Israelites* is in a particular Manner precious to him, *Psal. 72. 14.*—The Learned *Ainsworth* observes that the *Jewish* writers themselves own, that the Condition not being perform'd, the Promise of the Enlarging of their Coast was never fulfill'd, so that there was no Occasion of ever adding these three *Cities of Refuge*, yet the Holy Blessed God (say they) did not command it in vain, for in the days of *Messiah* the Prince, three other *Cities* shall be added to these Six: They expect it to be fulfill'd in the Letter, but we know that in *Christ* it hath its Spiritual Accomplishment, for the Borders of the Gospel *Israel* are enlarg'd, according to the Promise, and in *Christ* the Lord our Righteousness *Refuge* is provided for those that by Faith fly unto him.

2. 'Tis provided that the *Cities of Refuge* should be no Sanctuary or Shelter to a wilful Murderer, but even thence he should be fetch'd, and deliver'd to the avenger of blood, *v. 11, 12, 13. (1.)* This shews that wilful Murderer must never be protected by the Civil Magistrate; He bears the sword of Justice in vain if he suffer those to escape the Edge of it that lie under the Guilt of Blood, which he by Office is the avenger of. During the Dominion of the Papacy here in our own Land, before the Reformation, there were some Churches and Religious Houses (as they call'd them,) that were made Sanctuaries for the Protection of all Sorts of Criminals that fled to them, wilful Murderers not excepted, so that (as *Stanford* saith, in his Pleas of the Crown, lib. 2. cap. 38.) the Government follows not *Moses* but *Romulus*, and it was not till about the latter End of *Henry the VIIIth's* time that this Privilege of Sanctuary for wilful Murderer was taken away; when in that, as in other Cases, the Word of God came to be regarded more than the Dictates of the See of *Rome*. And some have thought it would be a completing of that Instance of Reformation, if the Benefit of Clergy were taken away for Manslaughter, that is, the killing of a Man upon a small Provocation, since this Law allow'd *Refuge*, only in Case of that which our Law calls Chance.

Chance-medley. (2.) It may be alluded to, to shew that in Jesus Christ there is no Refuge for presumptuous Sinners, that *go on still in their trespasses*. If we thus *sin wilfully*, Sin and go on in it, there *remains no Sacrifice*, Heb. 10. 26. Those that flee to Christ for their Sins, shall be safe in him, but not those that expect to be shelter'd by him in their Sins, Salvation itself cannot save such, Divine Justice will fetch them even from the *City of Refuge*, the Protection of which they are not Entitled to.

14 ¶ Thou shalt not remove thy neighbours land-mark, which they of old time have set in thine inheritance, which thou shalt inherit, in the land that the LORD thy God giveth thee to possess it. 15 ¶ One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses shall the matter be established. 16 ¶ If a false witness rise up against any man to testify against him *that which is wrong*: 17 Then both the men between whom the controversy is, shall stand before the LORD, before the priests, and the judges which shall be in those days. 18 And the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and behold, if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother, 19 Then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother: so shalt thou put the evil away from among you. 20 And those which remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you. 21 And thine eye shall not pity, *but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.*

Here's a *Statute* for the preventing of *Frauds and Perjuries*, for the Divine Law takes care of Mens Rights and Properties, and hath made a Hedge about them. Such a Friend is it to Humane Society, and Mens Civil Interests.

1. A Law against Frauds, v. 14. (1.) Here's an implicit Direction given to the first Planters of *Canaan*, to fix *Landmarks*, according to the Distribution of the Land to the several Tribes and Families, by lot. *Note*, 'Tis the will of God that every one should know his own: And that all good Means should be used to prevent Encroachments, and the doing and suffering of Wrong. Then Right is settled, care must be taken that it be not afterwards unsettled, and that if possible no Occasion of Dispute may arise. (2.) An express Law to Posterity not to remove those *Land-marks*, which were thus fix'd at first, by which a Man secretly got that to himself which was his Neighbours. This without doubt is a Moral Precept, and still binding, and to us it forbids (1.) The invading of any Man's Right, and taking to ourselves that which is not our own by any fraudulent Arts or Practices, as by forging, concealing, destroying or altering Deeds and Writings which are our *Land-marks*, to which Appeals are made; or by shifting Hedges, Mere-Stones, and Boundaries. Tho' the *Land-marks*, were set by the Hand of Man, yet he was a Thief and a Robber by the Law of God that removed them. Let every Man be content with his own Lot, and just to his Neighbours, and then we shall have no *Land-marks* removed. (2.) It forbids the sowing of Discord among Neighbours, and doing any thing to occasion Strife and Law-suits; which is done (and 'tis very ill done) by confounding those things which should determin Disputes, and decide Controversies. And (3.) It forbids breaking in upon the settled Order and Constitution of Civil Government; and the altering of Ancient Usages without just Cause. This Law supports the Honour of *Prescriptions*. *Consuetudo facit jus*.

2. A Law against Perjuries, which Enacts two things: 1. That a single Witness should never be admitted to give Evidence in a Criminal Cause, so as that Sentence should be pass upon his Testimony, v. 15. This Law we had before, *Numb.* 35. 30. and *Deut.* 17. 16. This was enacted in favour to the Prisoner, whose Life and Honour should not lie at the Mercy of a particular Person that had a Pique against him: And for Caution to the Accuser to say that which he could not corroborate by the Testimony of another. 'Tis a just shame which this Law puts upon Mankind, as false and not to be trusted, every Man is by it suspected; and it is the Honour of God's Grace, that the Record he has given concerning his Son is confirm'd both in Heaven and in Earth by three Witnesses, 1 John 5. 7. *Let God be true, and every Man a Liar*, Rom. 3. 4.

2. That a false Witness should incur the same Punishment, which was to have been inflicted upon the Person he accus'd, v. 16.--21. (1.) The Criminal here is a *false witness*, who is said to rise up against a Man, not only because all Witnesses stood up when they gave in their Evidence, but because a false Witness did indeed rise up as an Enemy and an Assailant against him, whom he accus'd. If two or three or many Witnesses concurr'd in a false Testimony, they were all liable to be Prosecuted upon this Law. (2.) The Person wrong'd or brought into Peril by the false Testimony is suppos'd to be the Appellant, v. 17. And yet if the Person were put to Death upon the Evidence, and afterwards it appear'd to be false, any other Person or the Judges themselves *ex officio* might call the false Witness to Account. (3.) Causes of this kind having more than ordinary Difficulty in them were to be brought before the Supreme Court. The Priests and Judges, who are said to be before the Lord, because as other Judges sat in the Gates of their Cities, so those at the Gate of the Sanctuary, *Deut.* 17. 12. (4.) There must be great Care in the Trial, v. 18. A diligent Inquisition must be made into the Characters of the Persons, and all the Circumstances of the Case, which must be compar'd that the Truth might be found out; which where it is thus faithfully and impartially enquir'd into, Providence it may be hoped will particularly advance the Discovery of. (5.) If it appear'd that a Man had knowingly and maliciously born false witness against his Neighbour, tho' the Mischief he design'd him thereby was not effected, he shall undergo the same Penalty which his Evidence would have brought his Neighbour under, v. 19. *Nec Lex est justior ulla*. If the Crime he accus'd his Neighbour of was to be punish'd with Death, the false Witness must be put to Death; if with Stripes, he must be beaten; if with a pecuniary Mulct, he was to be find the same Sum. And because to those who consider'd not the heinousness of the Crime, and the necessity of making this Provision against it, it might seem hard to punish a Man so severely for a few Words speaking, especially when no Mischief did actually follow, it is added, v. 20. *Thine eye shall not pity*. No man needs to be more Merciful than God: The Benefit that will accrue to the publick by his Severity will abundantly recompense it, v. 20. *They that remain shall hear and fear*. Such exemplary Punishments will be Warnings to others not to attempt any such Mischief; when they see how he that made the pit, and digg'd it, is fallen into the ditch which he made.

CHAP. XX.

This Chapter settles the Militia, and establishes the Laws and Ordinances of War, 1. Relating to the Soldiers. (1.) *Those must be encourag'd that were drawn up to the Battel*, v. 1.--4. (2.) *Those must be dismiss'd and sent back again whose private affairs call'd for their attendance at home*, v. 5, 6, 7. or whose weakness and timorousness dissettled them for service in the Field, v. 8, 9. 2. Relating to the Enemies they made War with. 1. *The Treaties they must make with the Cities that were far off*, v. 10.--15. 2. *The Destruction they must make of the People in whose Land they were going*, v. 16.--18. 3. *Too care they must take in Besieging Cities not to destroy the Fruit-trees*, v. 19, 20.

W HEN thou goest out to battel against thine enemies, and seest horses and chariots, and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them: for the LORD thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. 2 And it shall be when ye are come nigh unto the battel, that the priests shall approach, and speak unto the people. 3 And shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel, you approach this day unto battel, against your enemies: let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble; neither be ye terrified because of them: 4 For the LORD your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you. 5 ¶ And the officers shall speak unto the people, saying, What man is there that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it? let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battel, and another man dedicate it. 6 And what man is he that hath planted a vineyard, and hath not yet eaten of it? let him also go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battel, and another man eat of it. 7 And what man is there that betrothed a Wife, and hath not taken her? let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in battel, and another man take her. 8 And the officers shall speak further

further unto the people, and they shall say, What man is there that is fearful and faint-hearted? let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart. 9 And it shall be when the Officers have made an end of speaking unto the people, that they shall make captains of the Armies to lead the people:

Israel was at this Time to be consider'd rather as a Camp, than as a Kingdom, entering upon an Enemies Country, and not yet settled in a Country of their own; And besides the War they were now entering upon in order to their Settlement, even after their Settlement they could neither protect nor enlarge their Coast, but they must hear the Alarms of War; 'Twas therefore needful they should have Direction given them in their Military Affairs: And in these Verses they are directed in managing, marshalling and drawing up their own Forces. And it is observable, that the Discipline of War here prescribed, is so far from having any thing in it harsh or severe, as is usual in Martial Law, that the Intent of the whole is on the contrary to encourage the Soldiers, and to make their Service easie to them.

1. They that were dispos'd to fight must be encourag'd, and animated against their Fears.

(1.) *Moses* here gives a general Encouragement, which the Leaders and Commanders in the War must take to themselves, v. 1. *Be not afraid of them.* Tho' the Enemy have never so much the Advantage; by their Numbers, they are more than thou, and by their Cavalry, their Armies being much made up of Horses and Chariots: which Israel were not allow'd to multiply, yet decline not coming to a Battle, with them, dread not the Issue, nor doubt of Success. Two things they must encourage themselves with in their Wars, provided they kept close to their God and their Religion, otherwise they forfeited these Encouragements. (1.) The Presence of God with them. *The Lord thy God is with thee,* and therefore thou art not in Danger, nor needst thou be afraid. See *Isa.* 41. 10. (2.) The Experience they and their Fathers had had of God's Power and Goodness, in bringing them out of the land of Egypt in defiance of Pharaoh and all his Hosts, which was not only in general a Proof of the Divine Omnipotence, but to them in particular a Pledge of what God would do further for them: He that sav'd them from those greater Enemies, would not suffer them to be run down by those that were every way less Considerable, and all he had done for them to be undone again.

(2.) This Encouragement must be particularly address'd to the Common Soldiers by a Priest appointed, and the Jews say, anointed for that Purpose, whom they call the anointed of the war, a very proper Title for our Anointed Redeemer, the Captain of our Salvation. This Priest in God's Name was to animate the People; and who so fit to do that, as he whose Office it was as Priest to pray for them? for the best Encouragements arise from the precious Promises made to the Prayer of Faith. This Priest must (1.) charge them not to be afraid, v. 3. for nothing weakens the Hands so much as that which makes the Heart tremble, v. 3. There is need of Precept upon Precept to this purpose, as there is here. *Let not your hearts be tender* (so the Word is) to receive all the impressions of Fear, but let a believing Confidence in the Power and Promise of God harden 'em. *Fear not and do not make haste* (so the Word is) for he that believeth doth not make more haste than good speed. Do not make haste either rashly to anticipate your Advantages, or basely to fly off upon every Disadvantage. (2.) He must assure them of the Presence of God with them, to own and plead their Righteous Cause, and not only to save them from their Enemies, but to give them Victory over them, v. 4. Note, Those have no Reason to fear that have God with them. The giving of this Encouragement by a Priest one of the Lords Ministers, intimates (1.) That it is very fit that Armies should have Chaplains, not only to pray for them, but to preach to them, both to reprove that which would hinder their Success, and to raise their Hopes of it. (2.) That it is the Work of Christ's Ministers to encourage his good Soldiers in their Spiritual Conflicts with the World and the Flesh, and to assure them of a Conquest, yea, more than a Conquest through Christ that loved us.

2. They that were indispos'd to Fight, must be discharged, whether the Indisposition did arise:

1. From the Circumstances of a Mans outward Condition. As (1.) If he had lately built or purchas'd a new House, and had not taken Possession of it, had not dedicated it, (v. 5.) *i. e.* made a solemn Festival for the Entertainment of his Friends, that came to him to welcome him to his House; let him go home and take the Comfort of that which God had bless'd him with, till by enjoying it for some time he became less fond of it, and consequently less disturbed in the War by the Thoughts of it, and more willing to die and leave it. For that's the Nature of all our worldly Enjoyments, that they please us

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best at first; after a while we see the Vanity of them.—Some think this Dedication of their Houses was a Religious Act, that they took Possession of them with Prayers and Praises, with a solemn devoting of themselves, and all their Enjoyments to the Service and Honour of God; *David* penn'd the 30th Psalm, on this Occasion, as appears by the Title. Note, He that has a House of his own, should dedicate it to God, by setting up and keeping up the Fear and Worship of God in it, that he may have a Church in his House; and nothing should be suffer'd to drive a Man from this. Or (2.) If a Man had been at great Expence to plant a Vineyard, and long'd to eat of the Fruit of it, which for the first three Years he was forbidden to do, by that Law, *Lev.* 19. 29. &c. let him go home if he has a mind, and gratifie his own Humour with the Fruits of it, v. 9. See how indulgent God is to his People in innocent things, and how far from being a hard Master. Since we naturally covet to eat the Labour of our Hands, rather than an Israelite should be cross'd therein, his Service in War shall be dispensed with. Or (3.) If a Man were made up to be married, and the Marriage was not solemniz'd he was at Liberty to return, v. 7. as also to tarry at Home for one Year after Marriage, chap. 24. 5. for the Terrors of War would be disagreeable to a Man in Love. And God would not be serv'd in his Wars by press'd Men that were forc'd into the Army against their Will, but they must all be perfectly Volunteers, *Psal.* 110. 3. *Thy People shall be willing.*—In running the Christian Race, and fighting the good Fight of Faith, we must lay aside every weight, and all that which would clog and divert our Minds, and make us unwilling. The Jewish Writers agree that this Liberty to return, was allow'd only in those Wars which they made voluntarily (as *Bp. Patrick* expresseth it) not those which were made by the Divine Command against Amalek and the Canaanites, in which every Man was bound to Fight.

2. If a Mans Indisposition to fight arose from the weakness and timorousness of his own Spirit, he had leave to return from the War, v. 8. This Proclamation *Gibeon* made to his Army, and it knock'd off above two thirds of them, *Jud.* 7. 3.—Some make this fearfulness and faint-heartedness here suppos'd, to arise from the Terrors of an evil Conscience, which would make a Man afraid to look Death and Danger in the Face. 'Twas then thought that Men of loose and profligate Lives would not be good Soldiers, but must needs be both Cowards in an Army, and Curses to it; the Shame and Trouble of the Camp, and therefore those who were conscious to themselves of notorious Guilt were shaken off. But it seems rather to be meant of a natural Fearfulness. 'Twas partly in kindness to them that they had their Discharge, that tho' they were shamed, yet they were sav'd; but much more in kindness to the rest of the Army, who were not only hereby freed from the Encumbrance of such as were useless and unserviceable, but the Danger of Infection from their Cowardise and Flight was prevented, that's the Reason here given, *Left his brethrens heart fail as well as his heart.* Fear is catching, and in an Army is of most pernicious Consequence. We must take heed that we fear not the fear of them that are afraid, *Isa.* 8. 12.

Lastly, 'Tis here order'd, that when all the Cowards were dismiss'd, then Captains should be nominated; v. 9. for it was in a special manner necessary, that the Leaders and Commanders should be men of Courage. That Reform therefore must be made when the Army was first Must'r'd and Mars'hall'd.—The Soldiers of Christ had need have Courage, that they may quit themselves like Men, and endure hardness like good Soldiers, especially the Officers of his Army.

10 ¶ When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. 11 And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be that all the people that is found therein, shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee. 12 And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it. 13 And when the LORD thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword. 14 But the woman and the little ones, and the cattel, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thy self: and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the LORD thy God hath given thee. 15 Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations. 16 But of the cities of these people which the LORD thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth: 17 But thou shalt

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thalt utterly destroy them, *namely*, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee: 18 That they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods, so should ye sin against the LORD your God. 19 ¶ When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by forcing an ax against them: for thou mayest eat of them, and thou shalt not cut them down (for the tree of the field is mans life) to employ them in the siege. 20 Only the trees which thou knowest that they be not trees for meat, thou shalt destroy and cut them down; and thou shalt build bulwarks against the city that maketh war with thee, until it be subdued.

They are here directed what Method to take in dealing with the Cities, (those only are mentioned, v. 10. but doubtless the Armies in the Field, and the Nations they had Occasion to deal with, are likewise intended) upon which they made War. They must not make a Descent upon any of their Neighbours, till they had first given them fair Notice, by a Publick Manifesto, or Remonstrance of their Quarrel with them. In dealing with the worst of Enemies, the Laws of Justice and Honour must be observ'd, and as the Sword must never be taken in Hand without cause; so not without cause shewn. War is an Appeal in which the Merits of the Cause must be set forth. 1. Even to the Proclamation of War must be subjoyned a Tender of Peace, if they would accept of it upon reasonable Terms. That is, (say the Jewish Writers) upon Condition that they renounce Idolatry, worship the God of Israel, as Proselytes of the Gate, that were not Circumcis'd, and that they pay to their new Masters a Yearly Tribute, and submit to their Government: On these Terms the Process of War should be stay'd, and their Conquerors, upon this Submission, were to be their Protectors. v. 10, 11. Some think, that even the seven Nations of Canaan were to have this Offer of Peace made them; And the Offer was no Jest or Mockery, tho' it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should not accept it, Josh. 11. 20. Others think that they are excluded, v. 16. not only from the benefit of that Law, v. 13. which confines Military Execution to the Males only; but from the benefit of this also, which allows not to make war till Peace was refus'd. And I see not how they could proclaim Peace to those who, by the Law, were to be utterly rooted out, and to whom they were to shew no Mercy, Deut. 7. 2. But for any other Nation which they made War upon, either for the enlarging of their Coast, the avenging of any Wrong done, or the recovery of any Right deny'd; they must first proclaim Peace to them. Let this shew, (1.) Gods Grace in dealing with Sinners; Tho' he might most justly and easily destroy them, yet having no Pleasure in their Ruin, he proclaims Peace, and beseeches them to be reconcil'd; so that they who lie most obnoxious to his Justice, and ready to fall as Sacrifices to it, if they make him an answer of Peace, and open to him, upon Condition they will be Tributaries and Servants to him, shall not only be saved from Ruin, but incorporated with his Israel, as Fellow-citizens with the Saints. (2.) Let it shew us our Duty in dealing with our Brethren: If any Quarrel happen, let us not only be ready to hearken to the Proposals of Peace, but forward to make such Proposals. We should never make use of the Law, till we have first tried to accommodate Matters in variance amicably, and without Expence and Vexation. We must be for Peace, whoever are for War.

2. If the offers of Peace were not accepted, then they must proceed to push on the War. And let those to whom God offers Peace know, that if they reject the Offer, and take not the Benefit of it within the time limited, Judgment will rejoice against Mercy in the Execution, as much as now Mercy rejoiceth against Judgment in the Reprieve. In this Case here, (1.) There is a Promise imply'd, that they should be Victorious. 'Tis taken for granted, v. 13. that the Lord their God would deliver it into their Hands. Note, Those Enterprises which we undertake by a Divine Warrant, and prosecute by Divine Direction, we may expect to succeed in. If we take Gods Method, we shall have his Blessing. (2.) They are order'd, in Honour, to the publick Justice, to put all the Soldiers to the Sword, for them I understand, by every Male, v. 13. all that bore arms, (as all then did that were able) But the Spoil they are allow'd to take to themselves, v. 14. in which was accounted the Women and Children. Note, A justifiable Property is acquired in that which is won in lawful War; God himself owns the Title, the Lord thy God gives it thee, and therefore he must be owned in it, Psal. 44. 31. : destroyed and their nation will be

3. The Nations of Canaan are excepted from the merciful Provisions made by this Law. Remnants might be left of the Cities that were very far off, v. 15. because by them they were not in so much Danger of being infected with Idolatry; nor was their Country so directly and immediately intended in the Promise. But of the Cities which were given to Israel for an inheritance, no Remnants must be left of their Inhabitants, v. 16. for it put a slight upon the Promise to admit Canaanites to share with them in the peculiar Land of Promise. And for another Reason they must be utterly destroyed, v. 17. Because since it could not be expected they should be cur'd of their Idolatry, if they were left with that Plague-sore upon them, they would be in Danger of infecting God's Israel, who were too apt to take the Infection, v. 18. They will teach you to do after their abominations, to introduce their customs into the worship of the God of Israel, and by degrees to forsake him, and to worship false Gods: For those that dare violate the second Commandment, will not long keep to the first. Strange Worships open the Door to strange Deities.

Lastly, Care is here taken, that in the besieging of Cities, there should not be any Destruction made of Fruit-Trees. v. 19, 20. In those times when Besiegers forc'd their Way, not as now, with Bombs and Cannon-Ball, but with Battering-Rams; they had Occasion for much Timber in carrying on their Sieges: Now because in the heat of War, Men are not apt to consider as they ought, the publick Good, 'tis expressly provided that Fruit Trees should not be us'd as Timber Trees. That Reason, for the tree of the field is man's (the word Life supply) all the ancient Versions, the Septuagint, Targums, &c. read, For is the tree of the field a man? Or, the tree of the field is not a man, that it should come against thee in the siege; or, retire from thee into the Bulwark. Do not brutishly vent thy Rage against the Trees that can do thee no harm. But our Translation seems most agreeable to the intent of the Law; And it teaches us, 1. That God is a better Friend to Man than he is to himself; And God's Law, which we are apt to complain of as a heavy Yoke, consults our Interest and Comfort, while our own Appetites and Passions, which we are so indulgent of, are really Enemies to our Welfare. The Intent of many of the Divine Precepts is to restrain us from destroying that which is our Life and Food. 2. That Armies, and their Commanders, are not allow'd to make what Desolation they please in the Countries that are the Seat of War. Military Rage must always be check'd and rul'd with Reason. War, tho' carried on with never so much Caution, is destructive enough, and needs not be made more so than needs must. Generous Spirits will shew themselves tender, not only of Mens Lives, but of their Livelihoods, for tho' the life is more than meat, yet it will soon be nothing without Meat. 3. The Jews understand this as a prohibition of all wilful Wast upon any Account whatsoever. No Fruit-Tree is to be destroy'd, unless it be barren and cumber the ground: Nay, they say, who so wilfully breaks Vessels, tears Clothes, stops Wells, pulls down Buildings, or destroys Meat, transgresses this Law, Thou shalt not destroy. Christ took care that the broken meat should be gathered up, that nothing might be lost. Every Creature of God is good, and as nothing is to be refus'd, so nothing is to be abus'd. We may live to want what we carelessly wast.

CHAP. XXI.

In this Chapter Provision is made, 1. For the putting away of the Guilt of Blood from the Land, when he that fled from Justice. v. 1,--9. 2. For the preserving of the Honour of a Captive Maid. v. 11,--14. 3. For the securing of the right of a first born son, tho' he were not a Favorite. v. 15--17. 4. For the restraining and punishing of a rebellious Son. v. 18--21. 5. For the maintaining of the Honour of humane Bodies, which must not be hang'd in Chains, but decently buried, even the bodies of the worst Malefactors. v. 22, 23.

IF one be found slain in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee to possess it, lying in the field, and it be not known who hath slain him: 2 Then thy elders and thy judges shall come forth, and they shall measure unto the cities which are round about him that is slain: 3 And it shall be that the city which is next unto the slain man, even the elders of that city shall take an heifer which hath not been wrought with, and which hath not drawn in the yoke. 4 And the elders of that city shall bring down the heifer unto a rough valley which is neither eared nor sown, and shall strike off the heifers neck there in the valley. 5 And the priests the sons of Levi shall come near (for them the LORD

LORD thy God hath chosen to minister unto him, and to bless in the name of the LORD) and by their word shall every controversy and every stroke be tried, 6 And all the elders of that city that are next unto the slain man, shall wash their hands over the heifer that is beheaded in the valley. 7 And they shall answer and say, Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it. 8 Be merciful, O LORD, unto thy People Israel, whom thou hast redeemed, and lay not innocent blood unto thy people of Israel's charge. And the blood shall be forgiven them. 9 So shalt thou put away the guilt of innocent blood from among you, when thou shalt do that which is right in the sight of the LORD.

Care had been taken by some preceding Laws for the vigorous and effectual Prosecution of a wilful Murderer, chap. 19. 11. the putting of whom to Death was the putting away of the guilt of Blood from the Land; But if that could not be done, the Murderer not being discover'd, they must not think the Land was in no Danger of contracting any Pollution, since it was not through any Neglect of theirs that the Murderer was unpunish'd; No, a great Solemnity is here provided for the putting away of the Guilt, as an Expression of their Dread, and Detestation of that Sin.

1. The Case suppos'd is, that one is found slain, and it is not known who slew him. v. 1. The Providence of God hath sometimes wonderfully brought to Light these hidden Works of Darkness, and by strange Occurrences the Sin of the Guilty has found them out; inasmuch, that 'tis become a Proverb, *Murderer will out*: But it is not always so; now and then the Devils Promises of Secrecy and Impunity in this World are made good; yet 'tis but for a while: There is a time coming, when secret Murders will be discover'd; the Earth shall disclose her blood, Isa. 26. 21. upon the Inquisition Justice makes for it; and an Eternity coming, when they that escap'd Punishment from Men, will lie under the righteous judgment of God. And the going of so many Murders and other Wickednesses unpunish'd in this World, makes it necessary, that there should be a Day of Judgment, to require that which is past, Eccl. 3. 15.

2. Directions are given what is to be done in this Case: 'Tis taken for granted, that a diligent Search had been made for the Murderer, Witnesses examined, and Circumstances strictly enquir'd into, that if possible they might find out the guilty Person; But if, after all, they could not trace it out, nor fasten the Charge upon any, then, 1. The Elders of the next City (that had a Court of three and twenty in it) were to concern themselves about this Matter. If it were doubtful which City was next, the great Sanhedrim were to send Commissioners to determine that Matter, by an exact Measure. v. 2, 3. Note, Publick Persons must be solicitous about the publick Good: And those that are in Power and Reputation in Cities, must lay out themselves to redress Grievances, and reform what's amiss in the Country, and Neighbourhood that lies about them. Those that are next to them, should have the largest share of their good Influence, as Ministers of God for Good.

3. The Priests and Levites must assist, and preside in this Solemnity, v. 5. That they might direct the Management of it, in all Points according to the Law, and particularly might be the Peoples Mouth to God in the Prayer that was to be put up on this sad Occasion, v. 8. God being Israel's King, His Ministers must be their Magistrates, and by their word, as the Mouth of the Court, and learned in the Laws, every controversy must be tried. 'Twas their Privilege that they had such Guides, Overseers and Rulers, and their Duty to make use of 'em upon all Occasions, especially in sacred Things as this was.

4. They were to bring an Heifer down into a rough and unoccupied Valley, and to kill it there, v. 3, 4. This was not a Sacrifice, for it was not brought to the Altar, but a solemn Protestation, that thus they would put the Murderer to Death if they had him in their Hands. The Heifer must be one that had not drawn in the yoke, to signify (say some) that the Murderer was a son of Belial; It must be done in a rough Valley, to signify the Horror of the Fact, and that the Defilement which Blood brings upon a Land, turns it into Barrenness. And the Jews say, that unless, after this, the Murderer was found out; this Valley where the Heifer was kill'd, was never to be Till'd or Sown.

5. The Elders were to wash their hands in water over the Heifer that was kill'd, and to profess, not only that they had not shed this innocent Blood themselves, but that they knew not who had, (v. 6, 7.) nor had knowingly conceal'd the Murderer, help'd him to make his Escape, or had been any way aiding or abetting. To this Custom David alludes Psal. 26. 6. I

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will wash my hands in innocency; But if Pilate had any Eye to it, Mat. 27. 24. he wretchedly misapplied it, when he condemn'd Christ, knowing him to be Innocent, and yet acquitted himself from the guilt of Innocent Blood. *Protestatio non valet contra factum.*

6. The Priests were to pray to God for the Country and Nation, that God would be merciful to them, and not bring upon them the Judgments which the Connivance at the Sin of Murder would deserve, v. 8. It might be presum'd, that the Murderer was either one of their City, or was now harbour'd in their City; and therefore must pray, that they might not fare the worse for his being among them. Num. 16. 22. *Be merciful, O Lord to thy people Israel.* Note, When we hear of the Wickedness of the Wicked, we have need to cry earnestly to God for Mercy for our Land, which groans and trembles under it. We must empty the Measure by our Prayers, which others are filling by their Sins.

Now this Solemnity was appointed, (1.) That it might give Occasion to common and publick Discourse concerning the Murder, which perhaps might some way or other occasion the Discovery of it. (2.) That it might possess People with a dread of the guilt of Blood. Not only how desiring it is to the Conscience of him that sheds it, (which should engage us all to pray with David, *Deliver me from blood-guiltiness*) but to the Land in which it is shed. It cries to the Magistrate for Justice on the Criminal, and if that Cry be not heard, it cries to Heaven for Judgments on the Land. If there must be so much ado to save the Land from Guilt when the Murderer was not known, it was certainly impossible to secure it from Guilt, if the Murderer was known and yet protect'd. All would be taught by this Solemnity, to use their utmost Care and Diligence, to prevent, discover, and punish Murder. Even the Heathen Mariners dreaded the guilt of Blood. *Jona* 1. 14. (3.) That we might all learn to take heed of pertaking in other mens sins, and making ourselves accessory to them *ex post facto*, by countenancing the Sin or Sinner, and no witnessing against it in our Places. We have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, if we do not reprove them rather, and bear our Testimony against them: The Repentance of the Church of Corinth for the Sin of one of their Members, produc'd such a carefulness, such a clearing of themselves, such a holy Indignation, Fear, and Revenge, (2 Cor. 7. 11.) as was signified by the Solemnity here appointed.

10 ¶ When thou goest forth to war against thine enemies, and the LORD thy God hath delivered them into thine hands, and thou hast taken them captive, 11 And seest among the captives a beautiful woman, and hast a desire unto her, that thou wouldest have her to thy wife: 12 Then thou shalt bring her home to thine house, and she shall shave her head, and pair her nails. 13 And she shall put the raiment of her captivity from off her, and shall remain in thine house, and bewail her father and her mother a full month: and after that, thou shalt go in unto her, and be her husband, and she shall be thy wife. 14 And it shall be if thou have no delight in her, then thou shalt let her go whither she will, but thou shalt not sell her at all for money, thou shalt not make merchandise of her, because thou hast humbled her.

By this Law a Soldier is allow'd to marry his Captive, if he pleas'd. For the hardness of their Hearts Moses gave them this Permission, lest if they had not had Liberty given them to marry such, they should have taken Liberty to defile themselves with them, and by such Wickedness the Camp would have been troubled. The Man is suppos'd to have a Wife already, and to take his Wife for a secondary Wife, as the Jews call'd them. This Indulgence of Men's inordinate Desires, in which their Hearts walked after their Eyes, is by no Means agreeable to the Law of Christ, which therefore in this Respect among others far exceeds in Glory the Law of Moses. The Gospel permits not him that had one Wife, to take another, for from the beginning it was not so: The Gospel forbids looking upon a Woman, tho' a beautiful one, to lust after her, and commands the mortifying and denying of all irregular Desires, tho' it be as uneasy as the cutting off of a right hand; so much doth our Holy Religion more than that of the Jews advance the Honour and support the Dominion of the Soul over the Body, the Spirit over the Flesh, consonant to the glorious Discovery it makes of Life and Immortality, and the better Hope.

But tho' Military Men were allow'd this Liberty, yet Care is here taken that they should not abuse it, that is,

1. That they should not abuse themselves by doing it too ha-

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filly; tho' the Captive was never so desirable. *If thou wouldst have her to thy Wife*, v. 10, 11. 'tis true, thou need'st not ask her Parents consent, for she is thy Captive, and is at thy Dispose. But 1. Thou shalt not *lie with her*, till thou hast Married her. This Allowance was not design'd to gratify a filthy brutish Lust in the heat and fury of it's Rebellion against Reason and Virtue; But an Honourable and Generous Affection to a comely and aimable Person, tho' in Distress; therefore he may make her his Wife if he will, but he must not *deal with her as with a Harlot*. 2. Thou shalt not marry her *of a sudden*, but keep her a full Month in thy House, v. 12, 13. This he must do either, (1.) That he may try to take his Affections off from her; for he must know that tho' in marrying her he doth not do ill (so the Law then stood) yet letting her alone he doth much better. Let her therefore *shave her head*, that he might not be enamour'd with her Locks, and *let her nails grow* (so the Margin reads it) to spoil the Beauty of her Hand. Note, We should contrive ways to take our Affections off from those things we are tempted to love inordinately. *Quicquid amas, cupias non placuisse nimis*. Or rather (2.) This was done in Token of her renouncing Idolatry, and becoming a Profelyte to the Jewish Religion. The *shaving of her head*, and the *paring of her Nails*, and the *Changing of her Apparel* signified her *putting off her former Conversation*, which was corrupt in her ignorance, that she might become a *new Creature*. She must remain in his House to be taught the good Knowledge of the Lord, and the Worship of him, which (say the Jews) if she receiv'd not but continued obstinate in Idolatry, he must not marry her. Note, The Professors of Religion must not be *unequally yoked* with Unbelievers, 2 Cor. 6. 14.

2. 'Tis likewise provided that they should not *abuse the poor Captive*.— 1. She must have time to *bewail her Father and Mother*, from whom she separated, and without whose Consent and Blessing she is now likely to be Married, and perhaps to a common Soldier of Israel, tho' in her Country never so nobly born and bred. To force a Marriage till these Sorrows were digested, and in some Measure got over, and she was better reconcil'd to the Land of her Captivity, by being better acquainted with it, would be very Unkind. She must not *bewail her Idols*, but be glad to part with them; to her near and dear Relations only her Affection must be thus indulg'd.— 2. If upon second Thoughts, he that had brought her to his House with a Purpose to Marry her, chang'd his Mind and would not Marry her, he might not *make Merchandise of her*, as of his other Prisoners, but must give her Liberty, to return, if she pleas'd to her own Country, because he had *humbl'd her* and afflicted her by raising Expectations, and then disappointing them, v. 14. Having *made a fool of her*, he might not *make a prey of her*. This intimates how *binding* the Laws of Justice and Honour are particularly in the Pretensions of Love, the Courting of Affections, and the Promises of Marriage, which are to be look'd upon as *solemn things* that have something sacred in them, and therefore are not to be *jested with*.

15 ¶ If a man have two wives, one beloved, and another hated, and they have born him children, *both* the beloved and the hated; and if the first-born son be hers that was hated: 16 Then it shall be, when he maketh his sons to inherit *that* which he hath, *that* he may not make the son of the beloved, first-born, before the son of the hated, *which is indeed* the first-born: 17 But he shall acknowledge the son of the hated *for* the first-born by giving him a double portion of all that he hath: for he *is* the beginning of his strength, the right of the first-born *is* his.

This Law restrains Men from disinheriting their eldest Sons, purely in a Humour, and without just Provocation.

1. The Case here put, v. 15. is very instructive. (1.) It shews the great Mischief of having more Wives than one, which the Law of Moses did not restrain, probably in hopes that Mens own Experience of the great Inconvenience of it in Families, would at last put an end to it, and make them a Law to themselves. Observe the Supposition here, *If a Man have two Wives*, it's a thousand to one but *one* of them is beloved, and the other hated, i. e. manifestly loved less, as Leah was by Jacob, and the Effect of this cannot but be Strifes and Jealousies, *envy, confusion, and every evil work*, which could not but create a constant Uneasiness, and Vexation to the Husband, and involve him both in Sin and Trouble. Those do much better consult their own present Ease and Satisfaction, who adhere to God's Law, than those who indulge their own Lusts. (2.) It shews how Providence commonly sides with the weakest, and gives more abundant honour to that part which lacked, for the First-born Son is here suppos'd to be *hers that was hated*. 'Twas so in

Jacob's Family, because the Lord saw that Leah was hated, Gen. 29. 31. The great Householder wisely gives to each his Dividend of Comfort; If one had the Honour to be the Beloved Wife, it oft prov'd that the other had the Honour to be the Mother of the First-born.

2. The Law in this Case is still binding to Parents, they must give their Children their Right without partiality. In the Case suppos'd, the eldest Son, tho' the Son of the less beloved Wife, must have his Birth-right Privilege, which was a double Portion of the Estate, because he was the *beginning of his strength*, i. e. in him his Family began to be *strengthened*, and his *Quiver* began to be fill'd with the *Arrows of a mighty man*, Plal. 127. 4. and therefore the *Right of the first-born is his*, v. 16. 17. Jacob had indeed depriv'd Reuben of his Birth-right, and given it to Joseph, but it was because Reuben had forfeited the Birth-right by his Incest, not because he was the Son of the hated: Now lest that which Jacob did justly should be drawn into a Precedent, for others to do the same thing unjustly, 'tis here provided, that when the Father makes his Will, or otherwise settles his Estate, the Child shall not fare the worse for the Mother's unhappiness in having less of her Husband's Love, for that was not the Child's Fault. Note, 1. Parents ought to make no other Difference in dispensing their Affections among their Children, than what they see plainly God makes in dispensing his Grace among them. 2. Since 'tis the Providence of God that makes Heirs, the Disposal of Providence in that Matter must be acquiesc'd in, and not oppos'd. No Son should be abandon'd by his Father, till he manifestly appear to be abandon'd of God, which is hard to say of any while there's Life.

18 ¶ If a Man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and *that* when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them: 19 Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place: 20 And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son *is* stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; *he is* a glutton, and a drunkard. 21 And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you, and all Israel shall hear, and fear. 22 ¶ And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree: 23 His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day (for he that is hanged, *is* accursed of God) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.

Here's 1. A Law for the punishing of a Rebellious Son: Having in the former Law provided, that Parents should not deprive their Children of their Right, 'twas fit it should next be provided, that Children withdraw not the Honour and Duty that's owing to their Parents, for there's no partiality in the Divine Law.

1. Observe, How the Criminal is here describ'd. He is a *stubborn and rebellious Son*, v. 18. No Child was to fare the worse for the weakness of his Capacity, the slowness or dulness of his Understanding, but for his Willfulness and Obstinacy. If he carry himself proudly and insolently towards his Parents, contemn their Authority, slight their Reproofs, and Admonitions, disobey the express Commands they give him for his own Good, hate to be reform'd by the Correction they give him, shame their Family, grieve their Hearts, waste their Substance, and threaten to ruin their Estate by riotous living, this is a *stubborn and rebellious Son*. He is particularly suppos'd, v. 20. to be a *glutton or a drunkard*. This intimates either, (1.) That these were Sins which his Parents did in a particular manner warn him against, and therefore in these Instances there was a plain Evidence, that he *did not obey their voice*. Lemuel had this Charge from his Mother, Prov. 31. 4. Note, In the Education of Children great Care should be taken both to suppress all Inclinations to Drunkenness, and to keep them out of the way of Temptations to it; in Order hereunto they should be possess'd sometimes with a Dread and Detestation of that beastly Sin, and taught betimes to deny themselves. Or, (2.) That his being a *glutton and a drunkard* was the cause of his Insolence and Obstinacy towards his Parents. Note, There is nothing that draws Men into all manner of Wickedness, and hardens them in it more certainly and fatally, than Drunkenness doth. When Men take to drink, they forget the Law, they forget all Law, (Prov. 31. 5.) even that Fundamental Law of honouring Parents.

2. How

2. How this Criminal is to be proceeded against. His own *Father and Mother*, are to be his Prosecutors, v. 19, 20. They might not put him to death themselves, but they must complain of him to the *Elders of the City*, and the Complaint must needs be made with a sad Heart, *This our Son is stubborn and rebellious*. Note, Those that give up themselves to Vice and Wickedness, and will not be reclaim'd, forfeit their Interest in the natural Affections of their nearest Relations; The Instruments of their Being justly become the Instruments of their Destruction. The Children that forget their Duty must thank themselves and not blame their Parents, if they forget their Love. And how difficult soever tender Parents now find it to reconcile themselves to the just Punishment of their rebellious Children, in the Day of the Revelation of the Righteous Judgement of God, all natural Affection will be so entirely swallow'd up in Divine Love, that they will be very well content to see them damn'd, because God will be therein for ever glorified.

3. What Judgment is to be executed upon him, he must be publicly stoned to death by the men of his City, v. 21. And thus (1.) The Parental Authority was supported, and God our common Father shew'd himself jealous for it, it being one of the first and most ancient Stream derived from him that is the Fountain of all Power. (2.) This Law if duly executed, would early destroy the wicked of the Land, Psal. 101. 8. and prevent the spreading of the Gangreen by cutting off the corrupt Part betimes; for those that were ill Members of Families, would never make good Members of the Commonwealth. (3.) It would strike an aw upon Children, and frighten them into Obedience to their Parents, if they would not otherwise be brought to their Duty, and kept in it. *All Israel shall hear*. The Jews say, The Elders that condemn'd him were to send Notice of it in Writing, all the Nation over, *In such a Court, such a day, we stoned such a one, because he was a stubborn and rebellious Son*. And I have sometimes wish'd that as in all our Courts there is an exact Record kept of the Condemnation of Criminals in *perpetuum rei memoriam*, so there might be Publick and Authentick notice given in Print to the Kingdom of such Condemnations, and the Executions upon them, by the Elders themselves, in *terrorem*; that all may hear and fear.

4. A Law for the burying of the Bodies of Malefactors that were hang'd, v. 22, 23. The Hanging of them by the Neck till the Body was dead was not us'd at all among the Jews, as with us, but such as were ston'd to death, if it were for Blasphemy, or some other very execrable Crime, it was usual by Order of the Judges to hang up the dead Body upon a Post, for some time, as a Spectacle to the World, to express the Ignominy of the Crime, and to strike the greater Terror upon others, that they might not only hear and fear, but see and fear. Now it is here provided that whatever Time of the Day they were thus hung up, at Sun-set they should be taken down and buried, and not left to hang out all Night; *sufficient* (saith the Law) *to such a Man is this punishment*; Hitherto let it go but no further. Let the Malefactor and his Crime be hid in the Grave.

Now, 1. God would thus preserve the honour of Human Bodies, and the tenderness towards the worst of Criminals. The time of exposing of dead Bodies thus is limited for the same reason that the number of Stripes was limited by another Law, *lest thy brother seem vile unto thee*. Punishing beyond Death God reserves to himself, as for a Man there is no more that he can do. Whether therefore the hanging of Malefactors in Chains, and setting up their Heads and Quarters be decent among Christians that look for the Resurrection of the Body, may perhaps be worth considering. 2. Yet 'tis plain there was something Ceremonial in it; By the Law of Moses the Touch of a dead Body was defiling, and therefore dead Bodies must not be left hanging up in the Country, because by the same Rule that would defile the land. But 3. There is one Reason here given which has reference to Christ, *he that is hang'd is accursed of God*, i. e. it is the highest Degree of Disgrace and Reproach that can be done to a Man, and proclaims him under the Curse of God as much as any external Punishment can. They that see him thus hang between Heaven and Earth will conclude him abandon'd of both, and unworthy of either, and therefore let him not hang all Night, for that will carry it too far. Now the Apostle shewing how Christ has redeemed us from the Curse of the Law by being himself made a curse for us, illustrates it by comparing this Brand here put on him that was hang'd on a Tree with the Death of Christ, Gal. 3. 13. Moses in Spirit uses this Phrase of being accursed of God, when he means no more than being treated most Ignominiously, that it might afterwards be apply'd to the Death of Christ, and might shew that in it he underwent the Curse of the Law for us, which is a great Enhancement of his Love, and a great Incouragement to our Faith in him. And (as the excellent Bishop Patrick well observes) this Passage is apply'd to the Death of Christ, not only because he bare our Sins and was expos'd to Shame as these Malefactors were, that were accursed of God, but that he was in the Evening taken down from the

curst Tree and buried, (and that by the particular Care of the Jews, with an Eye to this Law, John 19. 31.) in Token that now the Guilt was remov'd, the Law was satisfied, as it was when the Malefactor had hang'd till Sun-set; it demand'd no more. Then he ceased to be a Curse, and those that are his. And as the Land of Israel was pure and clean, when the dead Body was buried, so the Church is wash'd and cleans'd by the compleat Satisfaction; which thus Christ made.

CHAP. XXII.

The Laws of this Chapter do provide, 1. For the preservation of Charity and good Neighbourship, in the care of stray or fallen Cattle, v. 1.---4. 2. For the preservation of Order and Distinction; That Men and Women should not wear one another's Clothes, v. 5. and that other needless mixtures should be avoided, v. 9,---11. 3. For the preservation of Birds, v. 6, 7. 4. Of Life, v. 8. 5. Of the Commandments, v. 12. 6. Of the reputation of a Wife abused, if she were innocent, v. 13,---19. but for her punishment if guilty, v. 20, 21. 7. For the preservation of the Chastity of Wives, v. 22. Virgins betrothed, v. 23,---27. or not betrothed, v. 28, 29. And Lastly, against Incest, v. 30.

THOU shalt not see thy brothers ox or his sheep go astray, and hide thy self from them; thou shalt in any case bring them again unto thy brother. 2 And if thy brother be not nigh unto thee, or if thou know him not, then thou shalt bring it unto thine own house, and it shall be with thee until thy brother seek after it; and thou shalt restore it to him again. 3 In like manner shalt thou do with his ass, and so shalt thou do with his raiment, and with all lost things of thy brothers; which he hath lost, and thou hast found, shalt thou do likewise: thou mayest not hide thy self, 4 ¶ Thou shalt not see thy brothers ass or his ox fall down by the way, and hide thy self from them: thou shalt surely help him to lift them up again.

The Kindness that was commanded to be shewn in reference to an Enemy, Exod. 23. 4. &c. is here required to be much more done for a Neighbour, tho' he were not an Israelite, for the Law is Consonant to Natural Equity.

1. That stray Cattle should be brought back either to the Owner or to the Pasture, out of which they had gone astray, v. 1. 2. This must be done in pity to the very Cattle; which while they wander'd were Exposed; and in civility and respect to the Owner, nay, and in Justice to him, for it was doing as we would be done by, which is one of the Fundamental Laws of Equity. Note, Religion teaches us to be neighbourly, and to be ready to do all good Offices, as we have Opportunity, to all men. In doing this. 1. They must not stick at pains, but if they knew who the Owner was, must bring it back themselves, for if they should only send Notice to the Owner to come and look after it himself, some Mischief might befall it ere he could reach it. 2. They must not stick at charge; But if they knew not who the Owner was, must take it home, and feed it till the Owner was found. If such Care must be taken of a Neighbours Ox or Ass going astray, much more of himself if he go astray from God and his Duty, we should do our utmost to convert him, Jam. 5. 19. and restore him, considering ourselves, Gal. 6. 1.

2. That lost goods should be brought to the Owner, v. 3. The Jews say, He that found the lost Goods was to give publick Notice of them by the Common Crier three or four times according to the Usage with us; if the Owner could not be found, he that found the Goods might convert them to his own Use, but (say some learned Writers in this Case) he would do very well to give the Value of the Goods to the Poor.

3. That Cattle in Distress should be help'd, v. 4. This must be done both in Compassion to the brute Creatures, for a merciful Man regardeth the Life of a Beast, tho' it be not his own, and in Love and Friendship to our Neighbour, not knowing how soon we may have occasion for his Help. If one Member may say to another, I have at present no need of thee, it cannot say, I never shall.

5 The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a womans garment: for all that do so are abominations

tion unto the LORD thy God. 6 ¶ If a bird's nest chance to be before thee in the way in any tree, or on the ground, *whether they be young ones, or eggs, and the dam sitting upon the young, or upon the eggs, thou shalt not take the dam with the young.* 7 But thou shalt in any wise let the dam go, and take the young to thee, that it may be well with thee, and *that thou mayest prolong thy days.* 8 ¶ When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thine house, if any man fall from thence. 9 ¶ Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with divers seeds: lest the fruit of thy seed which thou hast sown, and the fruit of thy vineyard be defiled. 10 ¶ Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together. 11 ¶ Thou shalt not wear a garment of divers sorts, as of woollen and linen together. 12 ¶ Thou shalt make thee fringes upon the four quarters of thy vesture, wherewith thou coverest thy self.

Here are several Laws in these Verses which seem to stoop very low, and to take cognizance of Things mean and minute; Mens Laws commonly do not do so; *De minimis non curat Lex*; But because God's Providence extendeth itself to the smallest Affairs, his Precepts do so, that even in them, we may be in the Fear of the Lord, as we are under his Eye and Care. And yet the significancy and tendency of these Statutes which seem little is such, as that notwithstanding them the things of Gods Law, which he has written to us are to be accounted great things.

1. The Distinction of Sexes by the Apparel is to be kept up, for the Preservation of our own, and our Neighbour's Chastity, v. 5. *Nature itself teaches*, that a Difference be made between them in their Hair. 1 Cor. 11. 14. and by the same Rule, in their Clothes, which therefore ought not to be confounded, either in ordinary Wear or upon Occasion. To befriend a lawful Escape or Concealment it may be done; but whether for Sport, or in the acting of Plays is justly questionable. (1.) Some think it refers to the Idolatrous customs of the Gentiles: In the Worship of Venus, Women appear'd in Armour, and Men in Womens Clothes; this, as other such superstitious Usages, is here said to be *an abomination to the Lord.* (2.) It forbids the confounding of the Dispositions and Affairs of the Sexes: Men must not be Effeminate, nor do the Womens work in the House, nor must Women be Viragos, pretend to teach or usurp authority, 1 Tim. 2. 11, 12. (3.) Probably this confounding of Garments had been us'd to gain Opportunity of committing Uncleanneſs, and is therefore forbidden: for those that would be kept from Sin must keep themselves from all Occasions of it, and Approaches to it.

2. In taking a Birds Nest, the Dam must be let go, v. 6, 7. The Jews say, this is the least of all the Commandments of the Law of Moses, and yet the same Promise is here made to the Observance of it, that is made to the keeping of the Fifth Commandment, which is one of the greatest, *that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days*: For as Disobedience in a small Matter, shews a very great Contempt of the Law, so Obedience in a small Matter, shews a very great Regard to it. He that let go a Bird out of his Hand (which was worth two in the Bush) purely because God bid him; in that made it to appear, that he esteemed all Gods precepts concerning all things to be right, and that he could deny himself rather than sin against God. But doth God take Care for Birds? 1 Cor. 9. 9. Yes certainly; and perhaps to this Law our Saviour alludes, Luke 12. 6. *are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God.* This Law (1.) forbids us to be cruel to the Brute-creatures, or to take a Pleasure in destroying them. Tho' God has made us wiser than the fowls of Heaven, and given us dominion over them; yet we must not abuse them, nor rule them with Rigour. Let go the Dam to breed again; Destroy is not, for a blessing is in it, Isa. 65. 8. (2.) It teaches us Compassion to those of our own Kind, and to abhor the Thought of every thing that looks Barbarous and Cruel, and Ill-natur'd, especially towards those of the weaker and tenderer Sex, which always ought to be treated with the utmost Respect in consideration of the Sorrows wherein they bring forth children. 'Tis spoken of as an Instance of the most inhuman Cruelty, that the mother was dash'd to pieces upon her children, Hof. 10. 14. and that the women wish child were ript up, Amos 1. 13. (3.) It further intimates, that we must not take Advantage against any from their Natural Affection, and the tenderness of their Disposition to do them an Injury. The Dam could not have been taken if her Concern for her Eggs or Young (unlike to the Ostrich) had not detain'd her upon the Nest, when otherwise she could easily have secur'd herself by Flight. Now since its a thousand Pities she should fare the worse for that which is her Praise, the Law

takes Care that she shall be let go. The Remembrance of this may perhaps some time or other keep us from doing a hard or unkind Thing to those we have at our Mercy.

3. In building a House, care must be taken to make it Safe, that none might receive Mischief by falling from it, v. 8. The Roofs of their Houses were flat for People to walk on, as appears by many Scriptures; now lest any, through Carelessness, should fall off them, they must compass them with Battlements, which (the Jews say) must be three foot and a half high; If this were not done, and Mischief followed; the Owner, by his Neglect, brought the guilt of Blood upon his House. See here, (1.) How precious Mens Lives are to God, who protects them not only by his Providence, but by his Law. (2.) How precious therefore they ought to be to us, and what Care we should take to prevent Hurt from coming to any Person. The Jews say, that by the Equity of this Law, they were oblig'd (and so are we too) to fence, or remove every thing by which Life may be endanger'd, as to cover Draw-wells, keep Bridges in repair, and the like; lest if any perish through our Omission, their Blood be requir'd at our Hand.

4. Odd mixtures are here forbidden, v. 8, 9, 10. much of this we met with before, Lev. 19. 19. There appears not any thing at all of moral Evil in these things, and therefore we now make no Conscience of sowing Wheat and Rye together, plowing with Horses and Oxen together, and of wearing Linsey-wolesy Garments; but hereby is forbidden either, (1.) A conformity to some idolatrous Customs of the Heathen. Or, (2.) That which is contrary to the plainness and purity of an Israelite. They must not gratify their own Vanity and Curiosity by putting those things together, which the Creator in infinite Wisdom had made asunder: They must not be un-equally yoked with Unbelievers; nor mingle themselves with the unclean, as an Ox with an Ass. Nor must their Profession and Appearance in the World be motley, or party-colour'd, but all of a Piece, all of a Kind.

5. The Law concerning Fringes upon their Garments, and Memorandums of the Commandments, which we had before, Numb. 15. 38, 39. is here repeated, v. 12. By these they were distinguish'd from other People, so that it might be said, upon the first sight, there goes an Israelite; which taught them not to be ashamed of their Country, or the Peculiarities of their Religion, how much soever their Neighbours look'd upon them and it with Contempt: And they were also put in mind of the Precepts, upon the particular Occasions to which they had reference; and perhaps this Law is repeated here, because the Precepts immediately foregoing seem'd so minute, that they were in danger of being overlook'd and forgotten. The Fringes will mind you not to make your Garments of Linnen and Woollen, v. 11.

13 ¶ If any man take a wife, and go in unto her, and hate her, 14 And give occasion of speech against her, and bring up an evil name upon her, and, say, I took this woman, and when I came to her, I found her not a maid: 15 Then shall the father of the damsel, and her mother, take and bring forth the tokens of the damsel's virginity, unto the elders of the city in the gate. 16 And the damsel's father shall say unto the elders, I gave my daughter unto this man to wife, and he hateth her, 17 And lo, he hath given occasions of speech against her, saying, I found not thy daughter a maid; and yet these are the tokens of my daughters virginity: and they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city. 18 And the elders of that city shall take that man and chastise him. 19 And they shall amerce him in an hundred shekles of silver, and gave them unto the father of the damsel, because he hath brought up an evil name upon a virgin of Israel: and she shall be his wife, he may not put her away all his days. 20 But if this thing be true, and the tokens of virginity be not found for the damsel: 21 Then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her fathers house, and the men of her city shall stone her with stones that she die: because she hath wrought folly in Israel, to play the whore in her fathers house: so shalt thou put evil away from among you. 22 ¶ If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, both the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel. 23 ¶ If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed

betrothed unto an husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her: 24 Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, *being* in the city; and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbours wife: so thou shalt put away evil from among you. 25 ¶ But if a man find a betrothed damsel in the field, and the man force her, and lie with her: then the man only that lay with her, shall die. 26 But unto the damsel thou shalt do nothing, *there is in the damsel no sin worthy of death*: for as when a man riseth against his neighbour, and slayeth him, even so is this matter. 27 For he found her in the field, and the betrothed damsel cried, and *there was none to save her*. 28 ¶ If a man find a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found: 29 Then the man that lay with her, shall give unto the damsel's father fifty *shekels* of silver, and she shall be his wife, because he hath humbled her, he may not put her away all his days. 30 ¶ A man shall not take his fathers wife, nor discover his fathers skirt.

These Laws relate to the seventh Commandment, laying a Restraint by laying a Penalty upon those *fleshly Lusts*, which *war against the soul*.

1. If a Man lusteth after another Woman, to get rid of his Wife, Slander her, and falsely accuse her, as not having the Virginity she pretended to when he married her, upon the Disproof of his Slander, he must be punished, v. 13.—19. What the meaning of that Evidence is, by which the Husband's Accusation was to be prov'd false, the learned are not agreed, nor is it at all necessary to enquire; they for whom this Law was intended no doubt understood it: 'Tis sufficient for us to know, that this wicked Husband, who had thus endeavour'd to ruin the Reputation of his own Wife was to be scourg'd, and find'd, and bound out from ever divorcing the Wife he had thus abus'd, v. 18, 19. Upon his dislike of her, he might have divorc'd her if he had pleas'd, by the Permission of the Law, Chap. 24. 1. but then he must have given her her Dowry: If therefore to save that, and to do her the greater Mischief, he would thus put her into an ill Name, 'twas fit he should be severely punish'd for it, and for ever after lose the benefit of the Permission of a Divorce. *Observe* (1.) The nearer any are in Relation to us, the greater Sin it is to bely them, and blemish their Reputation. 'Tis spoken of as a Crime of the highest Nature to slander their own mothers son, (Psal. 50. 20.) who is next to thyself, much more to slander thine own Wife, or thine own Husband, that is *thyself*. It's an ill Bird indeed that defiles its own Nest. (2.) Chastity is Honour as well as Virtue, and that which gives Occasion for the Suspicion of it, is as great a Reproach and Disgrace, as any other whatsoever: In this Matter therefore, above any thing, we should be highly tender, both of our own good Name and others. (3.) Parents must look upon themselves as concern'd to vindicate the Reputation of their Children, for it is a Branch of their own.

2. If the Woman that was married a virgin were not found so, she was to be *stoned to death* at her Father's Door, v. 20, 21. If the Uncleanness was committed before she was betrothed, it would not have been punish'd as a capital Crime; but she must die for the Abuse she put upon him whom she Married, being conscious to herself of her being defil'd, while she made him believe her to be a Chast and modest Woman. But some think her Uncleanness was punish'd with Death, only in case 'twas committed after she was betroth'd, supposing there were few come to Maturity but what were betroth'd, tho' not yet Married. Now, (1.) This gave a mighty powerful Caution to young Women to *steer* fornication, since, however, conceal'd before, so as not to marr their Marriage, it would very likely be discover'd after to their perpetual Infamy, and utter Ruin. 'Tis intimated to Parents, that they must by all means possible preserve their Childrens Chastity, by giving them good Advice and Admonition, setting them good Examples, keeping them from ill Company, praying for them, and laying them under needful Restraints, because, if the Children committed Lewdness, the Parents must have the Grief and Shame of the Execution at their own Door. That Phrase of *Folly wrought in Israel*, was us'd concerning this very Crime in the case of *Dinah*, Gen. 34. 7. All Sin is Folly, Uncleanness especially; But above all, Uncleanness in Israel, by Profession a Holy People.

3. If any Man, single or married, lay with a married Woman, they were both to be put to Death, v. 22. This Law we had before, Lev. 20. 10. For a married Man to lie with a single Woman, was not a Crime of so high a Nature, nor was it punish'd with Death, because not introducing a spurious Brood into Families, under the Character of legitimate Children.

4. If a Damsel were betrothed, and not married, she was from under the Eye of her intended Husband, and therefore she and her Chastity were taken under the special Protection of the Law. (1.) If her Chastity were violated by her own Consent, she was to be put to Death, and her Adulterer with her, v. 23, 24. And it shall be presum'd she consented, if it were done in the City, or in any Place where had the *cried out*, Help might speedily have come in to prevent the Injury offer'd her. *Qui tacet consentire videtur*. Note, It may be presum'd, that those willingly yield to a Temptation, (whatever they pretend) who will not use the Means and Helps they might be furnish'd with to avoid and overcome it. Nay, her being found in the City, a Place of Company and Diversion when she should have kept under the Protection of her Father's House, was an Evidence against her, that she had not that dread of the Sin, and the Danger of it which becometh a modest Woman. Note, They that needlessly expose themselves to Temptation, justly suffer for the same, if ere they are aware they be surpriz'd, and caught by it. *Dinah* lost her Honour to gratify her Curiosity with a sight of the daughters of the land. By this Law the Virgin Mary was in Danger of being made a public Example, that is, of being *stoned to death*, but that God, by an Angel, clear'd the Matter to Joseph.—(2.) If she were forc'd, and never consented, he that committed the Rape was to be put to Death, but the Damsel was to be acquitted, v. 25, 26, 27. Now if it were done in the Field, out of the hearing of Neighbours, it shall be presum'd that she *cried out*, but there was none to save her; And besides, her going into the Field, a Place of Solitude, did not so much expose her.—Now by this Law it is intimated to us, 1. That we shall suffer only for the Wickedness we do, not for that which is done unto us. That's no Sin which has not more or less of the Will in it.—2. That we must presume the best, concerning all Persons, unless the contrary do appear, not only Charity but Equity teaches us to do so. Tho' none heard her Cry, yet, because none could hear it if she did, it shall be taken for granted that she did. This Rule we should go by in judging of Persons and Actions, believe all things, and hope all things.—3. That our Chastity should be as dear to us as our Life, when that is assaulted; 'tis not at all improper to cry Murder, Murder, for as when a man riseth against his neighbour and slayeth him, even so is this matter. 4. By way of allusion to this, see what we are to do when Satan sets upon us with his Temptations, wherever we are let us cry aloud to Heaven for help, (*Succurre Domine, vim patior*) and there we may be sure to be heard, and answer'd, as Paul was, *My grace is sufficient for thee*.

5. If a Damsel not betrothed be thus abus'd by Violence, he that abus'd her should be fin'd, the Father should have the Fine, and if he and the Damsel did consent, he should be bound to Marry her, and never to Divorce her, how much soever she was below him, and how displeasing soever she might afterwards be to him, as *Tamar* was to *Amnon*, after he had forced her, v. 28, 29. This was to deter Men from such vicious Practices, which it is a shame that we are necessitated to read and write of.

6. The Law against a Man's marrying his Father's Widow, or having any undue Familiarity with his Father's Wife, is here repeated, v. 30. from Lev. 18. 8. And probably 'tis intended (as Bishop Patrick Notes) for a short Memorandum to them carefully to observe all the Laws there made against incestuous Marriages, this being instanc'd in which is the most detestable of all; 'Tis that of which the Apostle saith, *It is not so much as named among the Gentiles*, 1 Cor. 5. 1.

CHAP. XXIII.

The Laws of this Chapter do provide, 1. For the preserving of the purity and honour of the Families of Israel, by excluding such as would be a disgrace to them, v. 1.—8. 2. For the preserving of the purity and honour of the Camp of Israel when it was abroad, v. 9.—14. 3. For the encouraging and entertaining of Deserters, v. 15, 16. 4. Against whoredom, v. 17, 18. 5. Against Ufury, v. 19, 20. 6. Against the breach of vows, v. 21.—23. 7. What liberty a man might take in his neighbours field and vineyard, and what not, v. 24, 25.

HE that is wounded in the stones, or hath his privy member cut off, shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD. 2 A bastard shall

shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD: even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the LORD. 3 An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the LORD for ever: 4 Because they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt; and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee. 5 Nevertheless, the LORD thy God would not hearken unto Balaam: but the LORD thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because the LORD thy God loved thee. 6 Thou shalt not seek their peace, nor their prosperity all thy days for ever. 7 ¶ Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite, for he is thy brother: thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian, because thou wast a stranger in his land. 8 The children that are begotten of them, shall enter into the congregation of the LORD in their third generation.

Interpreters are not agreed what is here meant by *Entering into the congregation of the Lord*, which is forbidden to Eunuchs and to Bastards, Ammonites and Moabites for ever, but to Edomites and Egyptians, only till the third Generation. 1. Some think they are hereby excluded from communicating with the People of God in their Religious Services; Tho' Eunuchs and Bastards were own'd as Members of the Church, and the Ammonites and Moabites might be circumcis'd and Profelited to the Jewish Religion; yet they, and their Families must lie for sometime under Marks of Disgrace, remembering the Rock whence they were hewn, and must not come so near the Sanctuary as others might, nor have so free a Communion with Israelites.—2. Others think they are hereby excluded from bearing Office in the Congregation: None of these must be Elders or Judges, lest the Honour of the Magistracy should thereby be stain'd. 3. Others think they are excluded only from marrying with Israelites. Thus the learned Bishop Patrick inclines to understand it; yet we find, that when this Law was put in Execution after the Captivity, they separated from Israel, not only the *strange wives*, but *all the mixed multitude*, See *Neh. 13. 1, 2, 3.* with the Daughters of these Nations (tho' not of the Nations of Canaan) it should seem the Men of Israel might Marry, if they were completely profelited to the Jewish Religion; but with the Men of these Nations the Daughters of Israel might not Marry, nor could they be *naturaliz'd*, except as here excepted.

'Tis plain in general, that Disgrace is here put, 1. Upon Bastards and Eunuchs, *v. 1, 2.* By Bastards here, the Jewish Writers understand, not all that were born of Fornication, or out of Marriage; but all that were of those *incestuous mixtures* which are forbidden, *Lev. 18.* And tho' it was not the Fault of the Issue, yet to deter People from those *unlawful Marriages*, and *unlawful Lusts*; 'twas very convenient, that their Posterity should thus be made *infamous*.—By this Rule *Jephtha*, tho' the Son of a Harlot, a *strange woman*, (*Judg. 11. 1, 2.*) yet was not a Bastard in the Sense of this Law. And for the Eunuchs, tho' by this Law they seem'd to be cast out of the Vineyard as *dry trees*, which they complain of, *Isa. 56. 3.* yet it is there promis'd, *v. 5.* that if they took care of their Duty to God, as far as they were admitted, by *keeping his Sabbaths*, and *observing the things that pleas'd him*, the want of this Privilege should be made up to them with such spiritual Blessings as would entitle them to an *everlasting name*.

2. Upon Ammonites and Moabites, the Posterity of Lot, who for his outward Convenience had separated himself from Abraham, *Gen. 13. 11.* And we do not find that he or his ever joined themselves again to the Children of the Covenant. They are here cut off *to the tenth generation*, that is, (as some think it is explain'd) *for ever*. Compare *Neh. 13. 1.* The Reason of this Quarrel, Israel must have with them, so as not to seek their peace, *v. 6.* is, because of the Unkindnesses they had now lately done to the Camp of Israel, notwithstanding the Orders God had given, not to *distress* or *vex* them, *Deut. 2. 9, 19.* (1.) It was bad enough that they did not meet them with bread and water in the way, *v. 4.* that they did not, as Allies, or at least as neutral States, bring Victuals into their Camp, which they should have been duly paid for. 'Tis well, God's Israel did not need their Kindness; God himself following them with bread and water: However this Omission of the Ammonites should be remember'd against their Nation in future Ages. Note, God will certainly reckon,

not only with those that oppose his People, but with those that do not help and further them, when it is in the power of their Hand to do it. The Charge at the Great Day is for an Omission; I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat.—(2.) The Moabites had done worse, they hir'd Balaam to curse them, *v. 4.* 'Tis true, God turn'd the curse into a blessing, *v. 5.* not only changing the Word in Balaam's Mouth, but making that really to turn to the Honour and Advantage of Israel, which was design'd for their Ruin. But tho' the Design was defeated and over-ru'd for good, the Moabites wickedness was not the less provoking. God will deal with Sinners, not only according to their deeds, but according to their endeavours, *Psal. 28. 4.*

3. The Edomites and Egyptians have not so much mark of Displeasure put upon them, as the Moabites and Ammonites had. If an Edomite or Egyptian turn'd Profelited, his Grand-Children should be look'd upon as Members of the Congregation of the Lord to all Intents and Purposes, *v. 7, 8.* We would think the Edomites had been more Injurious to Israel than the Ammonites, and deserv'd as little Favour from them, *Numb. 20. 20.* and yet thou shalt not abhor an Edomite, as thou must an Ammonite, for he is thy brother. Note, The Unkindnesses of near Relations, tho' by many worst taken, yet should with us, for that Reason, because of the Relation be first forgiven. And then, as to the Egyptians, here's a strange Reason given, why they must not be abhor'd, *thou wast a stranger in their land*, and therefore, tho' hardly us'd there, be civil to them, for old Acquaintance sake. They must not remember their Bondage in Egypt for the keeping up of any ill will to the Egyptians, but only for the magnifying of God's power and Goodness in their Deliverance.

9 ¶ When the host goeth forth against thine enemies, then keep thee from every wicked thing. 10 If there be among you any man that is not clean, by reason of uncleanness that chanceth him by night, then shall he go abroad out of the camp, he shall not come within the camp. 11 But it shall be when evening cometh on, he shall wash himself with water: and when the sun is down, he shall come into the camp again. 12 ¶ Thou shalt have a place also without the camp, whither thou shalt go forth abroad. 13 And thou shalt have a paddle upon thy weapon: and it shall be when thou wilt ease thy self abroad, thou shalt dig therewith, and shalt turn back and cover that which cometh from thee. 14 For the LORD thy God walkest in the midst of thy camp, to deliver thee, and to give up thine enemies before thee: therefore shall thy camp be holy, that he see no unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee.

Israel was now Encamp'd, and this vast Army was just entering upon Action, which was likely to keep them together for a long time, and therefore it was fit to give them particular Directions for the good ordering of their Camp. And the Charge is in one Word to be clean. They must take care to keep their Camp pure from Moral, Ceremonial, and Natural Pollution.

1. From Moral Pollution, *v. 9.* When the host goes forth against thine enemy, then look upon thyself as in a special Manner engag'd to keep thyself from every evil thing. (1.) The Soldiers themselves must take heed of Sin, for Sin takes off the Edge of Valour; Guilt makes Men Cowards. They that put their Lives in their Hands are concern'd to make and keep their Peace with God, and preserve Conscience void of Offence, then may they look Death in the Face without Terror. Soldiers in executing their Commission must keep themselves from gratifying the Lusts of Malice, Covetousness or Uncleanness, for those are wicked things; must keep themselves from the Idols, or accursed Things they found in the Camps they plunder'd. (2.) Even they that tarried at Home, the Body of the People, and every particular Person must at that time especially keep from every wicked thing, lest by Sin they provoke God to withdraw his Presence from the Host, and give Victory to the Enemy for the Correcting of his own People. Times of War should be Times of Reformation, else how can we expect God should hear and answer our Prayers for success? *Psal. 66. 18.* See *1 Sam. 7. 3.*

2. From Ceremonial Pollution, which befel a Man in the Night against his Will, for which he was bound to wash his Flesh in Water, and look upon himself as unclean until the even, *Lev. 15. 16.* A Soldier, notwithstanding the constant Service and Duty he had to do in the Camp, must be so far from looking

ing upon himself as discharg'd from the Observance of that Ceremony, that more was required from him then than at another Time. Had he been at his own House he need only to wash his Flesh, but being in the Army, he must go *Abroad out of the Camp*, as one concern'd to keep it pure, and asham'd of his own Impurity, and not return till after Sun-set, v. 10, 11. By this Trouble and Reproach, which even involuntary Pollution exposed Men to, they were taught to keep up a very great Dread of all fleshy Lusts. 'Twere well if Military Men would consider this.

3. From Natural Pollution: They must go out of the Camp to ease Nature, and must take Care to cover their Excrements, v. 12, 13, 14. 'Tis strange that the Divine Law, or at least the solemn Order and Direction of Moses, should extend to a Thing of this Nature: But the Design of it was to teach them (1.) Modesty, and a good Decorum; Nature itself teaches Men, thus to distinguish themselves from Beasts, that know no shame. (2.) Cleanliness and (tho' not Niceness yet) Neatness, even in their Camp. Nastiness is Offensive to the Senses God has endued us with, prejudicial to the Health, a Wrong to the Comfort of Humane Life, and an Evidence of a careless, slothful Temper of Mind. (3.) Purity from the Pollution of Sin; if there must be this Care taken to preserve the Body clean and sweet, much more should we be solicitous to keep the Mind so. (4.) A Reverence of the Divine Majesty. This is the Reason here given, for the Lord thy God walketh by his Ark, the special Token of his Presence, in the midst of thy Camp, with Respect to that External Symbol, this External Purity is required, which (tho' not insisted on in the Letter when that Reason ceased, yet) teacheth us to preserve inward Purity of Soul in Consideration of the Eye of God, which is always upon us. By this Expression of Respect to the Presence of God among them, they were taught both to fortify themselves against Sin, and to encourage themselves against their Enemies with the Consideration of that Presence. (5.) A Regard one to another. The Filthiness of one is Noisom to many, this Law of Cleanliness therefore teaches us not to do that which will be justly Offensive to our Brethren, and grieve them. 'Tis a Law against Nuisances.

15 ¶ Thou shalt not deliver unto his master, the servant that is escaped from his master unto thee. 16 He shall dwell with thee, even among you, in that place which he shall choose, in one of thy gates where it liketh him best: thou shalt not oppress him. 17 ¶ There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel. 18 Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore, or the price of a dog into the house of the LORD thy God for any vow: for even both these are abomination unto the LORD thy God. 19 ¶ Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother; usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of any thing that is lent upon usury. 20 Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury, but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury; that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all that thou fettest thine hand to, in the land whither thou goest to possess it. 21 ¶ When thou shalt vow a vow unto the LORD thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the LORD thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee. 22 But if thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee. 23 That which is gone out of thy lips, thou shalt keep and perform; even a free-will-offering, according as thou hast vowed unto the LORD thy God, which thou hast promised with thy mouth. 24 ¶ When thou comest into thy neighbours vineyard, then thou mayest eat grapes thy fill, at thine own pleasure; but thou shalt not put any in thy vessel. 25 When thou comest into the standing-corn of thy neighbours, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand: but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbours standing-corn.

Orders are here given about five several Things which have no Relation one to another.

1. The Land of Israel is here made a Sanctuary, or City of Refuge for Servants that were wrong'd, and abus'd by their Masters, and flee thither for Shelter from the neighbouring Countries, v. 15, 16. We cannot suppose that they were

hereby oblig'd to give Entertainment to all the Rogues that out-run their Services. Israel need not (as Rome at first did, to be thus peopled. But 1. They must not deliver up the trembling Servant to his enraged Master, till upon Trial it appear'd that the Servant had wrong'd his Master, and was justly liable to Punishment. Note, It is an Honourable Thing to shelter and protect the Weak, provided they be not wicked. God doth allow his People should patronize the Oppressed. The Angel bid Hagar return to her Mistress, and St. Paul sent Onesimus back to his Master Philemon, because they had neither of them any Cause to go away, nor were either of them in any Danger in returning. But the Servant here is suppos'd to escape, i. e. to run for his Life, to the People of Israel, of whom he had heard (as Benhadad of the Kings of Israel, 1 King. 20. 31.) that they were a merciful People; to save himself from the Fury of a Tyrant, and in that Case to deliver him up is to throw a Lamb into the Mouth of a Lion. 2. If it appear'd that the Servant was abus'd, they must not only protect him, but supposing him willing to embrace their Religion, they must give him all the Encouragement that might be to settle among them. Care is taken both that he should not be impos'd upon in the Place of his Settlement; Let it be that which he shall chuse, and where it liketh him best; and that he should not exchange one hard Master for many, thou shalt not oppress him. Thus would he soon find a comfortable Difference between the Land of Israel and other Lands, and would chuse it to be his Rest for ever. Note, Profelytes and Converts to the Truth should be treated with particular Tenderness, that they may not be in Temptation to return.

2. The Land of Israel must be no Shelter for the Unclean; no Whore, no Sodomite must be suffer'd to live among them, v. 17, 18. neither a Whore nor a Whoremonger. No Houses of Uncleanness must be kept either by Men or Women. Here's (1.) A good Reason intimated why there should be no such Wickedness tolerated among them; they were Israelites: That therefore seems to have an Emphasis laid upon it. For a Daughter of Israel to be a Whore, or a Son of Israel to be a Whoremonger, is to reproach the Stock they are come of, the People they belong to, and the God they worship. 'Tis bad in any, but worst in Israelites, a holy Nation, 2 Sam. 13. 12. (2.) A just Mark of Displeasure put upon this Wickedness, that the Hire of a Whore, i. e. the Money she gets by her Whoring, and the Price of a Dog, i. e. of the Sodomite, Pimp or Whoremonger (so I incline to understand it, for such are call'd Dogs, Rev. 22. 15.) the Money he gets by his lewd and villainous Practices, no Part of it shall be brought into the House of the Lord (as was commonly done by the Prostitutes among the Gentiles) for any Vow. This intimates, (1.) That God would not accept of any Offering at all from such wicked People: They had nothing to bring an Offering of but what they got by their Wickedness, and therefore their Sacrifice could not but be an Abomination to the Lord, Prov. 15. 8. (2.) That they should not think by making and paying Vows, and bringing Offerings to the Lord, to obtain Leave to go on in this Sin, as (it should seem) some that follow'd that Trade suggest'd to themselves, when their Offerings were admitted, Prov. 7. 14, 15. This Day have I paid my Vows, therefore came I forth to meet thee. Nothing should be accepted in commutation of Penance. (3.) That we cannot honour God with our Substance, unless it be honestly and honourably come by. It must not only be consider'd what we give, but how we got it; God hates Robbery for Burnt-offerings, and Uncleanness too.

3. The Matter of Usury is here settled, v. 19, 20. (1.) They must not lend upon Usury to an Israelite. They had and held their Estates immediately from and under God, who while he distinguish'd them from all other People might have order'd, had he so pleas'd, that they should have all Things in common among themselves, but instead of that, and in Token of their joint Interest; in the good Land he had given them, he only appointed them as there was Occasion to lend to one another without Interest which among them would be little or no loss to the Lender, because their Land was so divided, their Estates so settled, and there was so little of Merchandize among them, that 'twas seldom or never that they had Occasion to borrow any great Sums, but only for the Subsistence of their Families, when the Fruits of their Ground had met with any Disaster, or the like; and in such a Case, for a small Matter to insist upon Usury would have been very barbarous. Where the Borrower gets, or hopes to get, 'tis just the Lender should share in the Gain: But so him that borrow'd for his necessary Food, Pity must be shew'd, and we must lend hoping for nothing again, if we have wherewithal to do it, Luk. 6. 35. (2.) They might lend to a Stranger upon Usury, who was suppos'd to live by Trade, and (as we say) by turning the Penny, and therefore got by what he borrow'd, and came among them in hopes to do so. By this it appears that Usury is not in itself oppressive; for they must not oppress a Stranger, and yet might exact Usury from him.

4. The Performance of the Vows wherewith we have bound our Souls, is here requir'd, and it is a Branch of the Law of Nature,

Nature, v. 21, 22, 23, (1.) We are here left at our Liberty whether we will make Vows or no. *If thou shalt forbear to Vow*, (some particular Sacrifice and Offering, more than was commanded by the Law) *it shall be no Sin to thee*. God had already signified his readiness to accept a Free-will Offering thus vowed, tho' it were but a little *fine Flower*, Lev. 2. 4. &c. which was Encouragement enough to those who were so inclin'd: But left the Priests, who had the largest Share of those Vows and voluntary Offerings should *sponge upon* the People, by pressing it upon them as their Duty to make such Vows beyond their Ability and Inclination, they are here expressly told it should not be reckon'd a Sin in them, if they did not make any such Vows, as it would be if they omitted any of the Sacrifices that God had particularly requir'd. For (as Bishop Patrick well expresseth it) God would have Men to be easy in his Service, and all their Offerings to be free and cheerful. (2.) We are here laid under the highest Obligations, when we have made a Vow, to perform it, and to perform it speedily; thou shalt not slack to pay it, for fear lest if it be delay'd beyond the first Opportunity, the Zeal abate, the Vow be forgotten, or something happen to disable thee for the Performance of it.— *That which is gone out of thy Lips* as a solemn and deliberate Vow, must not be recall'd, but thou shalt keep and perform it punctually and fully. The Rule of the Gospel goes somewhat further than this, 2 Cor. 9. 7. *Every Man according as he purposeth in his Heart*, tho' it have not gone out of his Lips, *so let him give*. Here's a good Reason why we should pay our Vows, that if we do not, *God will require it of us*, will surely and severely reckon with us, not only for lying, but for going about to mock him, who cannot be mocked. See Eccles. 7. 4, 5.

5. Allowance is here given when they pass'd thro' a Corn Field or a Vineyard, to pluck and eat of the Corn or Grapes that grew by the Road-side, whether it was done for Necessity or Delight, only they must carry none away with them, v. 24, 25. Therefore the Disciples were not censur'd for plucking the Ears of Corn, 'twas well enough known, that the Law allow'd it, but for doing it on the Sabbath-day, which the Tradition of the Elders had forbidden.— Now 1. This Law intimated to them what great Plenty of Corn and Wine they should have in Canaan, so much, that a little would not be mis'd out of their Fruits: They should have enough for themselves and all their Friends. 2. It provided for the Support of poor Travellers, to relieve the Fatigue of their Journeys, and teaches us to be kind to such. The Jews say, this Care was chiefly intended in favour of Labourers, who were employ'd in gathering in their Harvest and Vintages, their Mouths must not be muzzled no more than that of the Ox when he treads out the Corn. 3. It teacheth us not to insist upon Property in a small Matter, of which it is easy to say, *What's that between me and thee?* 'Twas true the Grapes which the Passenger eat were none of his own, nor did the Proprietor give them him, but the Thing was of so small Value, that he had Reason to think, were he present, he would not deny them him, no more than he himself would grudge the like Courtesy, and therefore 'twas no Theft to take them. 4. It us'd them to Hospitality, and teacheth us to be ready to distribute, willing to communicate, and not to think every Thing's lost that's given away. Yet, Lastly, It forbids us to abuse the Kindness of our Friends, and to take the Advantage from fair Concessions to make unreasonable Encroachments: We must not draw an Ell from those that give but an Inch; they may eat of their Neighbours Grapes; but it doth not therefore follow that they may carry away.

CHAP. XXIV.

In this Chapter we have, (1.) The Toleration of Divorce, v. 1.—4. (2.) A Disgrace of new married Men from the War, v. 5. (3.) Laws concerning Pledges, v. 6, 10.—13, & 17. (4.) Against Man-stealing, v. 7. (5.) Concerning the Leprosie, v. 8, 9. (6.) Against the Injustice of Masters towards their Servants, v. 14, 15. Judges in Capital Causes, v. 6, and Civil Concerns, v. 17, 18. (7.) Of Charity to the Poor, v. 19.—22.

1 **W**Hen a man hath taken a wife and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. 2 And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another mans wife. 3 And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his

wife: 4 Her former husband which sent her away may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled: for that is abomination before the LORD, and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.

This is that Permission which the Pharisees erroneously refer'd to as a Precept, Mat. 19. 7. *Moses commanded to give a Writing of Divorcement*: It was not so, our Saviour told them, he only suffer'd it because of the hardness of their Hearts, lest if they had not had Liberty to divorce their Wives, they should have ruin'd them with Vigour, and it may be been the Death of them. 'Tis probable that Divorces were in use before, they are taken for granted, Levit. 21. 14. and Moses thought it needful here to give some Rules concerning them.

1. That a Man might not Divorce his Wife, unless he found some uncleanness in her, v. 1. 'Twas not sufficient to say, he did not like her, or that he lik'd another better, but he must shew cause for his Dislike; something that made her disagreeable and unpleasant to him, tho' it might not make her so to another. This uncleanness must mean something less than Adultery, for, for that she was to die: and than the suspicion of it, for in that Case he might give her the Waters of Jealousy, but it means either a light Carriage, or a cross froward Disposition, or some loathsome Sore or Disease; nay, some of the Jewish Writers suppose a stinking Breath might be a just Ground for Divorce. Whatever is meant by it, doubtless, 'tis something considerable, so that their modern Doctors were out, who allow'd Divorce for every Cause, tho' never so trivial, Mat. 19. 3.

2. That it must be done not by Word of Mouth, for that might be spoken hastily, but by writing, and that put in due Form, and solemnly declar'd, before Witnesses, to be his own Act and Deed, which was a Work of Time, and left room for Consideration, that it might not be done rashly.

3. That the Husband must give it into the hand of his Wife, and send her away; which some think obligeth him to endow her, and make Provision for her according to her Quality, and such as might help to marry her again; and good Reason, since the Cause of Quarrel was not her Fault, but Infelicity.

4. That being divorc'd, it was lawful for her to marry another Husband, v. 2. The Divorce had dissolved the Bond of Marriage as effectually as Death could, so that she was free to marry again, as if her first Husband had been naturally dead.

5. That if her second Husband (dy'd or) divorc'd her, then still she might marry a third, her first Husband should never take her again, (v. 3. 4.) which he might have done if she had not married another; for by that Act of her own, she had perfectly renounc'd him for ever, and as to him was look'd upon as defiled, tho' not as to another Person. The Jewish Writers say, this was to prevent a most vile and wicked Practice, which the Egyptians had of changing Wives; or perhaps it was intended to prevent Mens Rashness in putting away their Wives; for the Wife that was divorc'd, would be apt in Revenge to marry another presently, and perhaps the Husband that divorc'd her, how much soever he thought to mend himself by another Choice, would find the next worse, and something in her more disagreeable; so that he would wish for his first Wife again: No, (saith this Law) you shall not have her, you should have kept her when you had her. Note, 'Tis best to be content with such Things as we have, since Changes made by Discontent often prove for the worse. The Uncleaness we know is commonly better, tho' we are apt to think it worse than that which we do not know.— By the strictness of this Law, God illustrates the Riches of his Grace in his Willingness to be reconcil'd to his People that had gone a Whoring from him, Jer. 3. 1. *Thou hast plaid the Harlot with many lovers, yet return again to me*, for his Thoughts and Ways are above ours.

5 ¶ When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business: but he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken. 6 ¶ No man shall take the nether or the upper millstone to pledge: for he taketh a man's life to pledge. 7 ¶ If a man be found stealing any of his brethren of the children of Israel, and maketh merchandise of him, or selleth him; then that thief shall die, and thou shalt put evil away from among

among you. 8 ¶ Take heed, in the plague of leprosie, that thou observe diligently, and do according to all the priests the Levites shall teach you: as I commanded them, so ye shall observe to do. 9 Remember what the LORD thy God did unto Miriam by the way, after that ye were come forth out of Egypt. 10 ¶ When thou dost lend thy brother any thing, thou shalt not go into his house to fetch his pledge. 11 Thou shalt stand abroad, and the man to whom thou dost lend shall bring out the pledge abroad unto thee. 12 And if the man be poor, thou shalt not sleep with his pledge. 13 In any case thou shalt deliver him the pledge again when the sun goeth down, that he may sleep in his own raiment, and bless thee, and it shall be righteousness unto thee before the LORD thy God.

Here's 1. Provision made for the Preservation and Confirmation of Love between *new married People*, v. 5. This fully follows upon the Laws concerning Divorce, which would be prevented if their Affection to each other were well settled at first. If the Husband were much Abroad from his Wife the first year, his Love to her would be in danger of cooling, and of being drawn aside to others he would meet with Abroad; therefore his Service to his Country in War, Embassies, or other publick Business that would call him from Home shall be dispens'd with, *that he may cheer up the Wife which he has taken*. Note, (1.) It is of great Consequence that Love be kept up between Husband and Wife, and that every thing be very carefully avoided which might make them strange one to another, especially at first; for in that Relation, where there is not the love that should be, there's an Inlet ready to abundance of Guilt and Grief. (2.) One of the Duties of that Relation is to *cheer up* one another, under the Cares and Crosses that happen, as *helpers of each others joys*; for a *cheerful heart doth good like a Medicine*.

2. A Law against *Man-stealing*, v. 7. 'Twas not Death by the Law of Moses to steal Cattle or Goods, but to steal a Child, or a weak and simple Man, or one that a Man had in his Power, and to *make Merchandise of him*, this was a capital Crime, and could not be expiated as other Thefts by Restitution; so much is a *man better than a sheep*, *Mat. 12. 12*. 'Twas a very heinous Offence for (1.) 'Twas robbing the Publick of one of its Members. (2.) 'Twas taking away a Mans Liberty, the Liberty of a Free-born *Israelite*, which was next in Value to his Life. (3.) 'Twas *driving a man out from the Inheritance of the Land*; to the Privileges of which he was intitled, and bidding him *serve other gods*, as David complains against Saul. 1 Sam. 26. 19.

3. A Memorandum concerning the Leprosie, v. 8, 9. (1.) The Laws concerning it must be carefully observ'd. The Laws concerning it we had, *Levit. 13. & 14.* they are here said to be commanded to the *Priests and Levites*, and therefore are not repeated in a Discourse to the People; but the People are here charg'd in case of Leprosie, to *apply themselves to the Priest according to the Law, and to abide by his Judgment*, so far as it agreed with the Law, and the plain Matter of Fact. The Plague of Leprosie being usually a particular Mark of God's Displeasure for Sin; he in whom the Signs of it did appear, ought not to conceal it, or cut out the Signs of it, or apply himself to the Physician for Relief, but he must go to the Priest, and follow his Directions. Thus they that feel their Consciences under Guilt and Wrath, must not cover it, or endeavour to shake off their Convictions, but by Repentance and Prayer, and humble Confession take the appointed Way to Peace and Pardon. (2.) The particular Case of Miriam, who was smitten with Leprosie for quarrelling with Moses, must not be forgotten: 'Twas an Explication of the Law concerning the Leprosie. Remember that, and 1. Take heed of sinning after the Similitude of her Transgression, by *despising Dominions*, and *speaking evil of Dignities*, lest you thereby bring upon yourselves the same Judgment. 2. If any of you be smitten with a Leprosie, expect not that the Law should be *dispens'd with*, nor think it hard to be shut out of the Camp, and so made a *specialist*; there's no Remedy; Miriam herself, though a Prophetess, and the Sister of Moses, was not exempted, but was forc'd to submit to this severe Discipline, when she was under this Divine Rebuke. Thus since David, Hezekiah, Peter, and other great Men, when they had sinned, *humbled themselves*, and took to themselves the Shame and Grief, let not us expect to be reconcil'd upon easier Terms.

4. Some necessary Orders given about Pledges or Pawns, for the securing of Money lent. They are not forbidden to take such Securities which would save the Lender from Loss,

and oblige the Borrower to be Honest. But (1.) They must not take *the Millstone* for a Pledge, v. 6. for with that they grind the Corn that was to be Bread for their Families; or if it were a publick Mill, with it the Miller got his Livelihood; and so it forbids the taking of any thing for a Pledge, by the want of which a Man was in Danger of being undone. Consonant to this is the ancient Common Law of England, which provides, That no Man be distrain'd by the Utensils or Instruments of his Trade or Profession, as the Ax of a Carpenter, or the Books of a Scholar, nor Beasts belonging to the Plow, as long as there are other Beasts, of which Distress may be made. (*Cook. 1 Inst. fo. 47.*) This teaches us to consult the Comfort and Sublance of others as much as our own Advantage. That Creditor who cares not tho' his Debtor and his Family Starve, nor is at all concern'd what becomes of them; so he may but get his Money, or secure it; goes contrary not only to the Law of Christ, but even to the Law of Moses too. (2.) They must not go into the Borrowers Houses to fetch the Pledge, but must stand without, and he must bring it, v. 10, 11. The borrower (*said Solomon*) is *servant to the lender*, therefore left the Lender should abuse the Advantage he has against him, and make a Hand of it for himself, 'tis provided that he take not what he pleases, but what the Borrower can best spare. A Man's House is his Castle, even the poor Man's House is so, and is here taken under the Protection of the Law. (3.) That a poor Man's Bed-clothes should never be taken for a Pledge, v. 12, 13. This we had before, *Exod 22. 26, 27*. If they were taken in the Morning, they must be brought back again at Night, which is in Effect to say, they must not be taken at all. Let the poor Debtor sleep in his own raiment, and bless thee, i. e. Pray for thee, and praise God for thy Kindness to him. Note, Poor Debtors ought to be sensible (more sensible than commonly they are) of the goodness of those Creditors that do not take all the Advantage of the Law against them, and to repay their Kindnesses by their Prayers for them, when they are not in Capacity of repaying it any other Way. Nay, thou shalt not only have the Prayers and good Wishes of thy poor Brother, but it shall be *righteousness to thee before the Lord thy God*, i. e. it shall be accepted and rewarded as an Act of Mercy to thy Brother, and Obedience to thy God, and an Evidence of thy sincere Conformity to the Law. Tho' it may be look'd upon, by Men, as an Act of Weakness, to deliver up the Securities thou hast for thy Debt, yet it shall be look'd upon by thy God as an Act of Goodness, which shall in no wise lose its Reward.

14 ¶ Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy, *whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy strangers that are in thy land within thy gates*. 15 At his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it, for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it; lest he cry against thee unto the LORD, and it be sin unto thee. 16 The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin. 17 ¶ Thou shalt not pervert the judgment of the stranger, nor of the fatherless, nor take a widows raiment to pledge. 18 But thou shalt remember that thou wast a bond-man in Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee thence: therefore I command thee to do this thing. 19 ¶ When thou cuttest down thy harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the Stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow: that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands. 20 When thou beatest thine olive-tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow. 21 When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean it afterward: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow. 22 And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bond-man in the land of Egypt: therefore I command thee to do this thing.

Here's 1. Masters are commanded to be just to their poor Servants; v. 14, 15. (1.) They must not oppress them, either by overloading them with Work, giving them undue and unreasonable Rebukes, or withholding from them fitting Maintenance. A Servant, tho' a Stranger to the Commonwealth of Israel must

must not be abus'd, for *thou wast a Bond-man in the Land where thou wast a Stranger*, v. 18. and thou knowest what a grievous thing it is to be oppos'd by a *Task-master*, and therefore in Tender-ness to those that are Servants and Strangers, and in Gratitude to that Gbd who set thee at Liberty, and settled thee in a Country of thy own, *Thou shalt not oppress a Servant*. Let not Masters be Tyrants to their Servants, for *their Master is in Heaven*. See *Job* 31. 13. (2.) They must be faithful and Punctual in paying them their Wages. *At his day thou shalt give him his hire*, not only pay it him in full, without Fraud, but pay it in time without further delay. As soon as he has done his Days Work, if he desire it, let him have his Days Wages, as those Labourers, *Mat. 20. 8. when even was come*, He that works by Day-wages is suppos'd to live from Hand to Mouth, and cannot have to-morrow's Bread for his Family, till he is paid for this Days Labour. If the Wages be withheld, 1. It will be Grief to the Servant, for, poor Man, he sets his heart upon it; or as the Word is, he lifts up his soul to it, he is earnestly desirous of it, as the Reward of his Work, *Job. 7. 2. and depends upon it as the Gift of God's Providence for the Maintenance of his Family*. A Compassionate Master tho' it should be somewhat inconvenient to himself, would not balk the Expectation of a poor Servant that is so fond to think of receiving his Wages. But that's not the worst. 2. It will be Guilt to the Master. The injur'd Servant will cry against thee to the Lord; since he has no one else to appeal to, he will lodge his Appeal in the Court of Heaven, and it will be Sin to thee. Or if he do not complain, the Cause will speak for itself, the Hire of the Labourers which is kept back by fraud will itself cry, *Jam. 5. 4. 'Tis a greater Sin than most People think it is, and will be found so in the great Day to put hardships upon poor Servants, Labourers, and Workmen that we employ. God will do them Right if Men do not.*

1. Magistrates, and Judges are commanded to be just in their Administrations, 1. In those which we call *Pleas of the Crown*, a standing Rule is here given, *That the Fathers shall not be put to death for the Children, nor the Children for the fathers*, v. 16. If the Children make themselves obnoxious to the Law, let them suffer for it, but let not the Parents suffer either for them, or with them; 'tis Grief enough to them to see their Children suffer: If the Parents be guilty let them die for their own Sin; but tho' God the Sovereign Lord of Life sometimes visit the Iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children, especially the Sin of Idolatry, and when he deals with Nations in their national Capacity, yet he doth not allow Men to do so. Accordingly we find *Amaziah* sparing the Children, even then, when the Fathers were put to Death for killing the King, 2 *King. 14. 6. 'Twas in an extraordinary Case, and no doubt by special Direction from Heaven that Saul's Sons were put to Death for his Offence, and they dy'd rather as Sacrifices than as Malefactors*, 2 *Sam. 21. 9, 14. 2. In Common Pleas between Party and Party, great Care must be taken that none whose Cause was just should fare the worse for their Weakness, nor for their being destitute of Friends as Strangers, Fatherless, and Widows*, v. 17. *Thou shalt not pervert their Judgment, nor forcethem to give their very raiment for a Pledge, by defrauding them of their Right. Judges must be Advocates for those that cannot speak for themselves, and have no Friends to speak for them.*

3. The Rich are commanded to be Kind and Charitable to the Poor. Many Ways they are order'd to be so, by the Law of *Moses*. The particular Instance of Charity here prescrib'd is, that they should not be greedy in gathering in their Corn, and Grapes, and Olives, so as to be afraid of leaving any behind them, but be willing to overlook some, and let the Poor have the Gleanings, v. 19, 20, 21, 22. (1.) Say not, It's all my own, and why should not I have it? But learn a generous Contempt of Property in small Matters. One Sheaf or Two forgotten, will make thee never the poorer at the Years End, and it will do some body Good, if thou have it not. (2.) Say not, what I give I'll give, and know who I give it to, why should I leave it to be gather'd by I know not who, that will never thank me? But trust Gods Providence with the Disposal of thy Charity, perhaps that will direct it to the most necessary. Or, thou mayst reasonably think it will come to the Hands of the most industrious, that are forward to seek and gather that which this Law provides for 'em. (3.) Say not, what should the Poor do with Grapes and Olives? it's enough for them to have Bread and Water, for since they have the same Senses that the Rich have, why should not they have some little Share of the Delights of Sense? Boaz order'd handfals of Corn to be left on Purpose for *Ruth*, and God blessed him. All that's left is not lost.

CHAP. XXV.

Here's 1. A Law to moderate the Scourging of Malefactors, v. 1.
2. Law in favour of the Ox that treads out the Corn, v. 4.
3. For the Disgracing of him that refused to marry his Brother's

Widow, v. 5. 10. 4. For the Punishment of an immodest Woman, v. 11, 12. 5. For just Weights and Measures, v. 13. 16. 6. For the destroying of Amalek, v. 17. 19.

IF there be a controversie between men, and they come unto judgment; that the judges may judge them, then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked. 2 And it shall be, if the wicked man be worthy to be beaten, that the judge shall cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face; according to his fault, by a certain number. 3 Forty stripes he may give him, and not exceed: lest if he should exceed, and beat him above these with many stripes, then thy brother should seem vile unto thee. 4 ¶ Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn.

Here's 1. A Direction to the Judges in Scourging Malefactors, v. 1, 2, 3. (1.) It is here suppos'd, that if a Man be charg'd with a Crime, the Accuser and the Accused (*Actor and Reus*) should be brought face to face before the Judges, that the Controversie may be determin'd. (2.) If a Man were accus'd of a Crime, and the Proof fell short, so that the Charge could not be made out against him by the Evidence; then he was to be acquitted, thou shalt justify the righteous, i.e. him that appears to the Court to be so. If the Accusation be prov'd, then the Conviction of the Accused is a Justification of the Accuser, as righteous in the Prosecution. (3.) If the Accused were found guilty, Judgment must be given against him, thou shalt condemn the wicked; for to justify the wicked is as much an Abomination to the Lord, as it is to condemn the righteous, *Prov. 17. 15.* (4.) If the Crime were not made capital by the Law, then the Criminal must be beaten. A great many Precepts we have met with which have not any particular Penalty annexed to them, the Violation of most of which the constant Practice of the Jews was to punish by scourging; from which no Persons Rank or Quality did exempt him, if he were a Delinquent, but with this Proviso, that he should never be upbraided with it, nor should it be look'd upon as leaving any Mark of Infamy or Disgrace upon him. The Directions here given for the scourging of Criminals are, 1. That it be done solemnly; not tumultuously through the Streets, but in open Court before the Judges Face, and with so much Deliberation as that the Stripes might be numbred. The Jews say, while Execution was in doing, the Chief Justice of the Court read with a loud Voice, *Deut. 28. 58, 59, and Deut. 29. 9.* and concluded with those Words, *Psal. 78. 38. But he being full of compassion forgave their Iniquity.* Thus it was made a sort of a Religious Act, and so much the more likely to reform the Offender himself, and to be a Warning to others. 2. That it be done in proportion to the Crime, according to his Fault, that some Crimes might appear, as they are, more heinous than others, the Criminal being beaten with many Stripes, to which perhaps there is an Allusion, *Luk. 12. 47, 48.* 3. That how great soever the Crimes were, the Number of Stripes would never exceed forty, v. 3. Forty save one was the common Usage, as appears, 2 *Cor. 11. 24.* It seems they always gave Paul as many Stripes as ever they gave to any Malefactor whatsoever. They abated one, either for fear of having miscounted, (tho' one of the Judges was appointed to number the Stripes) or because they would never go to the utmost Rigour, or because the Execution was usually done with a Whip of three Lashes, so that thirteen Stripes, (each one being counted for three) made up thirty-nine, but one more by that Reckoning would have been forty-two. The Reason given for this is, lest thy Brother should seem vile unto thee. He must still be look'd upon as a Brother (2 *Thes. 3. 15.*) and his Reputation as such was preserv'd, by this merciful Limitation of his Punishment. It saves him from seeming vile to his Brethren, when God himself by his Law takes this Care of him: Men must not be treated as Dogs; nor must those seem vile in our Sight, to whom, for ought we know, God may yet give Grace to make them precious in his Sight.

2. A Charge to Husbandmen not to hinder their Cattle from eating when they were Working, if Meat were within their Reach, v. 4. This Instance of the Beast that trod out the Corn (to which there is an Allusion in that of the Prophet, *Hos. 10. 11.*) is put for other the like. That which makes this Law very remarkable above its Fellows (and which countenances the like Application of other such Laws) is that 'tis twice quoted in the New Testament, to shew, That it is the Duty of the People to give their Ministers a comfortable Maintenance, 1 *Cor. 9. 9, 10.* and 1 *Tim. 5. 17, 18.* It teacheth us in the Letter of it to make much of the Brute Creatures that serve us, and to allow them not only the necessary Supports of this Life, but the Advantages of their Labour: And thus

thus we must learn not only to be just, but kind to all that are employ'd for our Good; not only to maintain but to encourage them, especially those that labour among us in the Word and Doctrine, and so are employ'd for the good of our better Part.

5 ¶ If brethren dwell together, and one of them die and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her. 6 And it shall be, *that* the first-born which she beareth, shall succeed in the name of his Brother *which is dead*, that his name be not put out of Israel. 7 And if the man like not to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate unto the Elders, and say, My husband's brother refuseth to raise up unto his brother a name in Israel, he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother. 8 Then the elders of his city shall call him, and speak unto him: and if he stand to it, and say, I like not to take her: 9 Then shall his brother's wife come unto him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother's house. 10 And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed. 11 ¶ When men strive together one with another, and the wife of the one draweth near for to deliver her husband out of the hand of him that smiteth him, and putteth forth her hand, and taketh him by the secrets: 12 Then thou shalt cut off her hand, thine eye shall not pity her.

Here's 1. The Law settled concerning the marrying of a Brother's Widow. It appears by the Story of Judah's Family, that this had been an ancient Usage, Gen. 38. 8. for the keeping up of distinct Families. The Case put is a Case that often happens, of a Man's dying without Issue, it may be in the Prime of his Time, soon after his Marriage, and while his Brethren were yet so young as to be unmarried. Now in this Case, (1.) The Widow was not to marry again into any other Family, unless all the Relations of her Husband did refuse her, that the Estate she was endow'd with might not be alienated. (2.) The Husband's Brother, or next of Kin, must marry her, partly with respect to her, who having forgotten her own People, and her Father's House, should have all possible Kindness shew'd her by the Family into which she was married; and partly with Respect to the deceased Husband, that tho' he was dead and gone, he might not be forgotten, nor lost out of the Genealogies of his Tribes, for the First-born Child which the Brother or next Kinsman should have by the Widow, should be denominated from him that was dead, and enter'd in the Genealogy as *his Child*, v. 5, 6. Under that Dispensation we have Reason to think Men had not so clear and certain a Prospect of *living themselves on* other side Death, as we have now, to whom *Life and Immortality are brought to light by the Gospel*, and therefore they could not but be the more desirous to live in their Posterity, which innocent Desire was in some Measure gratified by this Law, an Expedient being found out, that tho' a Man had no Child by his Wife, yet *his Name should not be put out of Israel*, i. e. out of the Pedigree, or which was Equivalent, remain there under the Brand of *Childlessness*. The Sadducees put a Case to our Saviour upon this Law, with a Design to perplex the Doctrine of the Resurrection by it, Mat. 22, 24, &c. perhaps insinuating, that there was no need of maintaining the Immortality of the Soul, and a future State, since the Law had so well provided for the perpetuating of Men's Names and Families in the World. But (3.) If the Brother or next of Kin declin'd to do this good Office to the Memory of him that was gone, What must be done in that Case? Why, 1. He shall not be compell'd to do it, v. 7. If he like her not, he is at his Liberty to refuse her, which some think was not permitted in this Case before this Law of Moses. Affection is all in all to the Comfort of that Relation; that's a Thing which cannot be forc'd, and therefore the Relation should not be forc'd without it. 2. Yet he shall be publicly disgrac'd for not doing it. The Widow, as the Person most concern'd for the Name and Honour of the Deceased, was to complain to the Elders of his Refusal; if he persist in it, she was to pluck off his Shoe, and spit in his Face, in open

Court, (or as the Jewish Doctors moderate it, spit before his Face) thus to fasten a Mark of Infamy upon him, which was to stick to his Family after him, v. 8, 9, 10. Note. Those justly suffer in their own Reputation; who do not do what they ought to preserve the Name and Honour of others. He that would not build up his Brother's House, deserv'd to have this Blame put upon his own, that it should be call'd, *the House of him that had his Shoe loosed*, in Token, that he deserv'd to go Barefoot. In the Case of Ruth, we find this Law executed, Ruth 4. 7. only because upon the Refusal of the next Kinsman, there was another ready to perform the Duty of an Husband's Brother, 'twas that other that pluck'd off the Shoe, and not the Widow; Boaz, and not Ruth.

2. A Law for the punishing of an immodest Woman, v. 11, 12. The Woman that by the foregoing Law was to complain against her Husband's Brother for not marrying her, and to spit in his Face before the Elders, had need of a very good Assurance: But lest the Confidence which that Law supported, should grow to an Excess unbecoming the Sex, here's a very severe, but just Law to punish Impudence and Immodesty. (1.) The Instance of it is confessedly scandalous to the highest degree. A Woman could not do it, unless she was perfectly lost to all Virtue and Honour. (2.) The Occasion is such as might in Part excuse it; 'twas to help her Husband out of the Hands of one that was too hard for him. Now if the doing of it in a Passion, and with such a good Intention, was to be so severely punish'd, much more when it were done wantonly, and in Lust. (3.) The Punishment was, *That her hand was to be cut off*; and the Magistrates must not pretend to be more Merciful than God, *thine Eye shall not pity her*. Perhaps our Saviour alludes to this Law, when he commands us to cut off the right hand that offends us, or is an Occasion of Sin to us. Better put the greatest Hardships that can be upon the Body, than ruin the Soul for ever. Modesty is the Hedge of Chastity, and therefore ought to be very carefully preserv'd and kept up by both Sexes.

13 ¶ Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a small. 14 Thou shalt not have in thine house divers measures, a great and a small. 15 But thou shalt have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure shalt thou have: that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. 16 For all that do such things, and all that do unrighteously, are an abomination unto the LORD thy God. 17 ¶ Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt. 18 How he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary; and he feared not God. 19 Therefore it shall be, when the LORD thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it, that thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven: thou shalt not forget it.

Here's 1. A Law against deceitful Weights and Measures: They must not only not use them, but they must not have them; not have them in the Bag, not have them in the House, v. 13, 14. for if they had them, they would be strongly tempted to use them. They must not have a great Weight and Measure to buy by, and a small one to sell by, for that was to cheat both Ways, when either was bad enough; as we read of those that made the Ephah small, in which they measur'd the Corn they sold, and the Shekel great, by which they weigh'd the Money they receiv'd for it, Amos 7. 5. But thou shalt have a perfect and just Weight, v. 15. That which is the Rule of Justice, must itself be just, if that be otherwise, 'tis a constant Cheat. This had been taken Care of before, Lev. 19. 35, 36. This Law is inforc'd with two very good Reasons. (1.) That Justice and Equity will bring down upon us the Blessing of God. The Way to have our Days lengthened, and to prosper, is to be just and fair in all our Dealings; *Honesty is the best Policy*. (2.) That Fraud and Injustice will expose us to the Curse of God, v. 16. Not only Unrighteousness itself, but all that do unrighteously are an abomination to the Lord. And miserable is that Man that is abhor'd by his Maker. How hateful particularly, all the Arts of Deceits are to God. Solomon several times observes, Prov. 11. 1.---20. 10, 23. and the Apostle tells us, that the Lord is the Avenger of all such as over-reach and defraud in any Matter,---1 Thes. 4. 6.

1. A Law for the rooting out of Amalek. Here is a *just Weight*, and a *just Measure*; that as Amalek had measured to Israel, so it should be measured to Amalek again. (1.) The Mischief Amalek did to Israel must be here remembered. v. 17, 18. When it was first done it was order'd to be recorded, *Exod. 17. 14. 15. 16.* and here the Remembrance of it to be preserv'd, not in Personal Revenge, for that Generation which suffer'd by the Amalekites was gone, so that these which now liv'd, and their Posterity could not have any Personal Repentment of the Injury, but in a Zeal for the Glory of God, which was insulted by the Amalekites, that *Throne of the Lord* against which the Hand of Amalek was stretched out. The Carriage of the Amalekites towards Israel is here represented, (1.) As very *Base* and *Disingenuous*. They had no Occasion at all to quarrel with Israel, nor did they give them any Notice by a *Manifesto*, or Declaration of War; but took them at an Advantage, when they were newly come out of the House of Bondage, and for ought appear'd to them, were only going to sacrifice to God in the Wilderness. (2.) As very *Barbarous* and *Cruel*, for they smote them that were feeble, whom they should have succour'd. The greatest Cowards are commonly the most Cruel, while those that have the Courage of a Man, will have the Compassion of a Man. (3.) As very *Impious* and *Profane*, they feared not God. If they had any Reverence for the Majesty of the God of Israel, which they saw a Token of in the Cloud, or any Dread of his Wrath, which they lately heard the Power of over Pharaoh, they durst not have made this Assault upon Israel. Well, here was the Ground of the Quarrel: And it shews how God takes what is done against his People, as done against himself; and that he will particularly reckon with those that discourage and hinder young Beginners in Religion, that (as Satan's Agents) set upon the weak and feeble, either to *divert* them or to *disquiet* them, and offend his little ones.

(2.) This Mischief must in due Time be reveng'd, v. 19. When their Wars were finish'd, by which they were to settle their Kingdom, and enlarge their Coast, then they must make War upon Amalek, v. 14. not merely to chase them, but to consume them, to blot out the Remembrance of Amalek. 'Twas an Instance of God's Patience, that he defer'd the Vengeance so long, which should have led the Amalekites to Repentance; yet an Instance of the Depth of the Resentment, that the Posterity of Amalek so long after were destroy'd for the Mischief done by their Ancestors to the Israel of God. That all the World may see, and say, that he who toucheth them toucheth the Apple of his Eye.— 'Twas near four hundred Years after this, that Saul was order'd to put this Sentence in execution, 1 Sam. 15. and was rejected of God, because he did not do it effectually, but spared some of that devoted Nation, in Contempt not only of the particular Orders he received from Samuel, but of this general Command here given by Moses, which he could not be ignorant of, David afterwards made some Destruction of them, and Simeonites in Heman's time smote them that remained, 1 Chron. 4. 43. for when God judgeth he will overcome.

C H A P. XXVI.

With this Chapter Moses concludes the Particular Statutes, which he thought fit to give Israel in charge at his parting with them; what follows is by way of Sanction and Ratification. In this Chapter, 1. Moses gives them a Form of Confession to be made by him that offered the Basket of his First-Fruits, v. 1.—11. 2. The Protestation and Prayer to be made after the disposal of the third Years Tithes, v. 12.—15. 3. He binds on all the Precepts he had given them. (1.) By the Divine Authority; not I, but the Lord thy God has commanded thee to do these Statutes, v. 16. (2.) By the mutual Covenant between God and them, v. 17.—19.

AND it shall be when thou art come in unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an Inheritance, and possessest it, and dwellest therein: 2 That thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth, which thou shalt bring of thy land that the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt put it in a basket, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose, to place his name there. 3 And thou shalt go unto the priest that shall be in those days, and say unto him, I profess this day unto the LORD thy God, that I am come unto the country which the LORD swore unto our Fathers for to give us. 4 And the priest shall take the basket out of thine hand, and set it down before the altar of the LORD thy God.

5 And thou shalt speak and say before the LORD thy God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation great, mighty, and populous. 6 And the Egyptians evil entreated us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage. 7 And when we cried unto the LORD God of our fathers, the LORD heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labour, and our oppression. 8 And the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an out-stretched arm, and with great terrible-ness, and with signs and with wonders. 9 And he hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey. 10 And now behold, I have brought the first-fruits of the land, which thou, O LORD, hast given me: and thou shalt set it before the LORD thy God, and worship before the LORD thy God. 11 And thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the LORD thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thine house, thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that is among you.

Here's 1. A good Work order'd to be done, and that is, the presenting of a Basket of their First-fruits to God every Year. v. 1, 2. Besides the sheaf of First-fruits, which was offered for the whole Land, on the Morrow after the Passover, Lev. 23. 10. Every Man was to bring for himself a Basket of First-fruits, at the Feast of Pentecost, when the Harvest was ended, which is therefore call'd the Feast of First-fruits, *Exod. 34. 22.* and is said to be kept with a Tribute of Free-will-offering, *Deut. 16. 10.* But the Jews say, the First-fruits, if not brought then, might be brought any time after between that and Winter. When a Man went into the Field or Vineyard, at the time when the Fruits were ripening, he was to mark that which he observ'd most forward, and to lay it by for First-fruits, Wheat, Barley, Grapes, Figs, Pomegranates, Olives, and Dates, some of each sort must be put in the same Basket, with Leaves between them, and presented to God in the Place which he should choose.— Now from this Law we may learn, (1.) To acknowledge God as the giver of all those good Things which are the Support and Comfort of our natural Life, and therefore to serve and honour him with them. (2.) To deny ourselves. What is first ripe we are most fond of; those that are Nice and Curious expect to be serv'd with each Fruit at its first coming in, *My soul desired the first-ripe Fruits, Mic. 7. 1.* When therefore God appointed them to lay those by for him, he taught them to prefer the glorifying of his Name, before the gratifying of their own Appetites and Desires. (3.) To give to God the first and best we have, as those that believe him to be the first and best of Beings. They that consecrate the Days of their Youth, and the Prime of their Time to the Service and Honour of God, bring him their First-fruits, and with such Offerings he is well pleas'd. *I remember the kindness of thy youth.*

2. Good Words put into their Mouths to be said in the doing of this good Work, as an Explication of the meaning of this Ceremony, that it might be a reasonable Service. The Officer must begin his Acknowledgment before he delivered his Basket to the Priest, and then must go on with it, when the Priest had set down the Basket before the Altar, as a Present to God their great Landlord, v. 3, 4.

1. He must begin with a Receipt in full for the good Land which God had given them, v. 3. *I profess that I am come now at last, after forty Years wandering, unto the Country which the Lord swore to give us.* This was most proper to be said when they came first into Canaan, probably when they had been long settled there, they varied from this Form. Now, When God has made good his Promises to us, he expects we should own it, to the Honour of his Faithfulness. This is like giving up the Bond, as Solomon doth, 1 Kings 8. 56. *There has not failed one Word of all his good Promises.* And our Creature Comforts are then doubly sweet to us, when we see them flowing to us from the Fountain of the Promise.

2. He must remember, and own the mean Original of that Nation, which he was a Member of: How great sever they were now, and he himself with them, their beginning was very small, which ought thus to be kept in mind throughout all the Ages of their Church by this publick Confession, that they might not be proud of their Privileges and Advantages, but

but might for ever be thankful to that God whose Grace chose them when they were *so low*, and rais'd them *so high*. Two things they must own for this Purpose, (1.) the Means of their common Ancestor. *A Syrian ready to perish was my Father*, v. 5. *Jacob* is here call'd an *Aramite*, or *Syrian*, because he lived Twenty Years in *Padan-Aram*; his Wives were of that Country, and his Children were all born there, except *Benjamin*; and perhaps the Confessor means not *Jacob* himself, but that Son of *Jacob*, who was the Father of his Tribe. However it be, both Father and Sons were more than once ready to perish by *Laban's* Severity, *Esa's* Cruelty, and the Famine in the Land; which last was the Occasion of their going down into *Egypt*. *Laban the Syrian sought to destroy my Father*. So the *Chaldee*,—*Had almost destroy'd him*. So the *Arabick*,—(2.) The miserable Condition of their Nation in its Infancy. They sojourn'd in *Egypt* as Strangers, they serv'd there as Slaves, v. 6. and that a great while: As their Father was call'd a *Syrian*, they might be call'd *Egyptians*; so that their Possession of *Canaan* being so long discontinued, they could not pretend any *Tenant-right* to it. A poor, despis'd, oppressed People they were in *Egypt*, and therefore, though now Rich and Great, had no Reason to be proud or secure, or forgetful of God.

3. He must thankfully acknowledge God's great Goodness, not only to himself in particular, but to *Israel* in general. (1.) In bringing them out of *Egypt*, v. 7, 8. 'Tis spoken of here as an Act of Pity, he look'd on our Affliction, and an Act of Power, he brought us forth with a mighty Hand. This was a great Salvation, fit to be remember'd upon all Occasions, and particularly upon this: They need not grudge to bring a Basket of First-fruits to God, for to him they ow'd it, that they were not now bringing in the Tale of Bricks to their cruel Task-masters. (2.) In settling them in *Canaan*, v. 9. *He hath given us this Land*. Observe, He must not only give Thanks for his own Lot, but for the Land in general, which was given to *Israel*; not only for this Year's Profits, but for the Ground itself, which produced them, which God had graciously granted to his Ancestors, and entail'd upon his Posterity. Note, The Comfort we have in our particular Enjoyments, should lead us to be thankful for our Share in publick Peace and Plenty; and with present Mercies we should bless God for the former Mercies we remember, and the further Mercies we expect and hope for.

4. He must offer to God his Basket of First-Fruits, v. 10. *I have brought the First-fruits of the Land*, (like a Pepper-corn) as a Quit-rent for the land which thou hast given me. Note, Whatever we give to God, 'tis but of his own that we give him, 1 Chron. 29. 14. And it becomes us who receive so much from him, to study what we shall render to him. The Basket he, set before God, and the Priests, as God's Receivers, had the First-fruits, as Perquisites of their Place, and Fees for attending; Numb. 18. 12.

Lastly, The Offerer is here appointed, when he has finish'd the Service, (1.) To give Glory to God, *thou shalt worship the Lord thy God*. His First-fruits were not accepted without further Acts of Adoration. An humble, reverent, thankful Heart, is that which God looks at and requires, and without that, all we can put in a Basket will not avail. *If a man would give all the substance of his House to be excus'd from this or in lieu of it, it would be utterly be condemn'd*. (2.) To take the Comfort of it to himself and his Family, v. 11. *Thou shalt rejoice in every good thing*. It is the Will of God that we should not only be cheerful in our Attendance upon his Holy Ordinances, but that we should be cheerful in our Enjoyments of the Gift of his Providence. Whatever good thing God gives us, it is his Will that we should make the most comfortable Use we can of it, yet still tracing the Streams to the Fountain of all Comfort and Consolation.

12 ¶ When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase, the third year, which is the year of tithing, and hast given it unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled: 13 Then thou shalt say before the LORD thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of mine house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all thy commandments which thou hast commanded me: I have not transgressed thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them. 14 I have not eaten thereof in my mourning, neither have I taken away ought thereof for any unclean use, nor given ought thereof for the dead: but I have

hearkened to the voice of the LORD my God, and have done according to all that thou hast commanded me. 15 Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people *Israel*, and the land which thou hast given us, as thou swarest unto our fathers, a land that floweth with milk and honey.

Concerning the disposal of their Tithe, the third year, we had the Law before, Chap. 14. 28, 29. That second Tithe which the other two Years was to be spent in *Extraordinaries* at the Feasts, was to be spent the third Year at home in entertaining the Poor. Now, because this was done from under the Eye of the Priests, and a great Confidence was put in the Peoples Honesty, that they would dispose of it according to the Law, to the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, v. 12. It is therefore requir'd, that when at the next Feast after, they appear'd before the Lord, there should there testify (as it were) upon Oath, in a Religious manner, that they had fully administered, and been true to their Trust.

1. They must make a Solemn Protestation to that Purpose, v. 13, 14. (1.) That no hallowed things were hoarded up, *I have brought them away out of mine House*, nothing now remains there but my own Part. (2.) That the Poor, and particularly poor Ministers, poor Strangers and poor Widows had had their Part according to the Commandment. 'Tis fit God, who by his Providence gives us all we have, should by his Law direct the using of it, and tho' we are not now under such particular Appropriations of our Revenue as they then were, yet in general we are commanded to give Alms of such things as we have; and then, and not otherwise, all things are clean to us. Then we may take the Comfort of our Enjoyments, when God has thus had his Dues out of them. This is a Commandment which must not be transgress'd, no not with an Excuse of its being forgotten, v. 13. (3.) That none of this Tithe had been misapplied to any common use, much less to any ill use. This seems to refer to the Tithe of the other two Years, which was to be eaten by the Owners themselves; they must profess, (1.) That they had not eaten of it in their mourning, when by their mourning for the Dead, they were commonly Unclean, or, they had not eaten of it grudgingly as those that all their days eat in darkness. (2.) That they had not sacrilegiously alienated it to any common use, for it was not their own. And lastly, that they had not given it for the dead, for the Honour of their dead Gods, or in hope of making it beneficial to their dead Friends—Now the obliging of them to make this solemn Protestation at the three Years end would be an Obligation upon them to deal faithfully, knowing that they must be call'd upon thus to purge themselves. 'Tis our Wisdom to keep Conscience clear at all Times, that when we come to give up our Account, we may lift up our face without spot. The Jews say, that this Protestation of their Integrity was to be made with a low Voice, because it look'd like a Self commendation; but that the foregoing Confession of God's Goodness was to be made with a loud Voice to his Glory. He that durst not make this Protestation, must bring his *Trespass-offering*, Lev. 5. 15.

2. To this solemn Protestation they must add a solemn Prayer, v. 15. not particularly for themselves, but for God's People *Israel*, for in the common Peace and Prosperity, every particular Person prospereth and has Peace. We must learn from hence to be publick Spirited in Prayer, and to wrestle with God for Blessings for the Land and Nation, our *English Israel*, and for the universal Church, which we are directed to have an Eye to in our Prayers, as the *Israel of God*, Gal. 6. 16. In this Prayer we are taught, 1. To look up to God as in a Holy Habitation, and from thence to infer that Holiness becomes his House, and that he will be sanctified in those that are about him. 2. To depend upon the Favour of God, and his gracious Cognizance, as sufficient to make us and our People Happy. 3. To reckon it wonderful condescension in God to cast an Eye, even upon so great and honourable a Body as *Israel* was. 'Tis looking down. 4. To be earnest with God for a Blessing upon his People *Israel*, and upon the Land which he has given us. For how shall the Earth yield its increase? or if it do, what Comfort can we take in it, unless therewith God, even our own God, gives us his Blessing? Psal. 67. 6.

16 ¶ This day the LORD thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes and judgments: thou shalt therefore keep and do them with all thine heart and with all thy soul. 17 Thou hast avouched the LORD this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes and his commandments and his judgments, and to hearken

hearken unto his voice. 18 And the LORD hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldst keep all his commandments: 19 And to make thee high above all nations which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour, and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the LORD thy God, as he hath spoken.

Two things *Moses* here urges to enforce all these Precepts.

1. That they were the commands of God, v. 16. They were not the Dictates of his own Wisdom, nor were they enacted by any Authority of his own, but infinite Wisdom fram'd them, and the Power of the King of Kings made them binding to them. *The Lord thy God Commands thee*, therefore thou art bound in Duty and Gratitude to obey him, and it is at thy Peril if thou disobey. They are his Laws, therefore thou shalt do them, for to that End were they given thee: Do them and not dispute them, do them and not draw back from them; do them not carelessly and hypocritically, but with thy Heart and Soul, thy whole Heart and thy whole Soul.

2. That their Covenant with God, oblig'd them to keep these Commands. He insists not only upon God's Sovereignty over them, but his Propriety in them, and the Relation wherein they stood to him. The Covenant is mutual, and it binds to Obedience both ways.

1. That we may perform our part of the Covenant, and answer the Intentions of that, v. 17. *Thou hast avouched and solemnly own'd and confes'd the Lord Jehovah, to be thy God, thy Prince and Ruler.* As he is so by an uncontestable Right, so he is by *thine own consent*. They did this implicitly by their Attendance on his Word, had done it expressly, *Exod. 24.* and were now to do it again before they parted, *Deut. 24. 1.*—Now this obligeth us in Fidelity to our Word, as well as in Duty to our Sovereign, to keep his Statutes and his Commandments. We really toriwear ourselves, and perfidiously violate the most sacred Engagements, if when we have taken the Lord to be our God, we do not make Conscience of obeying his Commands.

2. That God's part of the Covenant also may be made Good, and the Intentions of that answer'd, v. 18, 19. *The Lord has avouched*, not only taken, but publicly own'd thee to be his *Segullah*, his peculiar People, as he has promis'd thee, i. e. According to the true intent and meaning of the Promise. Now their Obedience was not only the condition of this Favour, and of the Continuance of it; if they were not Obedient, God would disown them, and cast them off: But it was also the principal Design of this Favour. He has avouched thee on Purpose, *that thou shouldst keep his Commandments*, that thou mightest have both the best Directions and the best Encouragements in Religion: Thus we are elect to Obedience, 1 Pet. 1. 2. *chosen that we should be holy*, Eph. 1. 4. Purified a peculiar People, that we might not only do good works, but be zealous in them, *Tit. 2. 14.*

Two things God is here said to design in avouching them to be his peculiar People, v. 19. To make them high, and in order to that, to make them Holy; for Holiness is true Honour, and the only way to everlasting Honour. (1.) To make them high above all Nations. The greatest Honour we are capable of in this World is to be taken into Covenant with God, and to live in his Service. *High in praise*; for God would accept them, that's true Praise, *Rom. 2. 29.* Their Friends would admire them, *Psal. 48. 2.* Their Enemies would envy them, *Zeph. 3. 19, 20.*—*High in Name*, which some think speaks continuance and perpetuity of that Praise, a name that shall not be cut off. And *High in Honour*, i. e. in all the Advantages of Wealth and Power, which would make them great among their Neighbours. See *Jer. 13. 11.*—(2.) That they might be a holy People, separated for God, devoted for him, and employ'd continually in his Service. This God aim'd at in taking them to be his People; so that if they did not keep his Commandments, they received all this Grace in vain.

CHAP. XXVII.

Moses having very largely and fully set before the people their Duty, both to God and one another, in general, and in particular Instances, having shew'd them plainly what is good, and what the Lord requires of them, and having in the close of the foregoing Chapter laid them under the obligation both of the Command and the Covenant, He comes in this Chapter to prescribe outward means. 1. For the helping of their Memories, that they might not forget the Law as a Strange thing. They must Write all the Words of this Law upon Stones, v. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100. For the moving of their Affections, that they might not be indifferent to the Law as a light thing. When they were come into Canaan, The Blessings and Curses which were the Sanctions of the Law,

were to be solemnly pronounc'd in the hearing of all Israel, who were to say Amen to them, v. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100. And if such a Solemnity as this would not make a deep impression upon them, and affect them with the great things of God's Law, nothing would.

1 AND *Moses* with the elders of Israel, commanded the people, saying, Keep all the commandments which I command you this day. 2 And it shall be on the day when you shall pass over Jordan unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, that thou shalt set thee up great stones, and plaister them with plaister. 3 And thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law, when thou art passed over, that thou mayest go in unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, a land that floweth with milk and honey: as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee. 4 Therefore it shall be when ye be gone over Jordan, that ye shall set up these stones, which I command you this day, in mount Ebal, and thou shalt plaister them with plaister. 5 And there shalt thou build an altar unto the LORD thy God, an altar of stones: thou shalt not lift up any iron tool upon them. 6 Thou shalt build the altar of the LORD thy God of whole stones: and thou shalt offer burnt-offerings thereon unto the LORD thy God. 7 And thou shalt offer peace-offerings, and shalt eat there, and rejoice before the LORD thy God. 8 And thou shalt write upon the stones all the words of this law, very plainly. 9 ¶ And *Moses*, and the priests the Levites, spake unto all Israel, saying, Take heed, and hearken, O Israel, this day thou art become the people of the LORD thy God. 10 Thou shalt therefore obey the voice of the LORD thy God, and do his commandments, and his statutes which I command thee this day.

Here's 1. A general Charge to the People to keep God's Commandments, for in vain did they know them, unless they would do them. This is press'd upon them, (1.) With all Authority. *Moses* with the elders of Israel, the Rulers of each Tribe, v. 1. and again, v. 9. *Moses* and the Priests, and Levites; So that the Charge is given by *Moses* who was King in *Jehovah*, and by their Lords, both Spiritual and Temporal, in Concurrence with him. Lest they should think that 'twas *Moses* only an old and dying Man, that made such ado about Religion, or the Priests and Levites only whose Trade it was to attend Religion, and who had their Maintenance out of it, the Elders of Israel, whom God had placed in Honour and Power over them, and who were Men of Business in the World, and likely to be long so when *Moses* was gone, they commanded their People to keep God's Law. *Moses* having put some of his Honour upon them joyns them in Commission with himself, in giving this Charge, as *St. Paul* sometimes in his Epistles joyns with himself *Silvanus*, and *Timothy*. Note, All that have any Interest in others, or Power over them, should use it for the support and furtherance of Religion among them. Tho' the Supreme Power of a Nation provide never so good Laws for this Purpose, if inferior Magistrates in their Places, and Ministers in theirs, and Masters of Families in theirs do not do their Offices, 'twill all be to little Effect. (2.) With all Impertunity. They press it upon them with the utmost earnestness, v. 9, 10. *Take heed and hearken, O Israel.* 'Tis a thing that requires and deserves the highest degree of Caution and Attention. They tell them of their Privilege and Honour this day thou art become the People of the Lord thy God, the Lord having avouched thee to be his own, and being now about to put thee in Possession of Canaan which he had long promis'd as thy God, *Gen. 27. 7, 8.* and which if he had fail'd to do in due Time, he would have been sham'd to be call'd thy God, *Heb. 11. 16.* now thou art more than ever his People, therefore obey his voice. Privileges should be improv'd as Engagements to Duty. Should not a People be rul'd by their God?

2. A particular Direction to them, with great Solemnity, to Register the words of this Law, as soon as they were come into Canaan. 'Twas to be done but once, and at their Entrance into the Land of Promise, in Token of their taking Possession of

of it under the several Proviso's and Conditions contained in this Law. There was a Solemn Ratification of the Covenant between God and Israel at Mount Sinai, there was an Altar erected, and Twelve Pillars, and the Book of the Covenant was produc'd, *Exod. 24. 4.* That which is here appointed is a Solemnity somewhat like that.

1. They must set up a Monument on which they must write the words of this Law. 1. The Monument itself was to be very mean; only rough unhewn Stones plaister'd over; not polish'd Marble, or Alabaster, nor Brass Tables, but common Plaister upon Stone; *v. 2.* 'tis repeated again, *v. 4.* And orders given that it be written, not very finely, to be admired by the Curious, but very plainly, that he that run might read it, *Hab. 2. 1.* The Word of God needs not to be set off by the Art of Man; nor embellish'd with the enticing words of Man's Wisdom. But 2. The Inscription was to be very great. All the words of this Law, *v. 3.* and again, *v. 8.* Some understand it only of the Covenant between God and Israel, mention'd, *Chap. 26. 17, 18.* let this Heap be set up for a Witness, like that Memorial of the Covenant between Laban and Jacob, which was nothing but a Heap of Stones thrown hastily together, which they did eat upon together in token of Friendship, *Gen. 31. 46, 47.* and that Stone which Joshua set up; *Josh. 24. 27.* Others think the Curses of the Covenant in this Chapter were written upon this Monument, the rather because it was set up in Mount Ebal, *v. 4.* Others think this whole Book of Deuteronomy was written upon this Monument; Or at least the Statutes and Judgments which began at *Chap. 12.* and so to the End of *Chap. 26.* And 'tis not improbable that the Heap might be so large as taking in all the sides of it to contain so copious an Inscription; unless we will suppose (as some do) that the Ten Commandments only were here written; as an Authentick Copy of the close Rolls which were laid up in the Ark. They must write this when they were gone into Canaan, and yet Moses saith, *v. 3.* Write it that thou may'st go in, i. e. that thou may'st go in with Comfort, and Assurance of Success and Settlement, and otherwise as good not go in at all. Write it as the Conditions of thine Entry, and own that thou comest in upon these Terms, and no other: Since Canaan is given by Promise, it must be held by Obedience.

2. They must also set up an Altar. By the Words of the Law which were written upon the Plaister God spake to them, By the Altar, and the Sacrifices offer'd upon it they spake to God; and thus was Communion kept between them and God. The Word and Prayer must go together. Tho' they might not of their own Heads set up any Altar besides that at the Tabernacle, yet by the Appointment of God they might, upon a special Occasion. *Elijah* built an Extempore Altar of Twelve unhewn Stones like this here, when he brought Israel back to this Covenant which was now made, *1 King. 18. 31, 32.* Now 1. This Altar must be made of such Stones as they found ready upon the Field, not new cut out of the Rock, much less squar'd artificially, *thou shalt not lift up any iron tool upon them, v. 5.* Christ our Altar is a Stone cut out of the Mountain without hands, *Dan. 2. 34, 35.* and therefore refused by the Builders, as having no form or comeliness, but accepted of God the Father, and made the Head of the Corner. 2. Burnt-offerings and Peace-offerings must be offer'd upon this Altar, *v. 6, 7.* that by them they might give Glory to God, and obtain his Favour. Where the Law was written, an Altar was set up, close by it, to signify, that we could not look with any Comfort upon the Law, being conscious to ourselves of the Violation of it, if it were not for the Great Sacrifice, by which Attonement is made for Sin; And the Altar was set up on Mount Ebal, the Mount on which those Tribes stood that said Amen to the Curses, to intimate that through Christ we are redeemed from the Curse of the Law. In the Old Testament the words of the Law are written, with the Curse annex'd which would fill us with Horror and Amazement, if we had not in the New Testament (which is bound up with it) an Altar erected close by it, which gives us everlasting Consolation. 3. They must eat there, and rejoice before the Lord their God, *v. 7.* This signified 1. The Consent they gave to the Covenant; for the Parties to a Covenant by feasting together ratified the Covenant. They were Partakers of the Altar, which was God's Table, as his Servants and Tenants, and so they acknowledg'd themselves, and being put in Possession of this good Land bound themselves to pay the Rent, and do the Services reserv'd by the Royal Grant. 2. The Comfort they took in the Covenant; They had Reason to rejoice in the Law, when they had an Altar, a Remedial Law, so near it; 'Twas a great Favour to them; and a Token for good, that God gave them his Statutes; And that they were own'd as the People of God, and the Children of the Promise, was what they had Reason to rejoice in, tho' when this Solemnity was to be perform'd, they were not put in full Possession of Canaan; but God has spoken in his Holiness, and then I will rejoice, *Gilead in mine, Manasseh mine; all my own.*

11 ¶ And Moses charged the people the same day, saying, 12 These shall stand upon mount VOL. I.

Gerizzim to bless the people, when ye are come over Jordan; Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Joseph, and Benjamin. 13 And these shall stand upon mount Ebal to curse; Reuben, Gad, and Asher, and Zebulun, Dan, and Nephtali. 14 ¶ And the Levites shall speak, and say unto all the men of Israel with a loud voice, 15 Cursed be the man that maketh any graven or molten Image, an abomination unto the LORD, the work of the hands of the craftsmen, and putteth it in a secret place: and all the people shall answer and say, Amen. 16 Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his Mother: and all the people shall say, Amen. 17 Cursed be he that removeth his neighbours land-mark: and all the people shall say, Amen. 18 Cursed be he that maketh the blind to wander out of the way: and all the people shall say, Amen. 19 Cursed be he that perverteth the judgment of the stranger, the fatherless, and widow: and all the people shall say, Amen. 20 Cursed be he that lieth with his fathers wife, because he uncovereth his fathers skirt: and all the people shall say, Amen. 21 Cursed be he that lieth with any manner of beast: and all the people shall say, Amen. 22 Cursed be he that lieth with his sister, the daughter of his father, or the daughter of his mother: and all the people shall say, Amen. 23 Cursed be he that lieth with his mother in law: and all the people shall say, Amen. 24 Cursed be he that smiteth his neighbour secretly: and all the people shall say, Amen. 25 Cursed be he that taketh reward to slay an innocent person: and all the people shall say, Amen. 26 Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them: and all the people shall say, Amen.

When the Law was Written to be seen and read by all Men, the Sanctions of it were to be publish'd, which to compleat the Solemnity of their Covenanting with God, they were deliberately to declare their Approbation of. This they were before directed to do, *Chap. 11. 29, 30.* and therefore the Appointment here begins somewhat abruptly; *v. 12.* There were it seems in Canaan, that Part of it which afterwards fell to the Lot of Ephraim (*Joshua's* Tribe) two Mountains that lay near together, with a Valley between, one call'd Gerizzim, and the other Ebal, on the sides of these two Mountains which faced one another, all the Tribes were to be drawn up, six on one side, and six on the other, so as that in the Valley, at the Foot of each Mountain they came pretty near together, so near as that the Priests standing betwixt them might be heard by those that were next them on both sides; Then when Silence was proclaim'd, and Attention command'd, One of the Priests, or perhaps more at some Distance from each other, pronounc'd with a loud Voice one of the Curses here following, and all the People that stood on the Side and Foot of Mount Ebal, (those that stood further off taking the signal from those that stood nearer and within hearing) said Amen; Then the contrary Blessing was pronounc'd, Blessed is he that doth not so or so, and then those that stood on the Side, and at the Foot of Mount Gerizzim said Amen. This could not but affect them very much with the Blessings and Curses, the Promises and Threatnings of the Law, and not only acquaint all the People with them; but teach them to apply them to themselves.

1. Something is to be observ'd in general concerning this Solemnity, which was to be done but once and not repeated, but would be talk'd of to Posterity.

1. God appointed which Tribes should stand upon Mount Gerizzim, and which on Mount Ebal, *v. 12, 13.* to prevent the Disputes that might have arisen if they had been to dispose of themselves. The six Tribes that were appointed for Blessing were all the Children of the Free Women, for to such the Promise belongs, *Gal. 4. 31.* Levi is here put among the rest, to teach Ministers to apply themselves the Blessing and Curse which they preach to others, and by Faith to set their own Amen to it.

2. Of those Tribes that were to say Amen to the Blessings 'tis said, they stood to bless the People, but of the other that they

they stood to *Curse*, not mentioning the *People*, as loth to suppose that any of this *People* whom God had taken for his own should lay themselves under the *Curse*. Or, perhaps the different way of Expression intimates, that there was to be but one Blessing pronounc'd in general upon the *People* of *Israel*, as a happy *People*, and that should ever be so, if they were obedient; And to that Blessing the Tribes on Mount *Gerizzim*, were to say *Amen*, Happy art thou O *Israel*, and may'st thou ever be so; But then the *Curses* come in as Exceptions from the general Rule, (and we know *Exceptio firmat Regulam*) *Israel* is a Blessed *People*, but if there be any Particular Persons even among them, that do such and such things as are here mention'd, let them know that they have no Part nor Lot in the Matter, but are under a *Curse*. This shews how ready God is to bestow the Blessing; if any fall under the *Curse* they may thank themselves, they bring it upon their own Heads.

3. The Levites or Priests, such of them as were appointed for that Purpose, were to pronounce the *Curses* as well as the Blessings. They were ordain'd to Bless, *Deut.* 10. 8. the Priests did it daily, *Numb.* 6. 23. But they must separate between the precious and the vile; They must not give that Blessing promiscuously, but must declare to whom it did not belong; lest those who had no right to it themselves, should think to share in it by being in the Crowd. Note, Ministers must Preach the Terrors of the Law, as well as the Comforts of the Gospel, must not only allure *People* to their Duty with the Promises of a Blessing, but affright them to it with the Threatnings of a *Curse*.

4. The *Curses* are here expressed, but not the Blessings; for as many as were under the Law, were under the *Curse*; but it was an Honour reserv'd for Christ to bless us, and so to do that for us which the Law could not do in that it was weak. In Christ's Sermon upon the Mount, which was the true Mount *Gerizzim*, we have Blessings only, *Mat.* 5. 3, &c.

5. To each of the *Curses*, the *People* were to say, *Amen*. 'Tis easy to understand the meaning of *Amen* to the Blessings. The *Jews* have a Saying to encourage *People* to say *Amen* to the Publick Prayers, *Whosoever answereth Amen after him that blesteth, he is as he that blesteth*. But how could they say *Amen* to the *Curses*? 1. It was a Profession of their Faith in the Truth of it; That these, and the like *Curses* were not Bugbears to frighten Children and Fools, but the real Declarations of the Wrath of God against the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men; not one iota of which shall fall to the Ground. 2. It was an Acknowledgment of the Equity of these *Curses*; When they said *Amen*, they did in effect say, not only *It is certain it shall be so*; but *it is just it should be so*. They which do such things well deserve to fall and lie under the *Curse*. 3. It was such an Imprecation upon themselves, as strongly oblig'd them to have nothing to do with those evil Practices, upon which the *Curse* is here entail'd. Let God's Wrath fall upon us, if ever we do such things. We read of those that enter'd into a *Curse* (and with us that's the usual Form of a solemn Oath) to walk in God's Law, *Neb.* 10. 29. Nay, the *Jews* say, (as the Learned Bishop Patrick quotes them) That all the *People* by saying this *Amen*, became bound for one another, that they would observe God's Laws, by which every Man was oblig'd as far as he could, to prevent his Neighbour from breaking these Laws, and to reprove those that had offended, lest they should bear Sin, and the *Curse* for them.

2. Let us now observe what are the particular Sins, against which the *Curse* is here denounc'd.

1. Sins against the second Commandment. This flaming Sword is set to keep that Commandment first, *v.* 15. They are here curst, not only that worship Images, but that make them or keep them, if they be such (or like such) as Idolaters us'd in the Service of their Gods, whether it be a graven Image or a molten Image, it comes all to one, its an abomination to the Lord; tho' it be not set up in Publick, but in a secret place, tho' it be not actually worshipp'd, nor is it said to be design'd for Worship, but reserv'd there with respect, and a constant temptation, he that doth this may, perhaps, escape Punishment from Men, but he cannot escape the *Curse* of God.

2. Against the fifth Commandment, *v.* 16. The Contempt of Parents is a Sin so heinous, that it is put next to the Contempt of God himself. If a Man abus'd his Parents either in Word or Deed, he fell under the Sentence of the Magistrate, and must be put to death, *Exod.* 21. 15, 17. but to set light by them in his Heart, was a thing which the Magistrate could not take Cognizance of, and therefore 'tis here laid under the *Curse* of God, who knows the Heart.—Those are curst Children, that carry themselves scornfully and insolently towards their Parents.

3. Against the eighth Commandment. The *Curse* of God is here fasten'd, (1.) Upon an unjust Neighbour that removes the Land-marks, *v.* 17. See Chap. 19. 14. (2.) Upon an unjust Counsellor, who when his Advice is ask'd, maliciously directs his Friend to that which he knows will be to his Prejudice;

which is making the blind to wander out of the way, under Pretence of directing him in the Way, than which nothing can be either more barbarous, or more treacherous, *v.* 18. Those that seduce others from the Way of God's Commandments, and entice them to Sin, bring this *Curse* upon themselves, which our Saviour has explain'd, *Mat.* 15. 14. The blind lead the blind, and both shall fall into the ditch.—(3.) Upon an unjust Judge, that perverted the judgment of the stranger, fatherless and widow, whom he should protect and vindicate, *v.* 19. These are suppos'd to be Poor and Friendless, nothing to be got by doing them a Kindness, nor any thing lost by disobliging them; and therefore Judges were in Temptation to side with their Adversaries against Right and Equity, but curst are such Judges.

4. Against the seventh Commandment. Incest is a curst Sin, with a Sister, a Father's Wife, or a Mother in Law, *v.* 20; 22, 23. These Crimes not only expos'd Men to the Sword of the Magistrate, *Lev.* 20. 11. but which is more dreadful, to the Wrath of God; Beastiality likewise, *v.* 21.

5. Against the sixth Commandment. Two of the worst kinds of Murther are instanc'd in, 1. Murther unseen, when a Man doth not set upon his Neighbour as a fair Adversary, giving him an Opportunity to defend himself, but smites him secretly, *v.* 24. as by Poison, or otherwise, when he sees not who hurts him. See *Psal.* 10. 8, 9. Tho' such secret Murthers may go undiscover'd, and unpunish'd, yet the *Curse* of God will follow them. 2. Murther under colour of Law, which is of all other the greatest Affront to God, for it makes an Ordinance of his to patronize the worst of Villains; and the greatest Wrong to our Neighbour, ruining his Honour as well as his Life; Curst therefore is he that will be hir'd, or brib'd either to accuse, or to convict, or to condemn, and so to slay an innocent person, *v.* 25. See *Psal.* 15. 5.

6. The solemnity concludes with a general *Curse*, upon him that confirmeth not, or, as it might be read, that performeth not all the Words of this Law to do them, *v.* 26. By our Obedience to the Law we set our Seal to it, and so confirm it, as by our Disobedience we do what lies in us to disannul it, *Psal.* 119. 126. The Apostle following all the ancient Versions reads it, *Curst is every one that continues not*, *Gal.* 3. 10. Lest those that were guilty of other Sins, not mention'd in this Commination, should think themselves safe from the *Curse*, this last reaches all; not only those that do the Evil which the Law forbids; but those also who omit the Good which the Law requires: To this we must all say, *Amen*, owning ourselves under the *Curse*, justly to have deserv'd it, and that we must certainly have perish'd for ever under it, if Christ had not redeem'd us from the curse of the Law, by being made a *Curse* for us.

CHAP. XXVIII.

This Chapter is a very large Exposition of two Words in the foregoing Chapter, the Blessing and the *Curse*. There those were pronounc'd Blessed in general that were Obedient, and those Curst that were Disobedient; But because Generals are not so affecting, Moses here descends to Particulars, and describes the Blessing and the *Curse*, not in their Fountains, those are out of sight, and therefore the most Considerable, yet least Considered, the Favour of God the Spring of all the Blessings, and the Wrath of God the Spring of all the Curses; But in their Streams, the sensible Effects of the Blessing and the *Curse*, for they are real Things, and have real Effects. 1. He describes the Blessings that should come upon them if they were obedient, Personal, Family and especially National, for in that capacity especially they are here treated with, *v.* 1.—14. 2. He more largely describes the Curses, which would come upon them if they were Disobedient, such as would be, 1. Their extreme Vexation, *v.* 15.—44. 2. Their utter Ruin and Destruction at last, 45.—67. This Chapter is much to the same purpose with *Lev.* 26. setting before them Life and Death, Good and Evil; and the Promise in the close of that Chapter of their Restoration upon their Repentance is here likewise more largely repeated, Chap. 30. Thus as they had Precept upon Precept in the Repetition of the Law, so they had Line upon Line in the Repetition of the Promises and Threatnings. And these are both there and here, deliver'd not only as Sanctions of the Law what should be conditionally, but as Predictions of the Event, what would be certainly, that for a while the *People* of *Israel* would be happy, in their Obedience, but that at length they would be undone by their Disobedience, and therefore 'tis said, Chap. 30. 1. That all those things would come upon them both the Blessing and the *Curse*.

1 AND it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day; that the

the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth. 2 And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God. 3 Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. 4 Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. 5 Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store. 6 Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out. 7 The LORD shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways. 8 The LORD shall command the blessing upon thee in thy store-houses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto: and he shall bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. 9 The LORD shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in his ways. 10 And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the LORD, and they shall be afraid of thee. 11 And the LORD shall make thee plentiful in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the LORD swore unto thy fathers to give thee. 12 The LORD shall open upon thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow. 13 And the LORD shall make thee the head and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath: if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God, which I command thee this day to observe and to do them: 14 And thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day, to the right hand or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

The Blessings are here put before the Curses, to intimate,

(1.) That God is slow to Anger, but swift to shew Mercy: He has said it, and sworn, that he would much rather we would obey and live, than sin and dye. 'Tis his Delight to Bless. (2.) That tho' both the Promises and the Threatnings are design'd to bring and hold us to our Duty; yet it is better that we be allur'd to that which is Good by a filial Hope of God's Favour, than that we be frightned to it by a servile Fear of his Wrath. That Obedience pleaseth best, which comes from a Principle of Delight in God's Goodness.

Now 1. We have here the Condition upon which the Blessing is promised. (1.) 'Tis upon Condition, that they diligently hearken to the voice of God, v. 1. 2. That they hear God speaking to them by his Word, and use their utmost Endeavour to acquaint themselves with his Will, v. 13. (2.) Upon Condition that they observe and do all his Commandments: And in order to Obedience, there is need of Observation. And that they keep the Commandments of God, v. 9. and walk in his ways. Not only do them for once; but keep them for ever; not only set out in his Ways, but walk in them to the end. (3.) Upon Condition, that they should not go aside either to the right hand or to the left, either to Superstition on the one hand, or Profaneness on the other; and particularly, that they should not go after other Gods, v. 14. Which was the Sin that of all others they were most prone to, and God would be most displeased with. Let them take care to keep up Religion, both the Form and Power of it, in their Families and Nation, and God would not fail to Bless them.

2. The particulars of this Blessing here promis'd.

1. 'Tis promis'd, That the Providence of God should prosper them in all their outward concerns. These Blessings are said to overtake them: v. 2. Good People sometimes in the sense of their own Unworthiness, are ready to fly from the Blessing, and to conclude it belongs not to them; but the Blessing shall

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find them out and follow them notwithstanding: Thus in the Great Day, the Blessing will overtake the Righteous that say, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee? Matth. 25. 37. 'Tis promis'd,

(1.) That they should be safe and easy: A Blessing should come upon their Persons wherever they were, in the City or in the Field, v. 3. Whether their Habitation was in the Town or Country; whether they were Husbandmen or Tradesmen; whether their Business call'd them into the City or into the Field, they should be preserv'd from the Dangers of both, and have the Comforts of both. This Blessing should attend them in their Journeys, going out and coming in, v. 6. Their Persons should be protected, and the Affairs they went about should succeed well. Observe here what a necessary and constant Dependence we have upon God, both for the continuance and comfort of this Life. We need him at every Turn, in all the various Moments of Life: We cannot be safe if he withdraw his Protection; nor Easy if he suspend his Favour: But if he bless us, go where we will, 'tis well with us.

(2.) That their Families should be built up in a numerous Issue, blessed shall be the Fruit of thy Body, v. 4. And in that the Lord shall make thee plentiful, v. 11. In pursuance of the Promise made to Abraham, That his Seed should be as the Stars of Heaven for multitude, and that God would be a God to them, than which a greater Blessing, and more comprehensive, could not be entail'd upon the Fruit of their Body. See Isa. 61. 9.

(3.) That they should be Rich, and have an abundance of all the good Things of this Life, which are promis'd them, not merely that they might have the Pleasure of enjoying them, but (as Bishop Patrick observes out of one of the Jewish Writers) that they might have wherewithal to honour God, and might be helped and encourag'd to serve him cheerfully, and to proceed and persevere in their Obedience to him. A Blessing is promis'd, 1. On all they had without-doors, Corn and Cattle in the Field, v. 4.--11. Their Cows and Sheep particularly; Which should be Blessed for the Owners sakes, and made Blessings to them. In order to this 'tis promis'd, that God would give them Rain in due season, which is call'd his good Treasure, v. 11. because with this River of God the Earth is enrich'd, Plal. 65. 9. Our constant Supplies we must see coming from God's good Treasure, and own our Obligations to him for them; If he withhold his Rain, the Fruits both of the Ground and of the Cattle soon perish. 2. On all they had within-doors, the Basket and Store, v. 5. the Store-houses or Barns, v. 8. When it's brought home God will bless it, and not blow upon it as sometimes he doth, Hag. 1. 6, 9. We depend upon God and his Blessing, not only for our yearly Corn out of the Field, but for our daily Bread out of our Basket and Store, and therefore are taught to Pray for it every Day.

(4.) That they should have Success in all their Employments, which would be a constant Satisfaction to them, The Lord shall command the Blessing (and it is he only that can command it) upon thee, not only in all thou hast, but in all thou doest, all that thou settest thine hand unto, v. 8. This intimated, that even when they were rich, they must not be idle, but must find some good Employment or other to set their hand to, and God would own their Industry, and bless the work of their hand, v. 12. for that which makes rich and keeps so, is the Blessing of the Lord upon the hand of the diligent, Prov. 10. 4, 22.

(5.) That they should have Honour among their Neighbours, v. 1. The Lord thy God will set thee on high above all Nations. He made them so by taking them into Covenant with himself, Chap. 26. 19. And he would make them more and more so by their outward Prosperity, if they would not by Sin disparage themselves. Two Things should help to make them great among the Nations. (1.) Their Wealth, v. 12. Thou shalt lend to many Nations upon Interest, which they were allow'd to take from their Neighbour Nations, but thou shalt not have Occasion to borrow. This would give them a mighty Influence upon all about them; for the Borrower is a Servant to the Lender. It may be meant of Trade and Commerce, that they should Export abundantly more than they should Import, which would keep the Balance on their side. (2.) Their Power, v. 13. The Lord shall make thee the Head, to give Law to all about them, to exact Tribute, and to arbitrate all Controversies. Every Sheaf should bow to theirs; which should make them so Considerable, that all the People of the Earth should be afraid of them, v. 10. i. e. should reverence their true Grandeur, and dread making them their Enemies. The flourishing of Religion among them, and the Blessing of God upon them, would make them Formidable to all their Neighbours, Terrible as an Army with Banners.

(6.) That they should be Victorious over their Enemies, and prosper in all their Wars. If any were so daring as to rise up against them to oppress them, or encroach upon them, it should be at their Peril, they should certainly fall before them, v. 7. The Forces of the Enemy, tho' entirely Drawn

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up to come against them *one way*, should be entirely Routed, and *flee from before them seven ways*, each making the best of his Way.

From the whole we learn, tho' 'twere well if Men would believe it, That Religion and Piety is the best Friend to outward Prosperity. Tho' Temporal Blessings do not take up so much room in the Promises of the New Testament, as they do in those of the Old, yet it is enough that our Lord Jesus has given us his Word, (and sure we may take his Word) that if we seek first the Kingdom of God, and the Righteousness thereof, all other things shall be added to us, as far as infinite Wisdom sees Good, and who can define it farther? *Mat. 6. 33.*

2. It likewise promis'd, that the Grace of God should establish them a holy People. *v. 9.* Having taken them into Covenant with himself, he would keep them in Covenant, and provided they used the Means of Stedfastness, he would give them the Grace of Stedfastness, that they should not depart from him. Note, Those that are sincere in Holiness, God will establish his Holiness; and he is of Power to do it, *Rom. 16. 25.* He that is holy shall be holy still; and those whom God establisheth in Holiness, he thereby establisheth a People to himself, for as long as we keep close to God he will never forsake us.

This Establishment of their Religion would be the Establishment of their Reputation, *v. 10.* All the People of the Earth shall see, and own, that thou art called by the Name of the Lord, i. e. that thou art a most excellent and glorious People, under the particular Care and Countenance of the Great God. They shall be made to know, that a People call'd by the Name of Jehovah, is without doubt the happiest People under the Sun, even their Enemies themselves being Judges. The Favourites of Heaven are truly Great, and first or last 'twill be made to appear that they are so; if not in this World, yet at that Day, when those who confess Christ now, shall be confess'd by him before Men and Angels, as those whom he delights to honour.

15. ¶ But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee and overtake thee. 16 Curfed shalt thou be in the city, and curfed shalt thou be in the field. 17 Curfed shall be thy basket and thy store. 18 Curfed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. 19 Curfed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and curfed shalt thou be when thou goest out. 20 The LORD shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto, for to do: until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly; because of the wickedness of thy doings whereby thou hast forsaken me. 21 The LORD shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee, until he have consumed thee from off the land, whither thou goest to possess it. 22 The LORD shall smite thee with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with blasting, and with mildew: and they shall pursue thee until thou perish. 23 And thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron. 24 The LORD shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust: from heaven shall it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed. 25 The LORD shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them, and shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth. 26 And thy carcase shall be meat unto all fowls of the air, and unto the beasts of the earth, and no man shall fray them away. 27 The LORD will smite thee with the borch of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scab, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed. 28 The LORD shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart. 29 And thou shalt grope at noon-days, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways: and thou shalt be only oppressed, and spoiled evermore, and no man

shall save thee. 30 Thou shalt betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her: thou shalt build an house, and thou shalt not dwell therein: thou shalt plant a vineyard, and shalt not gather the grapes thereof. 31 Thine ox shall be slain before thine eyes, and thou shalt not eat thereof: thine ass shall be violently taken away from before thy face, and shall not be restored to thee: thy sheep shall be given unto thine enemies, and thou shalt have none to rescue them. 32 Thy sons and thy daughters shall be given unto another people, and thine eyes shall look, and fail with longing for them all the day long: and there shall be no might in thine hand. 33 The fruit of thy land, and all thy labours, shall a nation which thou knowest not eat up; and thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed alway: 34 So that thou shalt be mad, for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see. 35 The LORD shall smite thee in the knees, and in the legs, with a fore borch that cannot be healed, from the sole of thy foot, unto the top of thy head. 36 The LORD shall bring thee, and thy king which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known; and there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone. 37 And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word, among all nations whither the LORD shall lead thee. 38 Thou shalt carry much seed out into the field, and shalt gather but little in: for the locust shall consume it. 39 Thou shalt plant vineyards and dress them, but shalt neither drink of the wine, nor gather the grapes: for the worms shall eat them. 40 Thou shalt have olive-trees throughout all thy coasts, but thou shalt not anoint thy self with the oyl: for thine olive shall cast his fruit. 41 Thou shalt beget sons and daughters, but thou shalt not enjoy them: for they shall go into captivity. 42 All thy trees and fruit of thy land shall the locust consume. 43 The stranger that is within thee shall get up above thee very high; and thou shalt come down very low. 44 He shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him: he shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail.

Having view'd the bright side of the Cloud which is towards the Obedient, we have now presented to us the black and dark side, which is towards the Disobedient. If we do not keep God's Commandments, we not only come short of the Blessing promised, that is not all, but we lay ourselves under the Curse, which is as Comprehensive of all Misery, as the Blessing is of all Happiness. Observe,

1. The Equity of this Curse. 'Tis not a Curse causeless, or for some light Cause; God seeks not Occasion against us, nor is he apt to quarrel with us: That which is here mention'd as bringing the Curse is, (1.) Despising God; refusing to hearken to his Voice, *v. 15.* which speaks the highest Contempt imaginable, as if what he said were not worth the heeding, or we were not under any Obligation to him. (2.) Disobeying him; Not doing his Commandments, or not observing to do them. None fall under his Curse, but those that rebel against his Command. (3.) Deserting him. 'Tis because of the wickedness of thy doings, not only whereby thou hast slighted me, but whereby thou hast forsaken me, *v. 20.* God never casts us off, till we first cast him off. It intimates, that their Idolatry, by which they forsook the true God for false Gods, would be their destroying Sin more than any other.

2. The Extent and Efficacy of this Curse. These Curses shall come upon thee from above, and shall overtake thee; tho' thou endeavour to escape them, 'tis to no Purpose to attempt it, they shall follow thee whithersoever thou goest, and seize thee, overtake thee, and overcome thee, *v. 15.* 'Tis said of the Sinner, when God's Wrath is in pursuit of him, that he would fain flee out of his hand, *Job 27. 22.* but he cannot, if he flee from the iron weapon, yet the Bow of steel shall reach him and strike him through. There's no running from God, but by running to him, no fleeing from his Justice, but by fleeing to his Mercy. See *Psal. 21. 8.* (1.) Wherever the Sinner goes, the Curse

Curse of God follows him, wherever he is it rests upon him. He is cursed in the City, and in the Field, v. 16. The Strength of the City cannot shelter him from it. The pleasant Air of the Country is no Fence against these Pestilential Steams. He is cursed, v. 19. when he comes in, for the Curse is upon the House of the Wicked, Prov. 3. 33. and he is cursed when he goes out, for he cannot leave that Curse behind him, nor get rid of it, which is enter'd into his Bowels like Water, and like Oil into his Bones. (2.) Whatever he has is under a Curse, *curst is he Ground for his sake*, and all that is on it, or comes out of it, and so he is *curst from the Ground*, as Cain, Gen. 4. 11. The Basket and Store curst, v. 17, 18. All his Enjoyments being forfeited by him, are in a manner forbidden to him, as *curst Things*, which he has no Title to. To those whose Mind and Conscience is defiled, every Thing else is so, Tit. 1. 15. They are all imbitter'd to him, he cannot take any true Comfort in them, for the Wrath of God mixes itself with them, and he is so far from having any Security of the Continuance of them, that if his Eyes be open he may see them all condemn'd, and ready to be confiscated, and with them all his Joys, and all his Hopes gone for ever. (3.) Whatever he doth is under a Curse too. 'Tis a Curse in all that he setteth his Hand unto, v. 20. A constant Disappointment which they are Subject to, that set their Hearts upon the World, and expect their Happiness in it, and which cannot but be a constant Vexation. This Curse here is just the reverse of the Blessing in the former Part of the Chapter. Thus whatever Bliss there is in Heaven, there is not only the want of it, but the contrary to it in Hell, Isa. 65. 13. *My servants shall eat, but ye shall be a hungry*.

Many particular Judgments are here instanc'd, in which would be the Fruits of the Curse, and with which God would punish the People of the Jews for their Apostacy and Disobedience. 1. These Judgments threaten'd are of divers kinds, for God has many Arrows in his Quiver, *four sore Judgments*, Ezek. 14. 21. and many more. 2. They are here represented very terrible, and the Descriptions of them are exceeding lively and affecting, that Men knowing these Terrors of the Lord, might if possible be persuaded. 8. The Threatnings of the same Judgment are several times repeated, that they might make the more deep and lasting Impressions; and to intimate, that if they persisted in their Disobedience, the Judgment which they thought was over, and of which they said, surely the bitterness of it is past, would return with double Force, for when God judgeth he will overcome.

1. Bodily Diseases are here threaten'd, that they should be Epidemical in their Land. These God makes use of sometimes for the Chastisement and Improvement of his own People, Lord behold him whom thou lovest is sick: But here they are threaten'd to be brought upon his Enemies as Tokens of his Wrath, and design'd for their Ruin. So that according to the Temper of our Spirits, under Sickness, accordingly it is to us a Blessing or a Curse. But whatever Sickness may be to particular Persons, 'tis certain Epidemical Diseases raging among a People, are National Judgments, and are so to be accounted. He here threatens, (1.) Painful Diseases, v. 35. *a sore Botch beginning in the Legs and Knees*, but spreading like Job's Boils from Head to Foot. And (2.) Shameful Diseases, v. 27. the *Botch of Egypt*, (such Boils and Blains as the Egyptians had been plagu'd with, when God brought Israel from among them (and the Emerods, and Scab; Vile Diseases, the just Punishment of those who by Sin had made themselves vile. (3.) Mortal Diseases. The Pestilence, v. 21. The Consumption, (put for all Chronical Diseases) and the Fever (for all Acute Diseases) v. 22. See Lev. 26. 16. and all incurable, v. 27.

2. Famine and Scarcity of Provisions; and this, (1.) for want of Rain, v. 23, 24. *Thy Heaven over thy Head*, that Part that is over thy Land, shall be as dry as Brass, while the Heavens over other Countries shall distil their Dew: And when the Heaven is as Brass, the Earth of Course will be as Iron, so hard and unfruitful. Instead of Rain, the Dust shall be blown out of the Highways into the Field, and spoil that little that there is of the Fruits of the Earth. (2.) By destroying Insects. The Locusts should destroy the Corn, so that they should not have so much as their Seed again, v. 38, 42. And the Fruit of the Vine, which should make glad their Hearts, should all be Worm eaten, v. 39. And the Olive; some way or other, should be made to cast its Fruit, v. 40. The Heathen us'd many Superstitious Customs in Honour of their Idol-Gods, for the preserving the Fruits of the Earth: But Moses tells Israel, that the only Way they had to preserve them was to keep God's Commandments; for he is a God that will not be sported with, like their Idols, but will be serv'd in Spirit and Truth. This Threatning we find fulfill'd in Israel, 1 Kings 17. 1. Jer. 14. 1. Joel. 1. 4.

3. That they should be smitten before their Enemies in War, who 'tis likely would be the more cruel to them, when they had them at their Mercy, for the Severity they had us'd against the Nations of Canaan; which their Neighbours in after Ages

would be apt to remember against them, v. 25. 'Twould make their Flight the more shameful, and the more grievous, that they might have triumph'd over their Enemies, if they had but been faithful to their God. The Carcasses of those that were slain in War, or dy'd in Captivity among Strangers, should be Meat to the Fowls, v. 26. And an Israelite, having forfeited the Favour of his God, should have so little Humanity shew'd him, as that no Man should fray them away; soodious would God's Curse make 'em to all Mankind.

4. That they should be, infatuated in all their Counsels, so as not to discern their own Interest, nor bring any Thing to pass for the publick Good, v. 28, 29. *The Lord shall smite thee with Madness and Blindness*. Note, God's Judgments can reach the Minds of Men, to fill them with Darkness and Horror, as well as their Bodies and Estates; and those are the forest of all Judgments, which make Men a Terror to themselves, and their own Destroyers. That which they contriv'd to secure themselves by, should still turn to their Prejudice. Thus we often find that the Allies they confided in distressed them, and helped them not, 2 Chron. 28. 20. Those that will not walk in God's Counsels, are justly left to be ruin'd by their own: And those that are wilfully blind to their Duty, deserve to be made blind to their Interest; and seeing they loved Darkness rather than light, let them grope as Noon-day, as in the Dark.

5. That they should be plunder'd of all their Enjoyments, stripp'd of all by the proud and imperious Conqueror, such as Benhadad was to Ahab, 1 Kings 20. 5, 6. Not only their Houses and Vineyards should be taken from them, but their Wives and Children, v. 30, 32. Their dearest Comforts, which they took most Pleasure in, and promis'd themselves most from, should be the Entertainment and Triumph of their Enemies. As they dwelt in Houses which they builded not, and eaten of Vineyards which they planted not, Chap. 6. 10, 11. so others should do by them. Their Oxen, Asses and sheep, like Job's, taken away before their Eyes, and they should not be able to recover them, v. 31. And all the fruit of their Land and Labours should be devour'd and eaten up by the Enemy; so that they and theirs would want Necessaries, while their Enemies were revelling with that which they had labour'd for.

6. That they should be carried Captives into a far Country; nay, into all the Kingdoms of the Earth, v. 24. Their Sons and Daughters, whom they promis'd themselves Comfort in, should go into Captivity, v. 41. And they themselves at length, and their King in whom they promis'd themselves Safety and Settlement, v. 36. This was fully accomplish'd, when the Ten Tribes first was carried Captive into Assyria, 2 Kings 17. 6. and not long after the two Tribes into Babylon, and two of their Kings, 2 Kings 24. 14, 15, 25. 7. 21. That which is mention'd as an Aggravation of their Captivity, is, that they should go into an unknown Country, the Language and Customs of which would be very uncouth, and their Treatment among them barbarous, and there they should serve other Gods, i. e. be compell'd to do so by their Enemies, as they were in Babylon, Dan. 3. 6. Note, God often makes Mens Sin their Punishment, and chuseth their Delusions. Ye shall serve other Gods, i. e. ye shall serve those that do serve them. A Nation is often in Scripture call'd by the Name of its God, as Jer. 48. 7. They had made Idolaters their Associates, and now God made Idolaters their Oppressors.

7. That those which remain'd should be insulted and tyranniz'd over by Strangers, v. 43, 44. So the Ten Tribes were by the Colonies which the King of Assyria sent to take Possession of their Land, 2 Kings 17. 24. Or, this may be meant of the gradual Encroachments which the Strangers within their Gates should make upon them, so as insensibly to worm them out of their Estates. We read of the fulfilling of this, Hos. 7. 9. *Strangers have devour'd his Strength*. Foreigners eaten the Bread out of the Mouths of true born Israelites, by which they were justly chastis'd for introducing strange Gods.

8. That their Reputation among their Neighbours should be quite sunk, and they that had been a Name, and a Praise, should be an Astonishment, a Proverb, and a By-word, v. 37. Some have observ'd the fulfilling of this Threatning in their present State; for when we would express the most perfidious and barbarous Treatment, we say, *None but a few would have done so*. Thus is Sin a Reproach to any People.

Lastly, To compleat their Misery, 'tis threaten'd that they should be put quite out of the Possession of their own Souls by all these Troubles, v. 34. *Thou shalt be mad for the sight of thine Eyes*, i. e. quite bereav'd of all Comfort and Hope, and abandon'd to utter Despair. Those that walk by sight, and not by Faith, are in Danger of losing Reason itself, when every thing about them looks frightful; and their Condition is woful indeed that are mad for the sight of their Eyes.

45 Moreover, all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed: because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee. 46 And they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever. 47 Because thou servedst not the LORD thy God with joyfulness and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things: 48 Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the LORD shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee. 49 The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth, a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand: 50 A nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young. 51 And he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy land, until thou be destroyed: which also shall not leave the either corn, wine, or oyl, or the increase of thy kine, or flocks of thy sheep, until he have destroyed thee. 52 And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land: and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, throughout all thy land, which the LORD thy God hath given thee. 53 And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters (which the LORD thy God hath given thee) in the siege and in the straitness wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee: 54 So that the man that is tender among you and very delicate, his eye shall be evil towards his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the remnant of his children which he shall leave: 55 So that he will not give to any of them of the flesh of his children whom he shall eat: because he hath nothing left him in the siege, and in the straitness wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates. 56 The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil towards the husband of her bosom, and towards her son, and towards her daughter, 57 And towards her young one that cometh out from between her feet, and towards her children which she shall bear: for she shall eat them for want of all things secretly in the siege and straitness wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates. 58 If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law, that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD; 59 Then the LORD will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance. 60 Moreover, he will bring upon thee all the diseases of Egypt, which thou wast afraid of; and they shall cleave unto thee. 61 Also every sickness, and every plague which is not written in the book of this Law, them will the LORD bring upon thee, until thou be destroyed. 62 And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude: because thou wouldst not obey the voice of the LORD thy God. 63 And it shall come to pass, that as the LORD rejoiceth over you to do you good, and

to multiply you: so the LORD will rejoyce over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought: and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it, 64 And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone. 65 And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shalt the sole of thy foot have rest: but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind. 66 And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee, and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life. 67 In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even: and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning, for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see. 68 And the LORD shall bring thee into Egypt again, with ships, by the way whereof I spake unto thee, Thou shalt see it no more again: and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bond-men and bond-women, and no man shall buy you.

One would have thought enough had been said to possess them with a Dread of that Wrath of God which is revealed from Heaven against the ungodliness and unrighteousness of Men. But to shew how deep the Treasures of that Wrath are, and that still there is more and worse behind: Moses, when one would have thought he had concluded this dismal Subject, begins again, and adds to this Roll of Curses, many like Words; as Jeremiah did to his, Chap. 36. 32. It should seem that in the former Part of this Commination, Moses foretels their Captivity in Babylon, and the Calamities which introduc'd and attended that, by which even after their Return they were brought to that low and poor Condition, which is describ'd, v. 44. That their Enemies should be the Head, and they the Tail: But here in this latter Part he foretels their last Destruction by the Romans, and their Dispersion thereupon. And the present deplorable State of the Jewish Nation, and of all that have incorporated themselves with them, by embracing their Religion, doth so fully and exactly answer this Prediction here in these Verses, that it serves for an uncontested Proof of the Truth of the Prophecy, and consequently of the Divine Authority of the Scripture. And this last Destruction being here represented more dreadful than the former, it shews that their Sin in rejecting Christ and his Gospel, was more heinous and more provoking to God than Idolatry itself, and left them more under the Power of Satan; for their Captivity in Babylon cured them effectually of their Idolatry in Seventy Years time; but under this last Destruction now for above 1600 Years, they continue incurably averse to the Lord Jesus.

Observe 1. What is here said in general of the Wrath of God, which should light and lye upon them for their Sins.

1. That if they would not be rul'd by the Commands of God, they should certainly be ruin'd by his Curse, v. 45, 46. Because thou didst not keep his Commandments, (especially that of hearing and obeying the great Prophet) these Curses shall come upon thee, as upon a People appointed to Destruction, the Generation of God's Wrath: And they shall be for a Sign, and for a Wonder. It is amazing to think, That a People so long the Favourites of Heaven, should be so perfectly abandon'd and cast off: That a People so closely incorporated, should be so universally dispers'd; and yet that a People so scatter'd in all Nations should preserve themselves distinct, and not mix with any, but like Cain be Fugitives and Vagabonds, and yet mark'd to be known.

2. That if they would not serve God with Cheerfulness, they should be compell'd to serve their Enemies, v. 47, 48. That they might know the Difference, 2 Chron. 12. 8. which some think is the meaning of Ezek. 20. 24, 25. Because they despised my Statutes, I gave them Statutes that were not good. Observe here, 1. It is justly expected from those to whom God gives an Abundance of the good Things of this Life, that they should serve him. What doth he maintain us for, but that we may do his Work, and be some way serviceable to his Honour? 2. The more God gives us, the more cheerfully we should serve him. Our Abundance should be Oil to the Wheels of our Obedience. God is a Master that will be serv'd with Gladness, and delights to hear us sing at our Work. 3. If when we receive the Gifts of God's Bounty, we either do not serve him at all, or serve him with Reluctancy, it is a righteous Thing

Thing with him to make us know the Hardships of *Want* and *Servitude*. They deserve to have Cause given them to complain, who complain without a Cause. *Tristis es, & felix!* Happy, and yet not Easy! Blush at thine own Folly and Ingratitude.

3. That if they would not give *Glory to God* by an awful Obedience, he would get him Honour upon them by wonderful Plagues, v. 58, 59. Note, 1. God justly expects from us that we should fear his fearful Name: And which is strange, that Name which is here propos'd as the Object of our Fear, is, *The Lord thy God*, which is very fitly here put in our Bibles in Capital Letters; for nothing can sound more truly *August*. As nothing is more Comfortable, so nothing more Awful than this, That he with whom we have to do is *Jehovah*, a Being infinitely Perfect and Blessed, and the Author of all Being; and that he is our God, our rightful Lord and Owner, from whom we are to receive Laws, and to whom we are to give Account: This is great, and greatly to be fear'd. 2. We may justly expect from God, that if we do not fear his fearful Name, we should feel his fearful Plagues; for one Way or other God will be fear'd. All God's Plagues are dreadful; but some are wonderful, which carry in them extraordinary Signatures of Divine Power and Justice, so that a Man upon the first View of them, may say, *Verily, there is a God that judgeth in the Earth*.

2. How the Destruction threaten'd is describ'd. *Moses* is here upon the same melancholly Subject that our Saviour is discoursing of to his Disciples in his Farewel Sermon, *Mat. 24. vix.* the Destruction of *Jerusalem* and the *Jewish Nation*.

Five Things are here foretold, as Steps to their Ruin.

1. That they should be invaded by a Foreign Enemy, v. 49, 50. A Nation from far, viz. the Romans, as swift as the Eagle, hastening to the Prey. Our Saviour makes use of this Similitude, in foretelling this Destruction, that where the Carcase is, there will the Eagles be gather'd together, *Matth. 24. 28.* And Bishop Patrick observes, (to make the Accomplishment the more remarkable) that the Ensign of the Roman Armies, was an Eagle. This Nation is said to be of a fierce Countenance, an Indication of a fierce Nature, stern and severe, that would not pity the Weakness and Infirmary either of little Children, or of old People.

That the Country shall be laid waste, and all the Fruits of it eaten up by this Army of Foreigners; which is the natural Consequent of an Invasion, especially when it's made as the Romans was, for the Chastisement of Rebels, v. 51. He shall eat the Fruit of thy Castle and Land, so that the Inhabitants should be starv'd, while the Invaders were fed to the full.

3. That their Cities should be besieg'd, and that such would be the Obstinacy of the Besieg'd, and such the Vigour of the Besiegers, that they would be reduc'd to the last Extremity, and at length fall into the Hands of the Enemy, v. 52. No Place, tho' never so well fortify'd, no, not *Jerusalem* itself, tho' it held out long, would escape. Two of the common Consequences of a long Siege are here foretold. 1. A miserable Famine, which would prevail to that Degree, that for want of Food, they should kill and eat their own Children, v. 53. Men should do so, notwithstanding their Hardiness, and Ability to bear Hunger; and tho' oblig'd by the Law of Nature to provide for their own Families, yet should refuse to give to the Wife and Children that were starving any of the Child that was barbarously butcher'd, v. 54, 55. Nay, that Woman, Ladies of Quality, notwithstanding their natural Niceness about their Food, and their natural Affection to their Children, yet for want of Food should so far forget all Humanity as to kill and eat them, v. 56, 57. Let us observe by the Way how hard this Fate must needs be to the tender and delicate Women, and learn not to indulge ourselves in Tenderness and Delicacy, because we know not what we may be reduced to before we dye, and the more nice we are, the harder it will be to us to bear Want, and the more Danger we shall be in of sacrificing Reason, and Religion, and Natural Affection itself to the Clamours and Cravings of an unmortified ungoverned Appetite. This Threatning was fulfill'd in the Letter of it, more than once, to the perpetual Reproach of the Jewish Nation: Never was the like done either by Greek or Barbarian, but in the Siege of *Samarina*, a Woman boiled her own Son, 2 Kings 6. 28, 29. And it is spoken of as commonly done among them in the Siege of *Jerusalem* by the Babylonians, *Lam. 4. 10.* And in the last Siege by the Romans, *Josephus* tells us of a Noble Woman that kill'd and eat her own Child, through the Extremity of the Famine, and when she had eaten one half secretly, v. 57. that she might have it to herself, the Mob smelling Meat, got into the House, to whom she shew'd the other half, which she had kept till another time, inviting them to share with her. What is too barbarous for them to do, that are a-

bandon'd of God? Sickness is another common Effect of a strait and long Siege; and that's here threaten'd: Sore Sicknesses and of long Continuance, v. 59. These should attend the Jews wherever they went afterwards, the Diseases of Egypt, Leprosies, Botches, and foul Ulcers, v. 60. Nay, as if the particular Miseries here threaten'd were not enough, he concludes with an, &c. v. 61. The Lord will bring upon thee every Sickness, and every Plague, tho' it be not written in the Book of this Law. Those that fall under the Curse of God, will find that the one half was not told them of the Weight and Terror of that Curse.

4. That Multitudes of them should perish; so that they should become few in Number, v. 62. 'Twas a Nation that God had wonderfully increased, so that they were as the Stars of Heaven for Multitude; but for their Sin diminished and brought low, *Psal. 107. 38, 39.* 'Tis computed that in the Destruction of the Jewish Nation by the Romans, as appears by the Account *Josephus* gives of it, there were above two Millions that fell by the Sword at several Places, besides what perish'd by Famine and Pestilence; so that the whole Country was laid waste, and turn'd into a Wilderness. That's a terrible Word, v. 63. As the Lord rejoiceth over you to do you good, so he will rejoice over you to destroy you. Behold, here the Goodness and Severity of God: Mercy here shines bright in the Pleasure God takes in doing Good; he rejoiceth in it: Yet Justice here appears no less illustrious in the Pleasure he takes in destroying the Impenitent; not as it is the making of his Creatures miserable, but as it is the asserting of his own Honour, and the securing of the Ends of his Government. See what a malignant mischievous Thing Sin is, which (as I may say) makes it necessary for the God of infinite Goodness to rejoice in the Destruction of his own Creatures, even those that had been Favourites.

5. That the Remnant should be scatter'd throughout the Nations. This compleats their Woe, v. 64. The Lord shall scatter thee among all People. This is remarkably fulfill'd in their present Dispersion, for there are Jews to be found almost in all Countries that are possess'd either by Christians or Mahometans, and in such Numbers, that it has been said, if they could unite in one common Interest, they would be a very formidable Body, and able to deal with the most Powerful States and Princes, but they abide under the Power of this Curse, and are so scatter'd as that they are not able to incorporate. 'Tis here foretold, that in this Dispersion (1.) They should have no Religion, or none to any Purpose, should have neither Temple nor Altar, nor Priesthood, for they should serve other Gods. Some think this has been fulfill'd in the force put upon the Jews in Popish Countries, to Worship the Images that are us'd in the Romish Church to their great Vexation. 2. They should have no Rest; no Rest of Body, the sole of thy foot shall not have rest, v. 65, but be continually upon the Remove either in hope of Gain, or fear of Persecution; All Wandering Jews: No rest of the Mind (which is much worse) but a trembling heart, v. 65. no assurance of Life, v. 66. weary both of Light and Darkness, which are in their Turns both welcome to a quiet Mind; but to them both Day and Night would be a Terror, v. 67. Such a Toss Job was in once (*Job 7. 4.*) but to them this should be constant and perpetual; That Blindness and Darkness, which the Apostle speaks of as having happened to Israel, and that Guilt which bow'd down their back away, *Rom. 11. 8, 9, 10.* must needs occasion a constant Restlessness and Amazement. These are a Torment to themselves and to all about them that fear day and night; and are always uneasy; Let good People strive against it, and not give way to that Fear which has Torment; And let Wicked People not be secure in their Wickedness, for their Hearts cannot endure, nor can their Hands be strong, when the Terrors of God set themselves in array against them. They that say in the morning, O that it were even, and in the evening, O that it were morning, shew, 1. A Constant Fret, and Vexation, chiding the Hours for lingering, and complaining of the length of every Minute; Let time be precious to us when we are in Prosperity, and then it will not be so tedious to us when we are in Afflictions as otherwise it would. 2. A Constant Fright, and Terror; afraid in the Morning of the Arrow that flyeth by day, and therefore wishing the Day over, and what the better? When Evening comes, the trembling Heart is no less apprehensive of the Terror by Night, *Plal. 5. 6.* Happy they whose Minds being fix'd on God are quiet from the fear of Evil. Observe here the Terror ariseth not only from the sight of the Eyes, but from the fear of the Heart, not only from the real Dangers, but from imaginary ones; The causes of Fear many times when they come to be enquir'd into, prove to be only the Creatures of the Fancy.

Lastly, In the close God threatens to leave them as he found them in a House of Bondage, v. 68. The Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again, i. e. into such a miserable State as they were in when they were Slaves to the Egyptians, and rul'd by them with Rigor. God had brought them out of Egypt, and had said, they should see it no more again, *Deut. 17. 16.* but now they should

should be reduc'd to the same state of Slavery that they had been in there. To be Sold to *Strangers* would be bad enough, but much worse to be sold to their *Enemies*. And even *Slaves* may be valued as such, but a *Jew* should be in so ill a Name for all that's nought, that when he was expos'd to Sale no man should buy him, which would make his Master that had him to sell, the more severe with him. Thirty *Jews* (they say) have been sold for one small piece of Money, as they sold our Saviour for thirty Pieces.

Now upon the whole Matter. 1. The Accomplishment of these Predictions upon the *Jewish* Nation shews, that *Moses* spake by the Spirit of God, who certainly foresees the Ruin of Sinners, and gives them warning of it; that they may prevent it by a true and timely Repentance; or else be left inexcusable. 2. Let us all from hence learn to stand in awe, and not to sin. I have heard of a wicked Man, who upon reading the Threatnings of this Chapter was so enrag'd, that he tore the Leaf out of his Bible, as *Jehojakim* cut *Jeremiah's* Roll; But to what Purpose is it to deface a Copy while the Original remains upon Record in the Divine Councils, by which it is unalterably determin'd, that the Wages of Sin is Death, whether Men will hear or whether they will forbear.

CHAP. XXIX.

The first words of this Chapter are the Contents of it; These are the words of the Covenant, v. 1. these that follow; Here's 1. A recital of God's dealings with them, in order to the bringing of them into this Covenant, v. 2.—8. 2. A solemn charge to them to keep the Covenant, v. 9. 3. An Abstract of the Covenant itself, v. 12, 13. 4. A specification of the Persons taken into the Covenant, v. 10, 11, 14, 15. 5. An intimation of the great Design of this Covenant against Idolatry, in a Parenthesis, v. 16, 17. 6. A most solemn and dreadful Denunciation of the wrath of God against such Persons as promise themselves Peace in a sinful way, v. 18.—28. 7. The conclusion of this Treaty with a distinction between things secret, and things revealed, v. 29.

THESE are the words of the covenant which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel, in the land of Moab, beside the covenant which he made with them in Horeb. 2 ¶ And Moses called unto all Israel, and said unto them, Ye have seen all that the LORD did before your Eyes in the land of Egypt, unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land; 3 The great temptations which thine eyes have seen, the signs and those great Miracles: 4 Yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day. 5 And I have led you forty years in the wilderness: your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot. 6 Ye have not eaten bread, neither have ye drunk wine, or strong drink: that ye might know that I am the LORD your God. 7 And when ye came unto this place, Sihon the king of Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, came out against us unto battel, and we smote them. 8 And we took their land, and gave it for an inheritance unto the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to the half tribe of Manasseh. 9 Keep therefore the words of this covenant and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do.

Now Moses had largely repeated the Commands which the People were to observe as their Part of the Covenant, and the Promises and Threatnings which God would make good (according as they behav'd themselves) as his Part of the Covenant; the whole is here summ'd up in a federal Transaction. The Covenant formerly made is here renew'd, and Moses that was before, is still the Mediator of it, v. 1. The Lord commanded Moses to make it. Moses himself, tho' King in *Jeshurun*, could not make the Covenant any otherwise than as God gave him Instructions. It doth not lie in the power of Ministers to fix the Terms of the Covenant, they are only to dispense the Seals of it. This is said to be beside the Covenant made in Horeb; for tho' the Covenant was the same, yet it was a new Promulgation and Ratification of it. 'Tis probable some now living, tho' not of Age to be muster'd, were of Age to consent for themselves to the Covenant made at Horeb, and yet it is here renew'd; Note, Those that have solemnly covenanted with God, should take all Opportunities to do it again, as those that like their Choice too well to change. But the far greater Part were a new Generation,

and therefore the Covenant must be made afresh with them, for 'tis fit the Covenant should be renew'd to the Children of the Covenant.

'Tis usual for Indentures to begin with a Recital; This doth so; with a Reherſal of the great Things God had done for them. 1. As an Encouragement to them, to believe that God would indeed be to them a God, for he would not have done so much for them, if he had not design'd more, to which all he had hitherto done was but a Preface (as it were) or Introduction; Nay, he had shew'd himself a God in what he had hitherto done for them, which might raise their Expectations of something great; and answering the vast Extent and Compass of that pregnant Promise, that God would be to them a God. 2. As an Engagement upon them to be to him an Obedient People in Consideration of what he had done for them.

For the Proof of what he hereadvanceth, he appeals to their own Eyes, v. 2. Ye have seen all that the Lord did. Their own Senses were uncontestable Evidence of the matter of Fact; that God had done great Things for them; And then their own Reason was no less a competent Judge of the Equity of his Inference from it, v. 9. Keep therefore the words of this Covenant.

These things he instanceth in to shew the Power and Goodness of God in his Appearances for them, (1.) Their Deliverance out of Egypt, v. 2, 3. The amazing Signs and Miracles by which Pharaoh was plagu'd, and compell'd to dismiss them, and Israel was tried, (for they are call'd temptations) whether they would trust God to secure them from, and save them by those Plagues. (2.) Their Conduct through the Wilderness for 40 Years, v. 9, 6. There they were led, and clad, and fed by Miracles; tho' the Paths of the Wilderness were not only unknown, but untrodden, yet God kept them from being lost there; and (as Bishop Patrick observes) those very shoes, which by the Appointment of God they put on in Egypt at the Passover when they were ready to march, (Exod. 12. 11.) never wore out, but serv'd them to Canaan: And tho' they liv'd not upon Bread which strengthens the Heart, and Wine which rejoiceth it; but upon Manna, and Rock-water, yet they were Men of Strength and Courage, mighty Men, and able to go forth to War. By these Miracles they were made to know that the Lord is God, and by these Mercies, that he was their God. (3.) The Victory they had lately obtain'd over Sihon, and Og, and that good Land which they had taken possession of, v. 7, 8. Both former Mercies, and fresh Mercies should be improved by us as Inducements to Obedience.

By way of Inference from these Memoirs, (1) Moses laments their Stupidity, v. 4. Yet the Lord has not given you a heart to perceive.—This doth not lay the Blame of their Senselessness and Sottishness, and Unbelief upon God, as if they had stood ready to receive his Grace, and had begg'd for it, but he had denied them; No, but it fastens the Guilt upon themselves. The Lord, who is the Father of Spirits, a God in Covenant with you, and who had always been so rich in Mercy to you, no doubt would have crown'd all his other Gifts with this, he would have given you a heart to perceive and eyes to see, if you had not by your own Frowardness and Perverseness frustrated his kind Intentions, and receiv'd his Grace in vain. Note, 1. The hearing Ear, the seeing Eye, and the understanding Heart are the Gift of God. All that have them, have them from him. 2. God gives, not only Food and Raiment, but Wealth, and large Possessions to many to whom he doth not give Grace. Many enjoy the Gifts, that have not hearts to perceive the Giver, nor the true Intention and Use of the Gifts. 3. God's readiness to do us good in other things, is a plain Evidence that if we have not Grace, that best of Gifts, 'tis our own Fault not his; he would have gather'd us, and we would not.—(2.) Moses chargeth them to be Obedient, v. 9. Keep therefore and do.—Note, We are bound in Gratitude and Interest, as well as Duty and Faithfulness to keep the Words of the Covenant.

10 ¶ Ye stand this day all of you before the LORD your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, with all the men of Israel, 11 Your little ones, your wives, and thy stranger that is in thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood, unto the drawer of thy water: 12 That thou shouldest enter into covenant with the LORD thy God, and into his Oath which the LORD thy God maketh with thee this day: 13 That he may establish thee to day for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto thee a God, as he hath said unto thee, and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. 14 Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath; 15 But with him that standeth here with us this day before the LORD our God, and also with him that is not here with us this day:

16 (For

16 (For ye know how we have dwelt in the land of Egypt, and how we came through the nations which ye passed by. 17 And ye have seen their abominations, and their Idols, wood and stone, silver and gold, which were among them.) 18 Left there should be among you, man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations: lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood. 19 And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless'd himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst: 20 The LORD will not spare him, but then the anger of the LORD, and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the LORD shall blot out his Name from under heaven. 21 And the LORD shall separate him unto evil, out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant, that are written in this book of the law: 22 So that the generation to come of your children that shall rise up after you, and the stranger that shall come from a far land, shall say, when they see the plagues of that land, and the sicknesses which the LORD hath laid upon it; 23 And that the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, which the LORD overthrew in his anger and in his wrath: 24 Even all nations shall say, Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this land? What meaneth the heat of this great anger? 25 Then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt. 26 For they went and served other gods, and worshipped them, gods whom they knew not, and whom he had not given unto them. 27 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against this land, to bring upon it all the curses that are written in this book. 28 And the LORD rooted them out of their land, in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as it is this day. 29 The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us, and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.

It appears by the length of the Sentences here, and by the copiousness and pungency of the Expressions, that Moses, now he was drawing near to the close of his Discourse, was very warm and zealous, and very desirous to impress what he said upon the Minds of this unthinking People: To bind them the faster to God and Duty, he here with great Solemnity of Expression, (to make up the want of the external Ceremony that was used, Exod. 24. 4. &c. concludes a Bargain (as it were) between them and God, an everlasting Covenant which God would not forget, and they must not. He requires not their explicit Consent, but lays the Matter plainly before them, and then leaves it between God and their own Consciences.—Observe,

1. The Parties to this Covenant, (1.) 'Tis the Lord their God they are to Covenant with, v. 12. To him they must give up themselves, to him they must join themselves. 'Tis his Oath; He has drawn up the Covenant, and settled it; He requires your Consent to it; He has sworn to you, and to him you must be sworn. This requires us to be Sincere and Serious, Humble and Reverent in our covenant Transactions with God, remembering how great a God he is with whom we are covenanting, who has a perfect Knowledge of us, and an absolute Dominion over us. (2.) They are all to be taken into Covenant with him. They were all summon'd to attend, v. 2. and did accordingly,

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and are told, v. 10. what was the Design of their appearing before God now, in a Body, they were to enter into Covenant with him. 1. Even their Great Men; the Captains of their Tribes, their Elders and Officers, must not think it any Disparagement to their Honour, or any Diminution of their Power, to put their Necks under the Yoke of this Covenant, and to draw in it. They must rather first enter into the Covenant, to set a good Example to their Inferiours. 2. Not the Men only, but their Wives and Children must come into this Covenant; tho' they were not number'd and muster'd, yet they must be joyn'd to the Lord, v. 11. Observe, Even little ones are capable of being taken into Covenant with God, and are to be admitted with their Parents. Little Children, so little as to be carried in Arms, must be brought to Christ, and shall be blessed by him, for of such was, and is the Kingdom of God.—3. Not the Men of Israel only, but the Stranger that was in their Camp, provided he was so far profelyted to their Religion, as to renounce all false Gods, was taken into this Covenant with the God of Israel, forasmuch as he also, tho' a Stranger, was to be look'd upon in this Matter as a Son of Abraham, Luke 19. 9. This was an early indication of Favour to the Gentiles, and that Kindness God had in Store for them. 4. Not the Freeman only, but the Hewers of Wood, and Drawers of Water, the meanest Drudge they had among them. Note, As none are too great to come under the Bonds of the Covenant; so none are too mean to inherit the Blessings of the Covenant. In Christ no Difference is made between Bond and Free, Col. 3. 11. Are thou call'd being a Servant? care not for it, 1 Cor. 7. 21.—5. Not only those that were now present before God in this solemn Assembly, but those also that were not here with them, were taken into Covenant, v. 15. As with him that standeth here with us; (so Bishop Patrick thinks it should be render'd) so also with him that is not here with us this Day, that is, 1. Those that tarried at Home were included, that were detained either by Sickness or necessary Business, they must not therefore think themselves disengag'd, no, every Israelite shares in the common Blessings, they that tarry at home divide the Spoil, and therefore every Israelite must own himself bound by the Consent of the Representative Body. They who cannot go up to the House of the Lord, must keep up a Spiritual Communion with those that do, and be present in Spirit when they are absent in Body. 2. The Generations to come are included. Nay, one of the Chaldee Paraphrasts reads it, All the Generations that have been from the first Days of the World, and all that shall arise to the End of the whole World, stand with us here this Day: And so, taking this Covenant as a Typical Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace, 'tis a noble Testimony to the Mediator of that Covenant, who is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever.

2. The Summary of this Covenant: All the Precepts and all the Promises of the Covenant, are included in the Covenant Relation between God and them, v. 13. That they should be appointed, raised up, established for a People to him, to observe and obey him, to be devoted to him, and dependant on him; and that he should be to them a God, according to the Tenor of the Covenant made with their Fathers, to make them Holy, High and Happy. Their Fathers are here nam'd, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, as Examples of Piety which those must set themselves to imitate, who expected any Benefit by the Covenant made with them. Note, A due Consideration of the Relation we stand in to God, as our God, and the Obligation we lie under as a People to him, is enough to bring us to all the Duties, and all the Comforts of that Covenant.

3. The principal Design of the renewing of this Covenant at this Time, was to fortify them against Temptations to Idolatry. Tho' other Sins will be the Sinners Ruin; yet this was the Sin that was likely to be their Ruin. Now concerning this, he shews,

1. The Danger they were in of being tempted to it, v. 16, 17. You know we have dwelt in the Land of Egypt, a Country addicted to Idolatry, and 'twas well if there were not to this Day among them some Remains of the Infection of that Idolatry; we have passed by other Nations, the Edomites, Moabites, &c. and have seen their Abominations, and their Idols, and some among you, it may be, have liked them too well, and still hanker after them, and would rather worship a wooden God that they can see, than an infinite Spirit whom they never saw. 'Tis to be hop'd, there were those among them who the more they saw of these Abominations, and Idols, the more they hated them; but there were those that were smitten with the sight of them, saw these accursed Things and coveted them.

2. The Danger they were in, if they yielded to the Temptation. He gives them fair warning; it was at their Peril, if they forsook God to serve Idols. If they would not be bound and held by the Precepts of the Covenant, they would find that the Curses of the Covenant would be strong enough to bind and hold them.

3. Idolatry would be the Ruin of particular Persons and their Families, v. 18.—21. Where observe,

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(1.) The

(1.) The Sinner describ'd, v. 18. (1.) He is one whose *Heart turns away from his God*: There the Mischief begins, in the evil Hearts of Unbelief, which inclines Men to depart from the living God to dead Idols. Even to this Sin Men are tempted, when they are drawn aside by their own Lusts and Fancies. They that begin to turn from God, by neglecting their Duty to him, are easily drawn to other Gods: And they that serve other Gods, do certainly turn away from the true God; for he will admit no Rivals: He will be all, or nothing. (2.) He is a Root that bears Gall and Wormwood, i. e. He is a dangerous Man, that being himself poyson'd with ill Principles and Inclinations, with a secret Contempt of the God of Israel, and his Institutions, and a Veneration for the Gods of the Nations, endeavours by all Arts possible to corrupt and poyson others, and draw them to Idolatry: This is a Man whose Fruit is Hemlock (so the Word is translated, *Hof. 10. 4.*) and Wormwood, 'tis very displeasing to God, and will be to all that are seduc'd by him, *Bitterness in the latter end*. This is refer'd to by the Apostle, *Heb. 12. 15.* Where he is in like Manner cautioning us to take heed of those that would seduce us from the Christian Faith, they are the Weeds or Tares in a Field which, if let alone, will overspread the whole Field. A little of this Leaven will be in Danger of infecting the whole Lump.

(2.) His Security in the Sin. He promiset him Impunity, tho' he persist in his Impiety, v. 19. Tho' he *heareth the Words of the Curse*, so that he cannot plead Ignorance of the Danger, as other Idolaters; yet even then, he *blesseth himself in his own Heart*, thinks himself safe from the Wrath of the God of Israel, under the Protection of his idol-gods, and therefore saith, *I shall have Peace*, tho' I be govern'd in my Religion, not by God's Institution, but by my own Imagination, to add Drunkenness to Thirst; one Act of Wickedness to another. Idolaters were like Drunkards, violently set upon their Idols themselves, and industrious to draw others in with them. Revellings commonly accompanied the Idolatries, 1 Pet. 4. 3. so that this speaks a Wo to Drunkards (especially the Drunkards of Ephraim) who when they are awake, being thirsty, seek it yet again, *Prov. 23. 35.* And those that made themselves Drunk in Honour of their Idols, were the worst of Drunkards, Note, 1. There are many who are under the Curse of God, and yet *blesseth themselves*; but it will soon be found that in blessing themselves, they do but deceive themselves. 2. Those are ripe for Ruin, and there is little Hopes of their Repentance, who have made themselves believe that they shall have Peace though they go on in a sinful Way. 3. Drunkenness is a Sin that hardens the Heart, and debaucheth the Conscience as much as any other, to which Men are strangely tempted themselves, even when they have newly felt the Mischief of it, and are strangely fond to draw others to, *Hab. 2. 15.* And such an ensnaring Sin is Idolatry.

(3.) God's just Severity against him for the Sin, and for the impious Affront he put upon God, in saying he should have Peace, though he went on, so giving the Lie to Eternal Truth, (*Gen. 3. 4.*) There is a scarce a Threatning in all the Book of God that sounds more dreadful than this here. O that presumptuous Sinners would read it and tremble! For it is not a Bug-bear to frighten Children and Fools, but a real Declaration of the Wrath of God against the Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men, v. 20, 21. (1.) The Lord shall not spare him. The Days of his Reprieve, which he abuseth will be shorten'd, and no Mercy remember'd in the midst of Judgment. (2.) The Anger of the Lord, and his Jealousy, which is the fiercest Anger, shall smoke against him, like the Smoke of a Furnace. (3.) The Curses written shall lie upon him, not only light upon him to terrify him; but abide upon him, to sink him to the lowest Hell. *Job. 3. 36.* (4.) His Name shall be blotted out, i. e. he himself shall be cut off, and his Memory shall rot and perish with him. (5.) He shall be separated unto Evil, which is the most proper Notion of a Curse; he shall be cut off from all Happiness, and all Hope of it, and mark'd out for Misery, without Remedy: And (lastly) All this according to the Curses of the Covenant, which are the most fearful Curses, being the just Revenges of abused Grace.

2. Idolatry would be the Ruin of their Nation; it would bring Plagues upon the Land that committ'd at this Root of Bitterness, and receiv'd the Infection: As far as the Sin spreads the Judgment should spread likewise.

1. The Ruin is describ'd. It begins with Plagues and Sicknesses, v. 22. to try if they would be reclaim'd by lesser Judgments; but if not, it ends in a total Overthrow, like that of Sodom, v. 23. And that Valley which had been like the Garden of the Lord for Fruitfulness, was turn'd into a Lake of Salt and Sulphur, so should the Land of Canaan be made desolate and barren, as it has been ever since the last Destruction of it by the Romans. The Lake of Sodom border'd close upon the Land of Israel, that by it they might be

warn'd against the Iniquity of Sodom; but not taking the Warning, they were made as like to Sodom in Ruin as they had been in Sin.

2. The Reason of it is enquir'd into, and assign'd.

1. It would be enquir'd into by the Generations to come, v. 22. who would find the State of their Nation in all Respects the Reverse of what it had been; and when they read both the History and the Promise, would be astonish'd at the Change. The Stranger likewise, and the Nations about them, as well as particular Persons, would ask, *Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this Land?* v. 24. Great Desolations are thus represented elsewhere as striking the Spectators with Amazement, 1 Kings 9. 8, 9. *Jer. 22. 8, 9.* 'Twas time for the Neighbours to tremble, when Judgment thus began at the House of God, 1 Pet. 4. 17. The Emphasis of the Question is to be laid upon this Land; the Land of Canaan; this good Land, the Glory of all Lands; this Land floweth with Milk and Honey: A thousand Pities that such a good Land as this should be made desolate; but that is not all, 'tis this Holy Land, the Land of Israel, a People in Covenant with God; 'tis Immanuel's Land; a Land where God was known and worshipp'd, and yet thus wasted. Note, 1. It is no new Thing for God to bring desolating Judgments upon a People that in Profession are near to him, *Amos 3. 2.* 2. He never doth this, but there is a good Reason why and wherefore he doth it. 3. It concerns us to enquire into the Reason, that we may give Glory to God, and take Warning to ourselves.

2. The Reason is here assign'd, in answer to that Enquiry. The Matter would be so plain, that all Men would say, 'Twas because they forsook the Covenant of the Lord God of their Fathers, v. 25. Note, God never forsakes any, till they first forsake him: But those that desert the God of their Fathers, are justly cast out of the Inheritance of their Fathers. They went and served other Gods, v. 26. Gods that they had no Acquaintance with, nor lay under any Obligation to, either in Duty or Gratitude; for God had not given the Creatures to be served by us, but to serve us; nor had they done any good to us; (as some read it) more than what God enabled them to do; to the Creator therefore we are Debtors, and not to the Creatures. 'Twas for this that God was angry with them, v. 27. and rooted them out in Anger, v. 28. So that how dreadful soever the Desolation was, the Lord was righteous in it, which is acknowledg'd, *Dan. 4. 11, 12.* Thus (saith Mr *Ainsworth*) the Law of Moses leaves Sinners under the Curse, and rooted out of the Lord's Land: But Grace in Christ towards Penitent believing Sinners, plants them again upon their Land, and they shall be no more pulled up, being kept by the Power of God, *Amos 9. 15.*

Lastly, He concludes his Prophecy of the Jews Rejection, just as St. Paul concludes his Discourse on the same Subject, when it began to be fulfill'd, *Rom. 11. 33.* How unsearchable are God's Judgments, and his Ways past finding out! So here, v. 29. Secret Things belong to the Lord our God. Some make it to be one Sentence, The secret Things of the Lord our God are revealed to us and to our Children, as far as we are concern'd to know them, and he hath not dealt so with other Nations: But we make it two Sentences, by which,

1. We are forbidden curiously to enquire into the secret Councils of God, and to determine concerning them: A full Answer is given to that Question, *Wherefore hath the Lord done thus to this Land?* Sufficient to justify God, and admonish us: But if any ask farther, Why God would be at such a vast Expence of Miracles to form such a People, whose Apostasy and Ruin he plainly foresaw? Why he did not by his Almighty Grace prevent it? Or, what he intends yet to do with them? Let such know that are these Questions which cannot be answer'd, and therefore are not fit to be ask'd. 'Tis Presumption in us to pry into the Arcana Imperii, and to enquire into the Reasons of State, which 'tis not for us to know, See *Act. 1. 7.* and *Job. 21. 22. Col. 2. 18.*

2. We are directed and encourag'd diligently to enquire into that which God has made known; Things revealed belong to us and to our Children. Note, 1. Tho' God has kept much of his Council secret, yet there is enough reveal'd to satisfy and save us. He has kept back nothing that is profitable for us, but that only which 'tis good for us to be ignorant of. 2. We ought to acquaint ourselves, and our Children too, with the Things of God that are reveal'd, we are not only allow'd to search into them, but are concern'd to do so, they are Things in which we and ours are nearly interested: They are the Rules we are to live by, the Grants we are to live upon; and therefore we are to learn them diligently ourselves, and to teach them diligently to our Children. 3. All our Knowledge must be in order to Practice, for this is the End of all Divine Revelation, not to furnish us with curious Subjects of Speculation and Discourse, with which to entertain ourselves and our Friends, but that we may do all the Words of this Law, and be blessed in our Deed.

CHAP. XXX.

One would have thought the Threatnings in the close of the foregoing Chapter had made a full End of the People of Israel, and had left their Case for ever Desperate; but in this Chapter we have a plain Intimation of the Mercy God had in store for them in the latter Days, so that Mercy at length rejoiceth against Judgment, and has the last Word. Here we have 1. Exceeding great and precious Promises made to them upon their Repentance and Return to God, v. 1.—10. 2. The Righteousness of Faith set before them in the Plainness and easiness of the Commandments, that was now given them, v. 11.—14. 3. A fair Reference of the whole Matter to their Choice, v. 15.—20.

AND it shall come to pass when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee, 2 And shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul: 3 That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee. 4 If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee. 5 And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it: and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. 6 And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live. 7 And the LORD thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them that hate thee, which persecuted thee. 8 And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the LORD, and do all his commandments which I command thee this day. 9 And the LORD thy God will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattel, and in the fruit of thy land, for good; for the LORD will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers: 10 If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God to keep his commandments, and his statutes, which are written in this book of the law, and if thou turn unto the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul.

Two Ways these Verses may be consider'd; either as a Conditional Promise, or as an Absolute Prediction.

1. They are chiefly to be consider'd as a Conditional Promise, and so they belong to all Persons and all People, and not to Israel only: And the Design of them is to assure us, that the greatest Sinners, if they repent and be converted, shall have their Sins pardon'd, and be restor'd to God's Favour. This is the Purport of the Covenant of Grace, it leaves room for Repentance in Case of Misdemeanour, and promiseth Pardon upon Repentance, which the Covenant of Innocency did not. — Now Observe here,

1. How the Repentance is describ'd, which is the Condition of these Promises. 1. It begins in serious Consideration, v. 1. thou shalt call to mind that which thou hadst forgotten, or not regarded. Note, Consideration is the first Step towards Conversion. Isa. 46. 8. Bring to Mind, O ye Transgressors. The Prodigal Son came to himself first; and then to his Father. — That which they should call to mind is the Blessing and the Curse. If Sinners would but seriously consider the Happiness they have lost by Sin, and the Misery they have brought themselves into, and that by Repentance they may escape that Misery, and recover that Happiness, they would not delay to return to the Lord their God. The Prodigal call'd to mind

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the Blessing and the Curse, when he consider'd his present Poverty, and the Plenty of Bread in his Father's House, Luk. 15. 17.—2. It consists in sincere Conversion. The Effect of the Consideration cannot but be Godly Sorrow and Shame, Ezek. 6. 9.—7. 16. But that which is the Life and Soul of Repentance, and without which the most passionate Expressions are but a Jest, is returning to the Lord our God, v. 2. If thou turn (v. 10.) with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul. We must return to our Allegiance to God as our Lord and Ruler, our Dependance upon him as our Father and Benefactor, our Devotedness to him as our highest End, and our Communion with him as our God in Covenant. We must return to God from all that which stands in Opposition to him, or Competition with him. In this Return to God we must be upright, with the Heart and Soul, and universal, with all the Heart, and all the Soul. 3. It is evidenced by a constant Obedience to the Holy Will of God. If thou shalt obey his Voice v. 2. thou and thy Children, for it is not enough that we do our Duty ourselves, but we must train up and engage our Children to it. Or, this comes in as the Condition of the Entail of the Blessing upon their Children, provided their Children kept close to their Duty. This Obedience must be with an Eye to God, thou shalt obey his Voice, v. 8. and hearken to that, v. 10. It must be sincere and chearful, and entire, with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, v. 2. It must be from a Principle of Love, and that Love too must be with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, v. 6. 'Tis the Heart and Soul that God looks at, and requires; he will have that or nothing, and that entire, or not at all. And it must be universal; according to all that I command thee, v. 2. and again, v. 8. to do all his Commandments. For he that allows himself in the Breach of one Commandment involves himself in the Guilt of contemning them all, Jam. 2. 10. An upright Heart has respect to all God's Commands, Psal. 119. 6.

2. What the Favour is which is promis'd upon this Repentance. Tho' they are brought to God by their Trouble and Distress, in the Nations whither they were driven, v. 1. yet God will graciously accept of them notwithstanding; for on this Errand Afflictions are sent, to bring us to Repentance. Tho' they are driven out to the utmost Parts of Heaven, yet from thence their penitent Prayers shall reach God's gracious Ear, and there his Favour shall find them out, v. 4. Undique ad caelos tantundum est via. This Promise. Nehemiah pleads in his Prayer for dispersed Israel, Neh. 1. 9.

It is here promis'd, 1. That God would have Compassion upon them, as proper Objects of his Pity, v. 3. Against Sinners that go on in Sin, God has Indignation, chap. 29. 20. but on those that repent and bemoan themselves, he has Compassion, Jer. 31. 18. 20. True Penitents may take great Encouragement from the Compassions and tender Mercies of our God, which never fail but overflow. 2. That he would turn their Captivity, and gather them from the Nations whither they were scatter'd, v. 3. tho' never so remote, v. 4. One of the Chaldee Paraphrasts applies this to the Messiah, explaining it thus, The Word of the Lord shall gather you by the Hand of Elias the Great Priest, and shall bring you by the Hand of the King Messiah for this was God's Covenant with him, That he should restore the preserved of Israel, Isa. 49. 6. And this the Design of his Death, to gather into one the Children of God that were scatter'd abroad, Joh. 11. 51, 52. To him shall the gathering of the People be. 3. That he would bring them into their Land again, v. 5. Note, Penitent Sinners are not only deliver'd out of their Misery, but restor'd to true Happiness in the Favour of God. The Land they are brought into to possess it, is, tho' not the same, yet in some Respects better than that which our first Father Adam possess'd, and out of which he was expell'd. 4. That he would do them good, v. 5. And rejoice over them for good, v. 9. For there is Joy in Heaven upon the Repentance and Conversion of Sinners: The Father of the Prodigal rejoiced over him for good. That he would multiply them, v. 5. And that when they grew numerous, every Mouth might have Meat, he would make them plenteous in every Work of their Hand, v. 9. National Repentance and Reformation, bring National Plenty, Peace and Prosperity. 'Tis promis'd, the Lord will make thee plenteous in the Fruit of thy Cattel and Land, for good. Many have Plenty for hurt, the Prosperity of Fools destroys them. Then it is for good, when with it God gives us Grace to use it for his Glory. 5. That he would transfer the Curses they had been under to their Enemies, v. 7. When God was gathering them in to re-establish them, they would meet with much Opposition; but the same Curses that had been a Burthen upon them, should become a Defence to them, by being turn'd upon their Adversaries. The Cup of Trembling should be taken out of their Hand, and put into the Hand of those that afflicted them, Isa. 51. 22, 23. 6. That he would give them his Grace to change their Hearts and rule there, v. 6. The Lord thy God will circumcise thine Heart to love the Lord. Note, (1.) The Heart must be circumcised to love God. The Filth of the Flesh must be put away, and the Foolishness of the Heart, as the Chaldee Paraphrase

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expounds

expounds it. See Col. 2. 11, 12. Rom 2. 29. Circumcision was a Seal of the Covenant; the Heart is then *circumcised to love God*, when it is strongly engag'd and held by that Bond to this Duty. (1.) 'Tis the Work of God's Grace to circumcise the Heart, and to shed Abroad the Love of God there; and this Grace is given to all that repent, and seek it carefully. Nay, that seems to be rather a Promise than a Precept. v. 8. *Thou shalt return, and obey the Voice of the Lord.* He that requires us to return, promiseth Grace to enable us to return; and it is our Fault if that Grace be not effectual. Herein the Covenant of Grace is well order'd, that whatsoever is requir'd in the Covenant is promis'd. Turn ye at my Reproof: Behold, I will pour out my Spirit, Prov. 1. 23. Lastly, It is observable, how Moses here calls God, *the Lord thy God*, twelve times in these ten Verses; intimating, 1. That Penitents may take Direction and Encouragement in their Return to God, from their Relation to him, *Jer. 3. 22. Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God*; therefore to thee we are bound to come, whether else would we go? And therefore we hope to find Favour with thee. (2.) That those that have revolted from God, if they return to him, and do their first Works, shall be restor'd to their former State of Honour and Happiness. *Bring hither the first Robe.* In the Threatnings of the former Chapter, he is all along call'd *the Lord*, a God of Power, and the Judge of all: But in the Promises of this Chapter *the Lord thy God*, a God of Grace, and in Covenant with thee.

2. This may also be consider'd as a Prediction of the Repentance and Restoration of the Jews, *When all these Things are come upon thee*, v. 1. The Blessing first, and after that the Curse, then the Mercy in Reserve shall take Place. Tho' their Hearts were wretchedly harden'd, yet the Grace of God could soften and change them; and then tho' their Case was deplorably miserable, the Providence of God would redress all their Grievances. Now 1. 'Tis certain, this was fulfill'd in their Return from their Captivity in Babylon. 'Twas a wonderful Instance of their Repentance and Reformation, that Ephraim, who had been join'd to Idols, renounc'd them, and said, *What have I to do any more with Idols?* That Captivity effectually cur'd them of Idolatry; and then God planted them again in their own Land, and did them good. But 2. Some think it is yet further to be accomplish'd in the Conversion of the Jews, that are now dispers'd, their Repentance for the Sin of their Fathers in crucifying Christ, their Return to God thro' him, and their Accession to the Christian Church. But, *alas, who shall live, when God doth this?*

11 ¶ For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. 12 It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? 13 Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? 14 But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.

Moses here urges them to Obedience, from the Consideration of the Plainness and easiness of the Command.

1. This is true of the Law of Moses. They could never plead in Excuse of their Disobedience, that God had enjoyn'd them that which was either *unintelligible* or *impracticable*, impossible to be known, or to be done, v. 11. *It is not hidden from thee.* That is, (1.) It is not too high for thee; thou needest not send Messengers to Heaven, v. 12. to enquire what thou must do to please God; nor needest thou go beyond Sea, v. 12. as the Philosophers did, that travell'd thro' many and distant Regions in pursuit of Learning; no, thou art not put to that Labour and Expence; nor is the Commandment within the reach of those only that have a great Estate, or a refin'd Genius, but it is *very nigh unto thee*, v. 14. 'Tis written in your Books, made plain upon Tables, so that he that runs may read it; your Priests Lips keep this Knowledge, and when any Difficulty ariseth, you may ask the Law at their Mouth, Mal. 2. 7. 'Tis not communicated in a strange Language, but it is in *thy Mouth*, i. e. in the *Vulgar Tongue*, that's commonly us'd among you, in which you may hear it read, and talk of it familiarly among your Children. 'Tis not wrapt up in obscure Phrases or Figures to puzzle and amaze you, or in Hieroglyphicks, but is in *thy Heart*; 'tis deliver'd in such a manner, as that it is level to thy Capacity, even to the Capacity of the meanest. (2.) It is not too hard nor heavy for thee: So the Septuagint reads it, v. 11. Thou needst not say, As good attempt to climb to Heaven, or see upon the Wings of

the Morning to the uttermost Part of the Sea, as go about to do all the Words of this Law: No, the Matter is not so; 'tis no such intolerable Yoke as some ill-minded People represent it. 'Twas indeed a heavy Yoke in Comparison with that of Christ, Acts 15. 10. but not in Comparison with the Idolatrous Services of the Neighbour Nations. God appeals to themselves, that he had not made them to serve with an Offering, nor wearied them with Incense, Isa. 43. 20. Mic. 6. 3. But he speaks especially of the Moral Law, and the Precepts of that, that's *very nigh thee*, consonant to the Law of Nature, which would have been found in every Man's Heart, and every Man's Mouth, if he would but have attended to it. There is that in thee which consents to the Law that it is good, Rom. 7. 16. Thou hast therefore no Reason to complain of any insuperable Difficulty in the observance of it.

2. This is true of the Gospel of Christ, to which the Apostle applies it, and makes the Language of the *Righteousness which is of Faith*, Rom. 10. 6, 7, 8. And many think that's principally intended by Moses here; for he wrote of Christ, Joh. 5. 46. This is God's Commandment, now under the Gospel, That we believe in the Name of his Son Jesus Christ, Joh. 3. 23. If we ask, as the blind Man did, *Lord, who is he?* Or where is he, that we may believe on him? Joh. 9. 36. This Scripture gives an Answer, We need not go up to Heaven, to fetch him thence, for he is come down from thence in his Incarnation; nor down to the Deep, to fetch him thence, for thence he is come up in his Resurrection. But the Word is nigh us, and Christ in that Word; so that if we believe with the Heart, that the Promises of the Incarnation and Resurrection of the Messiah, are fulfill'd in our Lord Jesus, and receive him accordingly, and confess him with our Mouth, we have then Christ with us, and we shall be saved. He is near, very near, that justifies us. The Law was plain and easy, but the Gospel much more so.

15 ¶ See, I have set before thee this day, life and good, and death and evil: 16 In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it. 17 But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them: 18 I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan, to go to possess it. 19 I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: 20 That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him (for he is thy life, and the length of thy days) that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.

Moses here concludes with a very bright Light, and a very strong Fire, that if possible, what he had been preaching of might find Entrance into the Understanding and Affections of this unthinking People. What could be said more moving, and more likely to make deep and lasting Impressions? The Manner of his treating with them is so Rational, so Prudent, so Affectionate, and every Way so apt to gain the Point, that it abundantly shews him to be in earnest, and leaves them inexcusable in their Disobedience.

1. He states the Case very fairly. He appeals to themselves concerning it, whether he had not laid the Matter as plain as they could wish before them. (1.) Every Man covets to obtain Life and Good, and to escape Death and Evil; desires Happiness, and dreads Misery: Well, saith he, I have shew'd you the Way to obtain all the Happiness you can desire, and to avoid all Misery. Be Obedient; and all shall be well, and nothing amiss. Our first Parents eat the forbidden Fruit, in hopes of getting thereby the Knowledge of Good and Evil. But it was a miserable Knowledge they got of Good by the Loss of it, and of Evil by the Sense of it; yet such is the Compassion of God toward Man, that instead of giving him up to his own Delusion, he has favour'd him by his Word with such a Knowledge of Good and Evil, as will make him

him for ever Happy, if it be not his own Fault. (2.) Every Man is mov'd and govern'd in his Actions by Hope and Fear, Hope of Good, and Fear of Evil, real or apparent. Now, faith Moses, I have tried both Ways, if you will be either drawn to Obedience by the certain Prospect of Advantage by it, or driven to Obedience by the no less certain Prospect of Ruin, in case you be Disobedient; if you will be wrought upon either Way, you will be kept close to God and your Duty; but if you are not, you are utterly *inexcusable*.

Let us then hear the Conclusion of the whole Matter. (1.) If they and theirs would Love God and Serve him; they should live and be happy, v. 16. If they would love God, and evidence the Sincerity of their Love by keeping his Commandments; if they would make conscience of keeping his Commandments, and do it from a Principle of Love, then God would do them Good, and they should be as Happy as his Love and Blessing could make them. (2.) If they or theirs should at any Time turn from God, desert his Service, and worship other Gods, that would certainly be their Ruin, v. 17. 18. Observe, It is not for every Failure in the particulars of their Duty, that Ruin is threatned, but for Apostacy and Idolatry: Tho' every violation of the Command deserved the Curse, yet the Nation would be destroyed by that only which is the violation of the Marriage Covenant. The Purport of the New Testament is much the same; that in like manner sets before us Life and Death, Good and Evil; He that Believes shall be saved; he that Believes not shall be Damned, Mark 16. 16. And that Faith, includes Love and Obedience. To them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for Glory, Honour and Immortality, God will give Eternal Life. But to them that are contentious, and do not obey the Truth, but obey unrighteousness, and so in effect worship other Gods and serve them, to them will be render'd the Indignation and Wrath of an Immortal God, the Consequent of which must needs be the Tribulation and Anguish of an Immortal Soul, Rom. 2. 7, 8, 9.

2. Having thus stated the Case, he fairly puts them to their Choice, with a Direction to them to chuse Well. He appeals to Heaven and Earth concerning his fair and faithful Dealing with them, v. 19. They could not but own, that whatever was the Issue, he had delivered his Soul, therefore that they might deliver theirs, he bids them choose Life, i. e. chuse to do their Duty, Which would be their Life. Note, 1. Those shall have Life that chuse it: They that chuse the Favour of God, and Communion with him for their Felicity, and prosecute their Choice as they ought, shall have what they chuse. 2. Those that come short of Life and Happiness, must thank themselves; they had had it, if they had chosen it, when they were put to their Choice: But they dye because they will dye, that is, because they do not like the Life promis'd, upon the Terms propos'd.

In the last Verse, (1.) He shews them in short, what their Duty is, to love God, and to Love him as the Lord, a Being most Amiable, and as their God, a God in Covenant with them, and as an Evidence of this Love, to obey his Voice in every thing, and by a Constancy in this Love and Obedience to cleave to him, and never to forsake him, in Affection or Practice. (2.) He shews them what Reason there was for this Duty. In Consideration 1. of their Dependence upon God; He is thy Life, and the length of thy Days. He gives Life, preserves Life, restores Life, and prolongs it by his Power, tho' it be a frail Life; and by his Patience, tho' it be a forfeited Life: He sweetens Life with his Comforts, and is the Sovereign Lord of Life; In his Hand our Breath is. Therefore we are concern'd to keep ourselves in his Love; for 'tis good having him our Friend, and bad having him our Enemy. 2. Of their Obligation to him for the Promise of Canaan made to their Fathers, and ratified with an Oath. And 3. Of their Expectations from him in performance of that Promise, Love God and Serve him, that thou mayest dwell in that Land of Promise, Which thou may'st be sure he can give, and uphold to thee, who is thy Life, and the length of thy Days. All these are Arguments to us to continue in Love and Obedience to the God of our Mercies.

CHAP. XXXI.

In this Chapter, Moses having finish'd his Sermon, (1.) Encourageth both the People, who were now to enter Canaan, v. 1.—6. and Joshua, who was to lead them, v. 7, 8, 23. And (2.) He takes care for the keeping of these things always, in their Remembrance, after his Death. 1. By the Book of the Law which was 1. written; 2. deliver'd into the Custody of the Priests, v. 9. and 24.—27. 3. order'd to be publicly read every 7th Year, v. 10.—13. (2.) By a Song which God orders Moses to prepare for their Instruction and Admonition. 1. He calls Moses and Joshua to the door of the Tabernacle, v. 14. 15. 2. He foretells to them the Apostacy of Israel in process of time, and the Judgments they would thereby bring upon themselves, v. 16.—18. 3. He prescribes the following Song to be a witness against them,

v. 19.—21. 4. Moses wrote it, v. 22. And deliver'd it to Israel, with an intimation of the Design of it, as he had received it from the Lord, v. 28.—30.

AND Moses went and spake these words unto all Israel. 2 And he said unto them, I am an hundred and twenty years old this day; I can no more go out and come in: also the LORD hath said unto me, Thou shalt not go over this Jordan. 3 The LORD thy God, he will go over before thee, and he will destroy these nations from before thee, and thou shalt possess them: and Joshua, he shall go over before thee, as the LORD hath said. 4 And the LORD shall do unto them, as he did to Sihon, and to Og, kings of the Amorites, and unto the land of them, whom he destroyed. 5 And the LORD shall give them up before your face, that ye may do unto them according unto all the commandments, which I have commanded you. 6 Be strong and of a good courage, fear not nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee, he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. 7 ¶ And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the LORD hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it. 8 And the LORD, he it is that doth go before thee, he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed.

Loth to part (we say) bids oft Farewel; Moses doth so to the Children of Israel; not because he was loth to go to God, but because he was loth to leave them, fearing, that when he had left them, they would leave God: He had finish'd what he had to say to them by way of Council and Exhortation: Here he calls them together to give them a Word of Encouragement, especially, with Reference to the Wars of Canaan, they were now to engage in. 'Twas a Discouragement to them that Moses was to be removed, at a Time when he could so ill be spar'd: Tho' Joshua was continued to Fight for them in the Valley, they would want Moses to intercede for them on the Hill, as he did, Exod. 17. 10. But there's no Remedy; Moses can no more go out and come in, v. 2. Not that he was disabled by any Decay either of Body or Mind; for his natural Force was not abated, chap. 34. 7. But he cannot any longer discharge his Office: For 1. He is a hundred and twenty Years old, and its Time for him to think of resigning his Honour, and returning to his Rest. He that had arriv'd to so great an Age then, when 70 or 80 was the ordinary stint, as appears by the Prayer of Moses, Ps. 90. 10. might well think, he had accomplish'd as a Hireling his Day. 2. He is under a Divine Sentence, Thou shalt not go over Jordan. Thus a full stop was put to his Usefulness; hitherto he must go, hitherto he must serve, but no further. So God had appointed it, and Moses acquiesceth: For I know not why we should any of us desire to live a Day longer than while God has Work for us to do; nor shall we be accountable for more Time than is allotted us. But tho' Moses must not go over himself, he is in Care to encourage those that must.

1. He encourageth the People; and never could any General animate his Soldiers upon such good Grounds, as Moses here encourageth Israel. 1. He assures them of the constant Presence of God with them, v. 3. The Lord thy God that has led thee [and kept thee hitherto, he will go over before thee: and they might follow boldly, who were sure that they had God for their Leader. He repeats it again, v. 6. with an Emphasis, The Lord thy God, the Great Jehovah, who is thine in Covenant, He it is, He, and no less; He, and no other, that goes before thee; not only that by his Promise has assur'd thee that he will go before thee; but by his Ark, the visible Token of his Presence, shews thee that he doth actually go before thee. And he repeats it with Enlargement, not only he goes over before thee at first, to set thee in, but he will continue with thee all along, with thee and thine, He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee; he will not disappoint thy Expectations in any Strait, nor will he ever desert thine Interest. Be constant to him, and he will be so to thee, This is apply'd by the Apostle, to all God's Spiritual Israel, for the Encouragement,

couragement of their Faith and Hope; unto us is this Gospel Preached, as well as unto them, *He will never fail thee, nor forsake thee*, Heb. 13. 5. 2. He commends *Joshua* to them for a Leader; *Joshua, he shall go over before thee*, v. 3. One whose Conduct and Courage, and sincere Affection to their Interest, they had had long Experience of; and one whom God had ordain'd and appointed to be their Leader, and therefore no doubt, would own and bless, and make a Blessing to them. See *Numb.* 27. 18. Note, It is a great Encouragement to a People, when instead of some useful Instruments that are remov'd God raiseth up others to carry on his Work. 3. He ensures their Success. The greatest Generals, supported with the greatest Advantages, must yet own the Issues of War to be doubtful, and uncertain; *the Battle is not always to the Strong*, or to the Bold; an ill Accident unthought of; may turn the Scale against the highest Hopes. But *Moses* had warrant from God to assure *Israel*, That notwithstanding the Disadvantages they labour'd under, they should certainly be Victorious. A Coward will Fight, when he is sure to be a Conqueror. God undertakes to do the Work, *he will destroy these Nations*; and *Israel* shall do little else but divide the Spoil, *thou shalt possess them*, v. 3. Two things might encourage their Hopes of this. (1.) The Victories they had already obtain'd over *Sidon* and *Og*, v. 4. From which they might infer both the Power of God, that he could do what he had done, and the Purpose of God, that he would finish what he had begun to do. Thus must we improve our Experience. (2.) The Command God had given them to destroy the *Canaanites*; chap. 7. 2.—12. 2. to which he refers here, v. 5. That ye may do unto them according to all which I have commanded you, and from which they might infer, if God had commanded them to destroy the *Canaanites*, no doubt, he would put it into the Power of their Hands to do it. Note, What God has made our Duty, we have Reason to expect Opportunity and Assistance from him for the doing of it. So that from all this he had Reason enough to bid them *be strong, and of a good courage*, v. 6. While they had the Power of God engag'd for them they had no Reason to fear all the Powers of *Canaan* engag'd against them.

2. He encourageth *Joshua*, v. 7, 8. Observe, 1. Though *Joshua* was an experienc'd General, and a Man of approv'd Gallantry and Resolution, and that had already signaliz'd himself in many brave Actions; yet *Moses* saw Cause to bid him *be of good courage*, now he was entering upon new Action; and *Joshua* was far from taking it as an Affront, or as an implicit questioning of his Courage to be thus charg'd, as sometimes we find proud and peevish Spirits invidiously taking Exhortations and Admonitions for Reproaches and Reflections. *Joshua* himself is very well pleas'd to be Admonish'd by *Moses* to *be strong, and of good courage*. 2. He gives him this Charge in the sight of all *Israel*, that they might be the more observant of him, whom they saw thus solemnly Inaugurated, and that he might set himself the more to be an Example of Courage to the People, who were Witnesses to this Charge here given to him, as well as to themselves. 3. He gives him the same Assurances of the Divine Presence, and consequently of a glorious Success that he had given the People. God would be with him, would not forsake him, and therefore he should certainly accomplish that glorious Enterprize, to which he was Call'd and Commission'd, *Thou shalt cause them to inherit the Land of Promise*. Note, Those shall speed well that have God with them; and therefore they ought to be of good courage. Through God let us do valiantly, for through him we shall do victoriously; If we resist the Devil he shall flee, and God shall shortly tread him under our Feet.

9 ¶ And *Moses* wrote this Law, and deliver'd it unto the priests the sons of *Levi*, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and unto all the elders of *Israel*. 10 And *Moses* commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, 11 When all *Israel* is come to appear before the LORD thy God, in the place which he shall choose: thou shalt read this law before all *Israel* in their hearing. 12 Gather the people together, men, and women and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the LORD your God, and observe to do all the words of this law: 13 And that their children which have not known any thing, may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long ye live in the land whither ye go over *Jordan* to possess it.

The Law was given by *Moses*; so it is said, *Joh.* 1. 17. He was not only intrusted to deliver it to that Generation, but to transmit it to the Generations to come; and here it appears that he was faithful to that Trust.

1. *Moses* wrote this Law, v. 9. The Learned Bishop Patrick understands this of all the Five Books of *Moses*, which are often call'd *the Law*; though he supposeth that *Moses* had written most of the Pentateuch before, yet he did not finish it till now; how he put his last Hand to that sacred Volume. Many think, that *the Law* here (especially since it is call'd *this Law*, this grand Abridgment of the Law) is to be understood of this Book of *Deuteronomy*; All those Discourses to the People, which have taken up this whole Book, he being in them Divinely Inspir'd, wrote them as the Word of God. He wrote this Law. (1.) That they that had heard it might often review it themselves, and call it to Mind. (2.) That it might be the more safely handed down to Posterity. Note, The Church has receiv'd abundance of Advantage by the writing as well as by the preaching of Divine Things; Faith comes not only by hearing, but by reading. The same Care that was taken of the Law, thanks be to God, is taken of the Gospel too: Soon after it was Preach'd it was written, that it might reach to them on whom the Ends of the World should come.

2. Having written it he committed it to the Care and Custody of the Priests, and Elders. He deliver'd one Authentick Copy to the Priests, to be laid up by the Ark, v. 26. there to remain as a Standard by which all other Copies must be tried: And 'tis suppos'd to the Elders of each Tribe he gave another Copy, to be transcrib'd by all that were so dispos'd of that Tribe. Some observe that the Elders as well as the Priests, were intrusted with the Law, to intimate, that Magistrates by their Power, as well as Ministers by their Doctrine, are to maintain Religion, and to take care that the Law be not broken or lost.

3. He appointed the publick Reading of this Law in a general Assembly of all *Israel* every 7th Year. The Pious Jews (tis very likely) read the Law daily in their Families, and *Moses* of old time was read in the Synagogues every Sabbath-day, Acts 15. 21. But once in seven Years that the Law might be the more magnified, and made honourable, it must be read in a General Assembly. Though we read the Word in private, we must not think it needful to hear it read in publick.

Now here he gives Direction.

1. When this solemn Reading of the Law must be; That the Time might add to the Solemnity, it must be done (1.) in the Year of Release. In that Year the Land rested, so that they could the better spare time to attend this Service. Servants who were then discharg'd, and poor Debtors who were then acquitted from their Debts, must know, that having the Benefit of the Law, 'twas justly expected they should yield Obedience to it; and therefore give up themselves to be God's Servants, because he had loosed their bonds. The Year of Release, was typical of Gospel Grace, which therefore is call'd the acceptable Year of the Lord; for our Remission and Liberty by Christ, engageth us to keep his Commandments, Luke 1. 74, 75. (2.) At the Feast of Tabernacles in that Year. In that Feast they were particularly required to rejoice before God, Lev. 23. 40. Therefore then they must read the Law, both to qualify their Mirth, and keep it in due Bounds, and to sanctify their Mirth, that they might make the Law of God the Matter of their rejoicing, and might read it with Pleasure, and not as a Task.

2. To whom it must be read; to all *Israel*, v. 11. Men, Women, and Children, and the Strangers, v. 12. The Women and Children were not oblig'd to go up to the other Feasts, but to this only in which the Law was read. Note, It is the Will of God that all People should acquaint themselves with his Word. 'Tis a Rule to all, and therefore should be read to all. 'Tis suppos'd that since all *Israel* could not possibly meet in one Place, or that one Man's Voice could reach them all, that as many as the Courts of the Lord's House would hold met there, and the rest at the same Time in their Synagogues. The Jewish Doctors say, That the Hearers were bound to prepare their Hearts, and to hear with Fear and Reverence, and with Joy and Trembling, as in the Day when the Law was given on Mount Sinai; And tho' they were great and wise Men, which knew the whole Law very well, yet they were bound to hear with great Attention; for he that reads is the Messenger of the Congregation to cause the Words of God to be heard. I wish those that hear the Gospel Read and Preach'd, would consider this.

3. By whom it must be read. *Thou shalt read it*, v. 11. Thou, O *Israel*, by a proper Person appointed for that Purpose, Or, Thou, O *Joshua*, their chief Ruler; Accordingly we find he did read the Law himself, *Josh.* 8. 35. So did *Joshua*, 2 *Chron.* 34. 30. and *Ezra*, *Neb.* 8. 3. And the Jews say, that the King himself, (when they had one) was the Person that read in the Courts of the Temple; That a Pulpit was

set up for that Purpose in the midst of the Court, in which the King stood, that the Book of the Law was deliver'd him by the High Priest, he stood up to receive it, utter'd a Prayer (as every one did that was to read the Law in Publick) before he read; and then if he pleas'd he might sit down and read. But if he read standing, it was thought the more commendable, as (they say) King Agrippa did. Here let me offer it as a Conjecture, that Solomon is call'd the Preacher, in his Ecclesiastes, because he deliver'd the Substance of that Book in a Discourse to the People after his Publick Reading of the Law, in the Feast of Tabernacles according to this Appointment here.

4. For what end it must be thus solemnly read, (1.) That the present Generation might hereby keep up their Acquaintance with the Law of God, v. 12. They must hear, that they may learn; and fear God, and observe to do their duty. See here what we are to aim at hearing the Word; we must hear that, we may learn, and grow in Knowledge, and every Time we read the Scriptures, we shall find there is still more and more to be learn'd out of them. We must learn, that we may fear God, i. e. that we may be duly affected with Divine Things; and must fear God, that we may observe and do the words of his Law, for in vain do we pretend to fear him, if we do not obey him. (2.) That the rising Generation might betimes be leaven'd with Religion; v. 13. not only that those who know something may thus know more, but that the Children which have not known anything may betime know this, how much it is their Interest as well as Duty to fear God.

14 ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, behold, the days approach that thou must die: call Joshua, and present your selves in the tabernacle of the congregation, that I may give him a charge. And Moses and Joshua went, and presented themselves in the tabernacle of the congregation. 15 And the LORD appeared in the tabernacle in a pillar of a cloud: and the pillar of the cloud stood over the door of the tabernacle. 16 ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, and this people will rise up and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land whither they go to be amongst them, and will forsake me, and break my covenant which I have made with them. 17 Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them, so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not amongst us? 18 And I will surely hide my face in that day, for all the evils which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned unto other gods. 19 Now therefore write ye this Song for you, and teach it the children of Israel; put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel. 20 For when I shall have brought them into the land which I swore unto their fathers, that floweth with milk and hony; and they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxen fat; then will they turn unto other gods, and serve them, and provoke me, and break my covenant. 21 And it shall come to pass when many evils and troubles are befallen them, that this song shall testify against them as a witness: for it shall not be forgotten out of the mouths of their seed: for I know their imagination which they go about, even now before I have brought them into the land which I swore.

Here 1. Moses and Joshua are summon'd to attend the Divine Majesty at the Door of the Tabernacle, v. 14. Moses is told again that he must shortly die; Even those that are most ready and willing to die have need to be often minded of its Approach. In consideration of this he must come himself to meet God, for whatever improves our Communion with God furthers our Preparation for Death. He must also bring Joshua with him to be presented to God for a Successor, and to receive his Commission and Charge. Moses readily obeys the Summons, for he was none of those that look with

an evil Eye upon their Successors, but on the contrary rejoiced in him.

2. God graciously gives them the Meeting. He appear'd in the Tabernacle, (as the Shechinah us'd to appear) in a pillar of Cloud, v. 15. This is the only Time in all this Book that we find the Glory of God appearing, as it oft did in the three foregoing Books: which perhaps signifies that in the latter days under the Evangelical Law, such visible Appearances as these of the Divine Glory are not to be expected, but we must take heed to the more sure word of Prophecy.

3. He tells Moses that after his Death the Covenant which he had taken so much Pains to make between Israel and their God would certainly be broken. (1.) That Israel would forsake God, v. 16. And we may be sure if the Covenant between God and Men be broken, the Blame must lie on Man, 'tis he that breaks it; we have often observ'd it, that God never leaves any till they first leave him. Worshipping the Gods of the Canaanites, (who had been the Natives, but from henceforwards were to be look'd upon as the strangers of that land) would undoubtedly be counted a deserting of God, and like Adultery, a violation of the Covenant. Thus still those are Revolters from Christ, and will be so adjudg'd, who either make a God of their Money, by reigning Covetousness, or a God of their Belly by reigning Sensuality. They that turn to other Gods, v. 18. forsake their own mercies. This Apostacy of theirs is foretold to be an effect of their Prosperity, v. 20. They shall have eaten and filled themselves, that's all they will aim at in eating to gratify their own Appetites, and then they will wax fat, grow secure and sensual; Their Security will take off their Dread of God and his Judgments; and their Sensuality will incline them to the Idolatries of the Heathen, which made provision for the Flesh, to fulfil the Lusts of it.—Note, God has a clear and infallible fore-sight of all the Wickedness of the Wicked, and hath often covenanted with those who he knew would deal very treacherously, Isa. 48. 8. and conferr'd many Favours on those who he knew would deal very ungratefully.

(2.) That then God would forsake Israel; and justly doth he cast them off who had so unjustly cast him off, v. 17. My Anger shall be kindled against them, and I will forsake them. His Providence would forsake them, no longer to protect and prosper them, and then they would become a Prey to all their Neighbours; His Spirit and Grace would forsake them, no longer to teach and guide them, and then they would be more and more bigotted, besotted, and hardened in their Idolatries. Thus many evil and troubles would befall them, v. 17. 21. which would be such manifest Indications of God's Displeasure against them, that they themselves would be constrain'd to own it, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not amongst us? They that have sinn'd away their God will find that thereby they pull all Mischief upon their own Heads.—But that which compleated their Misery was, that God would hide his face from them in that day, that Day of their Trouble and Distress, v. 18. Whatever outward Troubles we are in, if we have but the Light of God's Countenance, we may be easy. But if God hide his face from us and our Prayers, we are undone.

4. He directs Moses to deliver them a Song, in the composing of which he should be divinely inspir'd, and which should remain a standing Testimony for God as faithful to them in giving them warning, and against them as false to themselves in not taking the Warning, v. 19. The written Word in general, as this Song in Particular is a Witness for God, against all those that break Covenant with him. It shall be for a Testimony, Mat. 24. 14. The Wisdom of Man has devis'd many Ways of conveying the Knowledge of Good and Evil, by Laws, Histories, Prophecies, Proverbs, and amongst the rest by Songs, each have their Advantages. And the Wisdom of God has in the Scripture made use of them all, that ignorant and careless Men might be left inexcusable. (1.) This Song if rightly improv'd might be a Means to prevent their Apostacy, for in the inditing of it, God had an Eye to their present imagination, now, before they were brought into the land of Promise, v. 21. God knew very well that there were in their Hearts such gross Concoits of the Deity, and such Inclinations to Idolatry, that they would be Tinder to the Sparks of that Temptation, and therefore in this Song gives them warning of their Danger, that Way. Note, The Word of God is a Discerner of the thoughts and intents of men's hearts, and meets with them strangely, by its Reproofs and Corrections, Heb. 4. 12. Compare 1 Cor. 14. 15. Ministers who preach the Word know not the Imaginations men go about, but God whose Word it is knows very well. (2.) If this Song did not prevent their Apostacy, yet it might help to bring them to Repentance, and to reduce them from their Apostacy. When their Troubles are come upon them this Song shall not be forgotten, but may serve as a Glass to shew them their own Faces, that they may humble themselves, and return to him from whom they have revolted. Note, Those whom God has mercy in store for, he may leave them to fall, yet he will provide Means for their Recovery. Medicines are prepar'd beforehand for their Cure.

22 ¶ Moses therefore wrote this Song the same day, and taught it the children of Israel. 23 And he gave Joshua the son of Nun a charge, and said, be strong and of a good courage: for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I swear unto them, and I will be with thee. 24 ¶ And it came to pass when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this Law in a book, until they were finished; 25 That Moses commanded the Levites which bare the Ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying, 26 Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee. 27 For I know thy rebellion, and thy stiff-neck: behold, while I am yet alive, with you this day, ye have been rebellious against the LORD; and how much more after my death? 28 Gather unto me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, that I may speak these words in their ears, and call heaven and earth to record against them. 29 For I know, that after my death ye will utterly corrupt your selves, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you: and evil will befall you in the latter days, because ye will do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger through the work of your hands. 30 And Moses spake in the ears of all the congregation of Israel the words of this song, until they were ended.

Here 1. The Charge is given to Joshua, which God had said, v. 14. he would give him. The same in effect that Moses had given him, v. 7. *Be strong and of a good courage*, v. 23. Joshua had now heard from God so much of the Wickedness of the People whom he was to have the Conduct of, as could not but be a Discouragement to him; Nay, saith God, how bad sower they are, thou shalt go through thy Undertaking, for I will be with thee. Thou shalt put them into Possession of Canaan, if they afterwards by their Sin throw themselves out of it again, that will be no Fault of thine, nor any Dishonour to thee, therefore *Be of good courage*.

2. The solemn Delivery of the Book of the Law to the Levites to be deposited in the side of the Ark is here again related, v. 24, 25, 26. of which before, v. 9. Only they are here directed where to treasure up this precious Original, not in the Ark, there only the two Tables were preserv'd, but in another Box by the side of the Ark. 'Tis probable this was the very Book that was found in the House of the Lord, (having been somehow or other misplac'd) in the Days of Josiah, 2 Chr. 34. 14. and so perhaps the following Words here, *that it might be a witness against thee*, may particularly point at that Event which happen'd so long after; for the finding of this very Book occasion'd the publick reading of it by Josiah himself, for a witness against a people who were then almost ripe for their Ruin by the Babylonians.

3. The Song which follows in the next Chapter is here deliver'd to Moses, and by him to the People. He wrote it, first, v. 22. as the Spirit of God indited it, and then spake it in the ears of all the congregation, v. 30. and taught it them, v. 22. i. e. gave out Copies of it, and order'd the People to learn it by heart.

'Twas deliver'd by word of Mouth first, and afterwards in Writing to the Elders and Officers as the Representatives of their respective Tribes, v. 28. by them to be transmitted to their several Families and Households. 'Tis deliver'd to them with a solemn Appeal to Heaven and Earth, concerning the fair Warning which was given them by it of the fatal consequences of their Apostacy from God; and with a Declaration of the little Joy and little Hope, Moses had in and concerning them.

1. He declares what little Joy he had had of them while he was with them, v. 27. 'Tis not in a Passion that he saith, *I know thy Rebellion*, (as once he said it unadvisedly, *Hear now ye Rebels*) But 'tis the Result of a long Acquaintance with them, *ye have been rebellious against the Lord*. The Rebellions against himself he makes no mention of, those he had long since forgiven and forgotten: But their Rebellions against God, they must be made to hear of, that they may be ever repented of, and never repeated.

2. What little Hopes he had of them now he was leaving them. From what God had now said to him, v. 16. more than from his own Experience of them, tho' that was discouraging enough, he tells them, v. 29. *I know that after my death you will utterly corrupt your selves*. Many a sad Thought no doubt it oc-

casion'd to this good Man to foresee the Apostacy and Ruin of a People he had taken so much Pains with to do them good, and make them happy; But this was his Comfort, that he had done his Duty, and that God would be glorified, if not in their Settlement, in their Dispersion. Thus our Lord Jesus a little before his Death foretold the Rise of false Christs and false Prophets, Mat. 24. 24. notwithstanding which, and all the Apostacies of the latter Times, we may be confident that the gates of Hell shall not prevail against the Church, for the Foundation of God stands sure.

CHAP. XXXII.

In this Chapter we have, 1. The Song which Moses by the Appointment of God deliver'd to the Children of Israel, for a standing admonition to them, to take heed of forsaking God. This takes up most of the Chapter. In which we have (1.) The Preface, v. 1, 2. (2.) A High Character of God, and in Opposition to that an ill Character of the People of Israel, v. 3.—6. (3.) A Rehearsal of the Great things God had done for them, and in opposition to that an Account of their ill Carriage towards him, v. 7.—18. (4.) A Prediction of the wasting destroying Judgments which God would bring upon them for their Sins, in which God is here justified, by the many Aggravations of their Impieties, v. 19.—33. (5.) A Promise of the Destruction of their Enemies, and Oppressors at last, and the glorious Deliverance of a Remnant of Israel, v. 33.—43. 2. The Exhortation with which Moses deliver'd this Song to them, v. 44.—47. 3. The Orders God gives to Moses to go up to Mount Nebo and die, v. 48.—52.

Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak: and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. 2 My doctrine shall drop as the rain: my speech shall distill as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass. 3 Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. 4 He is the rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is he. 5 They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of his children: they are a perverse and crooked generation. 6 Do ye thus requite the LORD, O foolish people and unwise? is not he thy father, that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee?

Here's 1. A commanding Preface or Introduction to this Song of Moses, v. 1, 2. He begins (1.) with a solemn Appeal to Heaven and Earth, concerning the Truth and Importance of what he was about to say, and the Justice of the Divine Proceedings against a rebellious and backsliding People, for he had said, Chap. 31. 28. that he would in this Song call Heaven and Earth to record against them. The Heaven and Earth themselves would sooner hear than this perverse and unthinking People, for they revolt not from their Obedience to their Creator, but continue to this Day, according to his Ordinance, as his Servants, Psal. 119. 90, 91. and therefore will rise up in Judgment against rebellious Israel.—Heaven and Earth will be witness against Sinners, Witnesses of the Warning given them, and of their Refusal to take the Warning. See Job 20. 27. the Heaven shall reveal his Iniquity, and the Earth shall rise up against him.—Or Heaven and Earth are here put for the Inhabitants of both, Angels and Men; both shall agree to justify God in his Proceedings against Israel, and to declare his Righteousness, Psal. 50. 6. See Rev. 19. 1. (2.) He begins with a solemn Application of what he was about to say to the People, v. 2. *My Doctrine shall drop as the Rain*. (1.) It shall be a bearing sweeping Rain to the Rebellious. So one of the Chaldee Paraphrasts expounds the first Clause. Rain is sometimes sent for Judgment, Witness that with which the World was delug'd, and so the Word of God; as to some it is reviving and refreshing, and a Saviour of Life unto Life, so to others it is terrifying and killing, and a Saviour of Death unto Death. (2.) It shall be as a sweet and comfortable Dew to those who are rightly prepar'd to receive it. Observe 1. The Subject of this Song is Doctrine: He had given them a Song of Praise and Thanksgiving, Psal. 15. but this is a Song of Instruction, for in Psalms and Hymns and Spiritual Songs we are not only to give Glory to God, but to teach and admonish one another, Col. 3. 16. Hence many of David's Psalms are intitled *Maschil*, to give Instruction.—2. This Doctrine is fitly compar'd to Rain, and Showers, which come from above to make the Earth fruitful, and accomplish that for which they are sent, Isa. 55. 10, 11, and depend not upon the Wisdom or Will of Man, Mic. 5. 7: 'Tis a Mercy to have this Rain come oft upon us, and our Duty

to drink it in, Heb. 6. 7. 3. He promiseth that his Doctrine shall drop and distil as the Dew, and the small Rain, which descends silently, and without Noise. The Word preach'd is then likely to profit, when it comes gently, and sweetly insinuates itself into the Hearts and Affections of the Hearers. 4. He bespeaks their Acceptance and Entertainment of it, and that it might be as sweet and pleasant and welcome to them, as Rain to the thirsty Earth. Psal. 72. 6. And the Word of God is then likely to do us good, when it is thus acceptable. 5. The learned Bishop Patrick understands it as a Prayer, That his Words, which were sent from Heaven to them, might sink into the Hearts, and soften them, as the Rain doth the Earth, and so make them fruitful in Obedience.

2. An awful Declaration of the Greatness and Righteousness of God, v. 3, 4. He begins with this, and lays it down as his first Principle, (1) To preserve the Honour of God, that no Reproach might be cast upon him, for the Sake of the Wickedness of his People Israel: How Wicked and Corrupt soever they are who are call'd by his Name; he is *Just and Right* and all that's good, and is not to be thought the worse of for their Badness. (2) To aggravate the Wickedness of Israel, who knew and worshipp'd such a holy God, and yet were themselves so unholy. And (3) to justify God in his Dealings with them, we must abide by it that God is *righteous*, even when his Judgments are a great Deep, Jer. 12. 1.

Moses here sets himself to publish the Name of the Lord, v. 3. that Israel knowing what a God he is whom they had awench'd for theirs, might never be such Fools as to exchange him for a false God, a Dumb-God. He calls upon them therefore to ascribe Greatness to him. It will be of great Use to us for the preventing of Sin, and the preserving of us in the Way of our Duty, always to keep up high and honourable Thoughts of God, and to take all Occasions to express them. Ascribe Greatness to our God. We cannot add to his Greatness, for it is infinite; but we must acknowledge it, and give him the Glory of it.

Now when Moses would set forth the Greatness of God, he doth it not by explaining his Eternity and Immutability, or describing the Brightness of his Glory in the upper World, but by shewing the Faithfulness of his Word, the Perfection of his Works, and the Wisdom and Equity of all the Administrations of his Government; for in these his Glory shines most clear to us, and these are the Things revealed concerning him, which belong to us and our Children, v. 4. 1. He is the Rock. So he is called six times in this Chapter, and the Seventy all along translate it *Our God*. The learned Mr. Hugh Broughton reckons that God is called the Rock eighteen times (besides in this Chapter) in the Old Testament, (though in some Places we translate it *Strength*) and charges it therefore upon the Papists that they make St. Peter a God, when they make him the Rock on which the Church is built. God is the Rock, for he is in himself immutable and immovable, and he is to all that seek him and fly to him an impenetrable Shelter, and to all that trust in him an everlasting Foundation. 2. His Work is perfect. His Work of Creation was so, all very good; His Works of Providence are so, or will be so in due Time, and when the Mystery of God shall be finish'd, the Perfection of his Works will appear to all the World; Nothing that God doth can be mended, Eccles. 3. 14. God was now perfecting what he had promis'd and begun for his People Israel, and from the Perfection of this Work they must take Occasion to give him the Glory of the Perfection of all his Works. The best of Mens Works are imperfect, they have their Flaws and Defects, and are left unfinish'd: But as for God his Work is perfect. If he begin he will make an end. 3. All his Ways are Judgment. The Ends of his Ways are all Righteous, and he is wise in the Choice of the Means, in order to those Ends. Judgment signifies both Prudence and Justice. The Ways of the Lord are right, Hos. 14. 9. 4. He is a God of Truth, whose Word we may take and rely upon, for he cannot lie, who is faithful to all his Promises, nor shall his Threatnings fall to the Ground. 5. He is without Iniquity, one who never cheated any that trusted in him, never wrong'd any that appeal'd to his Justice, nor ever was hard upon any that cast themselves upon his Mercy. 6. Just and right is he. As he will not wrong any by punishing them more than they deserve, so he will not fail to recompense all those that serve him or suffer for him. He is indeed just and right; for he will effectually take Care that none shall lose by him. Now what a bright and amiable Idea doth this one Verse give us of the God whom we worship; and what Reason have we then to love him and fear him, to live a Life of Delight in him, Dependence on him, and Devotedness to him. This is our Rock, and there is no Unrighteousness in him; nor none can be, Psal. 92. 15.

3. A high Charge exhibited against the Israel of God, whose Character was in all respects the Reverse to that of the God of Israel, v. 5. (1.) They have corrupted themselves. Or, it has

corrupted itself: The Body of the People has: The whole Head sick, and the whole Heart faint. God did not corrupt them, for just and right is he; but they are themselves the sole Authors of their own Sin and Ruin; and both are included in this Word. They have debauched themselves: For every Man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own Lust: And they have destroyed themselves, Hos. 13. 9. If thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear the Guilt and Grief, Prov. 9. 12. (2.) Their Spot is not the Spot of his Children. Even God's Children have their Spots, while they are in this imperfect State; for if we say we have no Sin, no Spot, we deceive ourselves. But the Sin of Israel was none of those; it was not an Infirmity which they strove against, watch'd and pray'd against, but an Evil which their Hearts were fully set in them to do: For (3.) They were a perverse and crooked Generation, that were acted by a Spirit of Contradiction, and therefore would do what was forbidden, because it was forbidden; would set up their own Humour and Fancy in Opposition to the Will of God, were impatient of Reproof, hated to be reformed, and went on forwardly in the Way of their Heart. The Chaldee Paraphrase reads this Verse thus, They have scatter'd, or chang'd themselves, and not him; even the Children that served Idols; a Generation that has depraved its own Works, and alienated it self. Idolaters cannot hurt God, nor do any damage to his Works, or make him a Stranger to this World. See Job 35. 6. No all the Hurt they do, is to themselves, and their own Works. The learned Bishop Patrick gives another reading of it; Did he do him any Hurt? i. e. Is God the Rock to be blam'd for the Evils that should befall Israel? No, His Children are their Blot; i. e. All the Evil that comes upon them, is the Fruit of their Childrens Wickedness, for the whole Generation of them is crooked and perverse. All that are ruin'd, ruin themselves: They dye, because they will dye.

4. A pathetic Exposition with this provoking People for their Ingratitude, v. 6. Do you thus requite the Lord? Surely you will not hereafter be so base and diingenuous in your Carriage towards him, as you have been. (1.) He minds them of the Obligations God had laid upon them to serve him, and to cleave to him. He had been a Father to them, had begot;en them, fed them, carried them, nursed, and born their Manners; and would they spurn at the Bowels of a Father? He had bought them; had been at a vast Expence of Miracles to bring them out of Egypt; had given Men for them, and People for their Life. Isa. 43. 4. Is not he thy Father, thy Owner? To some, that has an uncontested Propriety in thee, and the Ox knoweth his Owner. He has made thee, and brought thee into Being; established thee, and kept thee in being; Has he not done so? Can you deny the Engagements you lie under to him. In Consideration of the great Things he has done and design'd for you? And are not our Obligations as baptiz'd Christians, equally great and strong to our Creator that made us, our Redeemer that bought us, and our Sanctifier that hath established us? (2.) From hence he infers the Evil of deserting him, and rebelling against him. For 1. It was base Ingratitude. Do you thus requite the Lord? Are these the Returns you make him for all his Favours to you? The Powers you have from him will you employ them against him? See Mic. 6. 3, 4. Job. 10. 32. This is such monstrous Villany, as all the World will cry shame on: Call a Man ungrateful, and you can call him no worse. 2. It was prodigious Madnes; O foolish People and unwise. Fools, and double Fools; who has bewitched you? Gal. 3. 1. Fools indeed, to disoblige one on whom you have such a necessary Dependence! To forsake your own Mercies, for lying Vanities! Note, All wilful Sinners, especially Sinners in Israel, are the most unwise, and the most ungrateful People in the World.

7. Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy Father, and he will shew thee, thy elders, and they will tell thee.

8. When the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. 9. For the LORDS portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. 10. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness: he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. 11. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings; 12. So the LORD alone did lead him, and there was no strange God with him. 13. He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields, and he made him to suck honey.

honey out of the rock, and oyl out of the flinty rock. 14 Butter of kine, and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, with the fat of kidneys of wheat, and thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape.

Moses having in general represented God to them as their Great Benefactor, whom they were bound in Gratitude to observe and obey, in these Verses gives particular Instances of God's Kindness to them, and Concern for them.

1. Some Instances were *ancient*, and for Proof of them he appeals to the Records, v. 7. *Remember the days of old*, i. e. Keep in Remembrance the History of those Days, and of the wonderful Providences of God concerning the old World, and concerning your Ancestors *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*, you'll find a constant Series of Mercies attending them, and how long since Things were in working towards that which is now come to pass. Note, The authentick Histories of ancient Times are of singular Use, and especially the History of the Church in its Infancy, both the Old Testament and the New Testament Church.

2. Others were more *modern*, and for Proof of them, he appeals to their *Fathers and Elders*, that were now alive, and *with them*. Parents must diligently teach their Children, not only the Word of God, his Laws, *Deut. 6. 7.* and the Meaning of his Ordinances, *Exod. 12. 26.* but his Works also, and the Methods of his Providence. See *Psal. 78. 3. 4. 6. 7.* And Children should desire the Knowledge of those Things which will be of Use to engage them to their Duty, and to direct them in it.

Three Things are here enlarg'd upon, as Instances of God's Kindness to his People *Israel*, and strong Obligations upon them never to forsake him.

1. The early Designation of the Land of *Canaan* for their Inheritance; for herein it was a Type and Figure of our Heavenly Inheritance, that it was of old *ordain'd* and *prepar'd* in the Divine Counsels, v. 8. When the Earth was divided among the *Sons of Men*, in the Days of *Peleg*, after the Flood, and each Family had its Lot, in which it must settle, and by Degrees grow up into a Nation, then God had *Israel* in his Thoughts, and in his Eye; for designing this good Land into which they were now going, to be in due Time an Inheritance for them, he order'd that the Posterity of *Canaan*, rather than any other of the Families then in being should be planted there in the mean time, to keep Possession as it were till *Israel* was ready for it; because those Families were under the Curse of *Noah*, by which they were condemn'd to Servitude and Ruin, *Gen. 9. 25.* and therefore would be the more justly, honourably, easily and effectually *rooted out*, when the Fulness of Time was come that *Israel* should take Possession. Thus he set the Bounds of that People with an Eye to the design'd number of the Children of *Israel*, that they might have just as much as would serve their Turn. And some observe, that *Canaan* himself with his eleven Sons, *Gen. 10. 15.* &c. make up just the Number of the twelve Tribes of *Israel*. Note, 1. The Wisdom of God has appointed the Bounds of Mens Habitation, and determin'd both the Place and Time of our living in the World, *Acts 17. 26.* When he gave the Earth to the Children of Men, *Psal. 115. 16.* 'Twas not that every Man might catch as he could; no, he divides to Nations their Inheritance, and will have every one to know his own, and not to invade another's Property. 2. Infinite Wisdom has a vast reach, and designs before-hand what is brought to pass long after; *Known unto God are all his Works* from the Beginning to the End, *Acts 15. 18.* but they are not so to us, *Eccles. 3. 11. 3.* The great God in governing the World, and ordering the Affairs of States and Kingdoms, has a special Regard to his Church and People, and consults their Good in all. See *2 Chron. 16. 9.* and *Isa. 45. 4.* The *Canaanites* thought they had as good and sure a Title to their Land, as any of their Neighbours had to theirs; but God intended they should only be Tenants till the *Israelites* their Landlords came. Thus God serves his own Purposes of Kindness to his People by those that neither know him, nor love them, who mean not so, neither doth their Heart think so. *Mic. 4. 12.*

The Reason given for this particular Care God took for this People, so long before they were either born or thought of (as I may say) in our World, doth yet more magnify the Kindness, and make it obliging beyond Expression, v. 9. *For the Lord's Portion is his People.* All the World is his; He is Owner and Possessor of Heaven and Earth, but his Church is his in a peculiar Manner: 'Tis his Demefn, his Vineyard, his Garden inclos'd: He has a particular Delight in it, 'tis the Beloved of his Soul, in it he walks, he dwells, 'tis his Rest for ever. He has a particular Concern for it, keeps it as the

Apple of his Eye; he has particular Expectations from it, as a Man has from his Portion; has a much greater Rent of Honour, Glory and Worship, from that distinguish'd Remnant than from all the World beside. That God should be his People's Portion is easy to be accounted for, for he is their Joy and Felicity, but how they should be his Portion who neither needs them, nor can be benefited by them, must be resolv'd into the wondrous Condescensions of Free Grace. *Even so Father, because it seemed good in thine Eyes so to call and count them.*

2. The forming of them into a People that they might be fit to enter upon this Inheritance, like an Heir of Age, at the Time appointed of the Father. And herein also *Canaan* was a Figure of the Heavenly Inheritance, for as it was from Eternity propos'd and design'd for all God's Spiritual *Israel*, so they are in Time, (and it is a Work of Time) fitted and made meet for it, *Col. 1. 12.*—The Deliverance of *Israel* out of Slavery by the Destruction of their Oppressors, was attended with so many Wonders obvious to Sense, and had been so often spoken of, that it need not to be mention'd in this Song; But the gracious Works God wrought upon them, would be less taken Notice of than the glorious Works he had wrought for them, and therefore he chuseth rather to instance in them. A great deal was done to model this People, to cast them into some Shape, and to fit them for the great Things design'd them in the Land of Promise; and 'tis here most elegantly describ'd.

(1.) He found them in a Desert Land, v. 10. This refers no doubt to the Wilderness through which God brought them to *Canaan*, and in which he took so much Pains with them, 'tis call'd the Church in the Wilderness, *Act. 7. 38.* There it was born and nurs'd, and educated, that all might appear to be Divine, and from Heaven, since they had there no Communication with any Part of this Earth either for Food or Learning: But because he is said to find them there, it seems design'd also to represent both the ill State and the ill Character of that People when God began first to appear for them.

(1.) Their Condition was forlorn, *Egypt* was to them a desert Land, and a vast howling Wilderness, for they were Bond-slaves in it, and cry'd by Reason of their Oppression, and were perfectly bewilder'd and at a loss for Relief: There God found them, and thence he fetch'd them. And (2.) their Disposition was very unpromising, so ignorant were the Generality of them in Divine Things, so stupid and unapt to receive the Impressions of them, so peevish and humoursome, so froward and quarrelsome, and withal so strangely addicted to the Idolatries of *Egypt*, that they might well be said to be found in a Desert Land, for one might as reasonably expect a Crop of Corn from a barren Wilderness, as any good Fruit of Service to God from a People of such a Character.—Those that are renew'd and sanctified by Grace should oft remember what they were by Nature.

(2.) He led him about and instructed him. When God had them in the Wilderness, he did not bring them directly to *Canaan*, but made them go a great Compass round, and so he instructed them; i. e. 1. By this Means he took Time to instruct them, and gave them Commandments as they were able to receive them. Those whose Business it is to instruct others, must not expect it will be done of a sudden: Learners must have time to learn. 2. By this Means he try'd their Faith and Patience, and Dependence upon God, and enur'd them to the Hardships of the Wilderness, and so instructed them. Every State had something in it that was instructive; even when he chasten'd them, he thereby taught them out of his Law. 'Tis said, *Psal. 107. 7.* That he led them forth by the right Way; and yet here, that he led them about; for God always leads his People the right Way, however to us it may seem about: So that the furthest Way about, proves, if not the next Way, yet the best Way home to *Canaan*. How God instructed them, is explain'd long after, *Nehem. 9. 13.* Thou gavest them right Judgments and true Laws, good Statutes and Commandments; and especially, v. 20. Thou gavest them also thy good Spirit to instruct them, and he instructs effectually. We may well imagine how unfit that People had been for *Canaan*, had they not first gone through the Discipline of the Wilderness.

(3.) He kept him as the Apple of his Eye, with all the Care and Tenderness that could be, from the malignant Influences of an open Sky and Air, and all the Perils of an inhospitable Desert. The Pillar of Cloud and Fire was both a Guide and a Guard to them.

(4.) He did that for them, which the Eagle doth for her Nest of young ones, v. 11, 12. The Similitude was touch'd, *Exod. 19. 4.* I bare you on Eagles Wings; here 'tis enlarg'd upon. Eagles are observ'd to have strong Affection to their Young, and to shew it not only as other Creatures, by protecting them, and making Provision for them, but by educating them, and teaching them to fly: For that Purpose she stirr'd them up out of the Nest, where they lye dozing, flutters

over them, to shew them how they must use their Wings, and then use them to fly upon *her* Wings, till they have learn'd to fly upon *their own*. This, by the Way, is an Example to Parents to train up their Children to *Business*, and not to indulge them in Idleness, and the love of Ease. God did thus by *Israel*; when they were in love with their Slavery, and loth to leave it, God, by *Moses*, stirr'd them up to aspire after Liberty, and many a time kept them from returning to the House of Bondage again. He carried them out of *Egypt*, led them into the Wilderness, and now at length had led them through it. The Lord alone did lead him, he needed not any Assistance, nor did he take any to be Partner with him in the Attainment; which was a good Reason why they should serve the Lord only, and no other so much, as in Partnership, much less in Rivalship with him. There was no strange God with him to contribute to *Israel's* Salvation, and therefore there should be none to share in *Israel's* Homage and Adoration, *Psal.* 81. 9.

3. The settling of them in a good Land. This was done in Part already, in the happy planting of the two Tribes and a half, an Earnest of what would speedily and certainly be done for the rest of the Tribes.

1. They were blest'd with glorious Victories over their Enemies, *v.* 13. He made them ride on the high Places of the Earth, i. e. He brought him on with Conquest, and brought him home with Triumph. He rode over the high Places, or strong holds that were kept against him; sat in Ease and Honour upon the fruitful Hills of *Canaan*. In *Egypt* they look'd mean and were so, in Poverty and Disgrace: But in *Canaan* they look'd great, and were so, advanc'd and enrich'd, they rode in State, as a People whom the King of Kings did delight to honour.

2. With great Plenty of all good Things. Not only the ordinary Increase of the Field, but which was uncommon, Honey out of the Rock, and Oil out of the flinty Rock. Which may refer either, (1.) To their miraculous Supply with fresh Water out of the Rock that follow'd them in the Wilderness; which is call'd Honey and Oil, because the Necessity they were reduc'd to made it as sweet and acceptable as Honey and Oil at another time. Or, (2.) To the great Abundance of Honey and Oil they should find in *Canaan*, even in those Parts that were least fertile. The Rocks of *Canaan* should yield a better Increase than the Fields or Meads of other Countries. Other of the Products of *Canaan* are mention'd; *v.* 14. Such Abundance, and such Variety of wholesome Food, and every Thing the best in its kind, that every Meal might be a Feast, if they pleas'd. Excellent Bread, made of the best Corn, here call'd the Kidney of the Wheat, for a Grain of Wheat is not much unlike a Kidney: Butter and Milk in Abundance: The Flesh of Cattle well fed; and for their Drink no worse than the pure Blood of the Grape. So indulgent a Father was God to them, and so kind a Benefactor. Ample makes the Plenty of good Things in *Canaan* to be a Figure of the Fruitfulness of Christ's Kingdom, and the heavenly Comforts of his Word and Spirit; for the Children of his Kingdom he has Butter and Milk, the sincere Milk of the Word, and strong Meat for strong Men, with the Wine that makes glad the Heart.

15 ¶ But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteem'd the rock of his salvation. 16 They provok'd him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provok'd they him to anger. 17 They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not. 18 Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee.

We have here a Description of the Apostacy of *Israel* from God, which would shortly come to pass, and which already they had a Disposition to. One would have thought a People under so many Obligations to their God in Duty, Gratitude, and Interest, should never have turned from him, but alas, they turn'd aside quickly.

Here are two great Instances of their Wickedness, and each of them amounted to an Apostacy from God.

1. Security and Sensuality, Pride and Insolence, and the other common Abuses of Plenty and Prosperity, *v.* 15. These People were call'd *Jeshurun*, an upright People: So some, a seeing People, so others: But they soon lost the Reputation both of their Knowledge and of their Righteousness, for being well fed. (1.) They waxed fat, and grew thick; i. e. They indulg'd

themselves in all manner of Luxury, and Gratifications of their Appetites, as if they had nothing to do but to make Provision for the Flesh to fulfil the Lusts of it. They grew fat; i. e. they grew big and unweildy, mindless of Business, and unfit for it; dull and stupid, careless and senseless, and this was the Effect of their Plenty. Thus the Prosperity of Fools destroys them, *Prov.* 1. 22. Yet this was not the worst of it. (2.) They kick'd; they grew proud and insolent, and lift up the Heel even against God himself: If God rebuk'd them either by his Prophets, or by his Providence they kick'd against the Good, as an untam'd Heifer, or a Bullock unaccustom'd to the Yoke, and in their Rage persecuted the Prophets, and flew in the Face of Providence itself: And thus he forsook God that made him, not paying due Respects to his Creator, nor answering the Ends of his Creation, and put an intollerable Contempt upon the Rock of his Salvation, as if he were not indebted to him for any past Favours, nor had any Dependence upon him for the future. Those that make a God of themselves, and a God of their Bellies in Pride and Wantonness, and cannot bear to be told of it, certainly thereby forsake God, and shew how lightly they esteem him.

2. Idolatry was the great Instance of their Apostacy; and which the former led them to, as it made them sick of their Religion, self-will'd and fond of Changes. Observe,

1. What sort of Gods they chose and offer'd Sacrifice to, when they forsook the God that made them, *v.* 16, 17. This aggravated their Sin, that those very Services, which they should have done to the true God, they did, (1.) To strange Gods, that could not pretend ever to have done them any Kindness, or laid them under any Obligation to them; Gods that they had no Knowledge of, nor could expect any Benefit by, for they were Strangers. Or, they are call'd strange Gods, because they were other than the one only true God, to whom they were betrothed, and ought to have been faithful. (2.) To new Gods, that came newly up, for even in Religion, the Antiquity of which is one of its Honours, vain Minds have strangely affected Novelty, and in contempt of the ancient of Days have been fond of new Gods. A new God! Can there be a more monstrous Absurdity? Would we find the right Way to Rest, we must ask for the good old Way, *Jer.* 6. 16. 'Twas true, their Fathers had worshipp'd other Gods, *Josh.* 24. 2. and perhaps it had been some little Excuse if the Children had return'd to them, but to serve new Gods, whom their Fathers feared not, and to like them the better for being new, was to open a Door to endless Idolatries. (3.) They were such as were no Gods at all, but meer Counterfeits and Pretenders; their Names the Inventions of Mens Fancies, and their Images the Work of Mens Hands. Nay, (4.) They were Devils. So far from being Gods, Fathers and Benefactors to Mankind, that really they were Destroyers; so the Word signifies; such as aim'd to do Mischief: If there were any Spirits or invisible Powers that possess'd their Idol Temples and Images, they were Evil Spirits, and Malignant Powers, whom yet they did not need to worship, for fear they should hurt them, as they say the Indians do; for they that faithfully worship God, are out of the Devil's reach: Nay, the Devil can destroy those only that sacrifice to him. How mad are Idolaters, who forsake the Rock of Salvation, to run themselves upon the Rock of Perdition.

2. What a great Affront this was to *Jehovah* their God.

1. It was justly interpreted a forgetting of him, *v.* 18. of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful. Mindfulness of God would prevent Sin, but when the World is serv'd, and the Flesh indulg'd, God is forgotten: And can any Thing be more base and unworthy than to forget God the that is the Author of our Being, by whom we subsist, and in whom we live and move. And see what comes of it, *Isa.* 17. 10, 11. Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy Salvation, and hast not been mindful of the Rock of thy strength, tho' the strange slips be pleasant Plants at first, yet the Harvest at last will be a Heap in the Day of Grief, and of desperate Sorrow. There's nothing got by forgetting God.

2. It was justly resent'd as an inexcusable Offence. They provok'd him to Jealousy, and to Anger, (*v.* 16.) for their Idols were Abominations to him. See here God's Displeasure against Idols, whether they be set up in the Heart or in the Sanctuary. 1. He is jealous of them, as Rivals with him for the Throne in the Heart. 2. He hates them, as Enemies to his Crown and Government. 3. He is, and will be very angry with those that have any Respect or Affections for them. Those consider not what they do that provoke God, for who knows the Power of his Anger?

19 And when the LORD saw it, he abhorred them, because of the provoking of his sons, and of his daughters. 20 And he said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be:

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for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith. 21 They have moved me to jealousy with *that which is not God*, they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with *those which are not a people*, I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation. 22 For a fire is kindled in my anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains. 23 I will heap mischiefs upon them, I will spend mine arrows upon them. 24 They shall be burnt with hunger, and devoured with burning heat, and with bitter destruction: I will also send the teeth of beasts upon them, with the poyson of serpents of the dust. 25 The sword without, and terror within shall destroy both the young man and the virgin, the suckling also with the man of gray hairs.

The Method of this Song follows the Method of the Predictions in the foregoing Chapter, and therefore after the Revolt of Israel from God, describ'd in the foregoing Verses, here follows immediately the Resolves of Divine Justice concerning them; we deceive ourselves if we think God will thus be mocked by a foolish faithless People that play fast and loose with him.

1. He had delighted in them, but now he would reject them with Detestation and Disdain, v. 19. When the Lord saw their Treachery, and Folly, and base Ingratitude, he abhor'd them: He despis'd them. So some read it. Sin makes us odious in the Sight of the Holy God; and no Sinners are so loathsome to him, as those that he has call'd, and that have call'd themselves his Sons and his Daughters, and yet have been provoking to him. Note. The nearer any are to God in Profession, the more noisome are they to him if they are defiled in a sinful Way, Psal. 106. 39.

2. He had given them the Tokens of his Presence with them, and his Favour to them: But now he would withdraw, and hide his Face from them, v. 20. His hiding his Face signifies his great Displeasure, they had turned their back upon God, and now God would turn his back upon them, (compare Jer. 18. 17. with Jer. 2. 27.) But here it notes also the slowness of God's Proceedings against them in a Way of Judgment. They began in their Apostacy with Omissions of Good, and so proceed to Commissions of Evil. In like manner God will first suspend his Favours, and let them see what the issue of that will be, what a Friend they lose when they provoke God to depart, and will try whether they will bring them to Repentance. Thus we find God hiding himself as it were in Expectation of the Event, Isa. 57. 17. To justify himself in leaving them, he shews that they were such as there was no dealing with; for, 1. They were froward, and a People that could not be pleas'd; or, obdurate in Sin, and that could not be convinc'd and reclaim'd. 2. They were Faithless, and a People that could not be trusted. When he sav'd them, and took them into Covenant, he said, Surely they are Children that will not lie, Isa. 63. 8. but when they proved otherwise, Children in whom is no Faith, they deserv'd to be abandon'd, and that the God of Truth should have no more to do with them.

3. He had done every thing to make them easy, and to please them, but now he would do that against them which should be most vexations to them. The Punishment here answers the Sin, v. 21. (1.) They had provok'd God with despicable Deities, which were not Gods at all, but Vanities; Creatures of their own Imagination, that could not pretend either to merit or to repay the Respects of their Worshipers: The more vain and vile the Gods were after which they went a Whoring, the greater was the Offence to that great and good God, whom they set them up in Competition with, and Contradiction to. This put two great Evils in their Idolatry, Jer. 2. 13. (2.) God would therefore plague them with despicable Enemies, that were worthless, weak, and inconsiderable, and not deserving the Name of a People, which was a great Mortification to them, and aggravated the Oppressions they groan'd under. The more base the People were that tyranniz'd over them, the more barbarous they would be, none so insolent as a Beggar on Horseback: Besides that it would be infamous to Israel, who had so often triumphed over great and mighty Nations, to be themselves trampled upon by the Weak and Foolish, and to come under the Curse of Canaan, who was to be a Servant of Servants. But God can make the weakest Instrument a Scourge to the strongest Sinner; and they that by Sin insult their mighty Creator, or justly insulted by the meanest of their Fellow Creatures. This was remarkably

fulfill'd in the Days of the Judges, when they were sometimes oppress'd by the very Canaanites themselves, whom they had subdu'd, as Judg. 4. 2. But the Apostle applies it to the Conversion of the Gentiles, who had been not a People in Covenant with God, and foolish in Divine Things, yet were brought into the Church solely to the Grief of the Jews, who upon all Occasions shew'd a great Indignation at it, which was both their Sin, and their Punishment, as Envy always is, Rom. 10. 19.

4. He had planted them in a good Land, and replenish'd them with all good Things, but now he would strip them of all their Comforts, and bring them to Ruin. The Judgments threaten'd are very terrible, v. 22.—25. (1.) The Fire of God's Anger shall consume them, v. 22. Are they proud of their Plenty? It shall burn up the Increase of the Earth: Are they confident of their Strength, it shall destroy the very Foundations of their Mountains: There's no Fence against the Judgments of God, when they come with Commission to lay all waste. It shall burn to the lowest Hell, i. e. It shall bring them to the very Depth of Misery in this World, which yet would be but a faint Resemblance of the compleat and endless Misery of Sinners in the other World. The Damnation of Hell, (as our Saviour calls it) is the Fire of God's Anger fastning upon the guilty Conscience of a Sinner, to it's unexpressible and everlasting Torment, Isa. 30. 33. (2.) The Arrows of God's Judgments shall be spent upon them, till his Quiver is quite exhausted, v. 23. The Judgments of God, like Arrows, fly swiftly, Psal. 64. 7. reach those at a Distance, who flatter themselves with Hopes of escaping them, Psal. 21. 8, 12. they come from an unseen Hand, but wound mortally, for God never misseth his Mark, 2 King. 22. 34. The particular Judgments here threaten'd are, (1.) Famine; they shall be burnt, or parch'd, with Hunger. (2.) Pestilence and other Diseases, here call'd burning Heat, and bitter Destruction. (3.) The Insults of the Inferiour Creatures; the Teeth of Beasts, and the Poison of Serpents, v. 24. (4.) War and the fatal Consequences of it, v. 25. (1.) Perpetual Frights. When the sword is without, there cannot but be Terror within, 2 Cor. 7. 5. without were Fightings, within were Fears: Those who cast off the Fear of God, are justly expos'd to the Fear of Enemies. (2.) Universal Deaths: The Sword of the Lord, when it is sent to lay all waste, will destroy without Distinction; neither the Strength of the young Man, nor the Beauty of the Virgin, nor the Innocency of the Suckling, nor the Gravity or Infirmary of the man of gray Hairs, will be their Security from the Sword when it devours one as well as another. Such Devastations doth War make, especially when it is push'd on by Men as ravenous as wild Beasts, and as venomous as Serpents, v. 24. See here what mischief Sin doth, and reckon those Fools that make a Mock at it.

26 I said, I would scatter them into corners, I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men: 27 Were it not that I feared the wrath of the enemy, lest their adversaries should behave themselves strangely, and lest they should say, Our hand is high, and the LORD hath not done all this. 28 For they are a nation void of counsel, neither is there any understanding in them. 29 O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end! 30 How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the LORD had shut them up? 31 For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges. 32 For their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter. 33 Their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps. 34 Is not this laid up in store with me, and sealed up among my treasures? 35 To me belongeth vengeance and recompence, their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste. 36 For the LORD shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants; when he seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up, or left. 37 And he shall say, Where are their gods, their rock in whom they trusted,

trusted, 38 Which did eat the fat of their sacrifices, and drank the wine of their drink-offerings? let them rise up and help you, and be your protection.

After many terrible Threatnings of deserved Wrath and Vengeance, we have here surprizing Intimations of Mercy, undeserved Mercy, which rejoiceth against Judgment, and by which it appears that God has no Pleasure in the Death of Sinners, but would rather they should turn and live.

1. In Jealousie for his own Honour, he will not make a full End of them, v. 26, 27, 28. (1.) It cannot be deny'd, but that they deserv'd to be utterly ruin'd, and that their Remembrance should be made to cease from among Men; so that the Name of an Israelite should never be known but in History; for they were a Nation void of Counsel, v. 18. The most foolish inconsiderate People that ever were; that would not believe the Glory of God, tho' they saw it, nor understand his Loving-kindness, tho' they tasted it and lived upon it. Of them who could cast off such a God, such a Law, such a Covenant, for vain and dunghill Deities, it might truly be said, there is no understanding in them. (2.) It had been an easy Thing with God to ruin them, and blot out the Remembrance of them; when the greatest Part of them were cut off by the Sword, 'twas but scattering the Remnant into some remote, obscure corners of the Earth, where they should never have been heard of more, and the Thing had been done. See Ezek. 9. 12. God can destroy those that are most strongly fortify'd, despoise those that are most closely united, and bury those Names in perpetual Oblivion that have been most celebrated. (3.) Justice demanded it. I said I would scatter them. 'Tis fit they should be cut off from the Earth, that have cut themselves off from their God; Why should they not be dealt with according to their Deserts? (4.) Wisdom consider'd the Pride and Insolency of the Enemy, which would take Occasion from the Ruin of a People that had been so dear to God, and for whom he had done such great Things, to reflect upon God, and to imagine, that because they had got the better of Israel, they had carry'd the Day against the God of Israel. The Adversaries will say, Our hands are high; high indeed, when it has been too high for those whom God himself fought for; nor will they consider that the Lord has done all this; but will dream that they have done it in despite of him, as if the God of Israel were as weak and impotent, and as easily run down, as the pretended Deities of other Nations. (5.) In consideration of this, Mercy prevails for the sparing of a Remnant, and the saving of that unworthy People from utter Ruin. I feared the Wrath of the Enemy. 'Tis an Expression after the manner of Men; 'tis certain God fears no Man's Wrath, but he acted in this Matter as if he had fear'd it. Those few good People in Israel that had a Concern for the Honour of God's Name, feared the Wrath of the Enemy in this Instance more than in any other, as Joshua Chap. 7. 9. and David often; and because they feared it, God himself is said to fear it: He needed not Moses to plead it with him, but minded himself of it, What will the Egyptians say? Let all those whose hearts tremble for the Ark of God and his Israel, comfort themselves with this, That God will work for his own Name, and will not suffer it to be profan'd and polluted: How much sorer we deserve to be disgrac'd, God will never disgrace the Throne of his Glory.

2. In Concern for their Welfare, he earnestly wisheth and desires their Conversion; and in order to that, their serious Consideration of their latter End, v. 29. Observe, (1.) Tho' God had pronounc'd them a foolish People, and of no understanding, yet he wisheth they were wise, as Deut. 5. 29. O that there were such a Heart in them! And Psal. 94. 8. Ye Fools, when will ye be wise? God delights not to see Sinners ruin themselves, but desires they will help themselves; and if they will, he is ready to help them. (2.) 'Tis a great Piece of Wisdom, and will contribute much to the Return of Sinners to God, seriously to consider the latter End; Or, the future State. 'Tis here meant particularly of that which God by Moses had foretold concerning this People in the latter Days: But it may be apply'd more generally. We ought to understand and consider, (1.) The latter End of Life, and the future State of the Soul. To think of Death as our Removal from a World of Sense to a World of Spirits; the final Period of our State and Probation, and our Entrance upon an unchangeable State of Recompence and Retribution. (2.) The latter End of Sin, and the future State of those that live and dye in it. O that Men would consider the Happiness they will lose, and the Misery they will certainly plunge themselves into, if they go on still in their Despoises; what will be the End thereof, Jer. 4. 31. Jerusalem forsake this, and therefore came down wonderfully, Lam. 1. 9.

He calls to mind the great Things he had done for them formerly, as a Reason why he should not quite cast them off.

This seems to be the meaning of that v. 30, 31. How should one Israelite have been too hard for a Thousand Canaanites; as they have been many a time, but that God, who is greater than all Gods, fought for them? And so it comes in like that, Isa. 63. 10, 11. When he was turned to be their Enemy, as here, and fought against them for their Sins, then he remembered the Days of Old, saying, Where is he that brought them out of the Sea? So here, his Arm begins to awake as in the Days of old, against the Wrath of the Enemy, Psal. 138. 7. There was a Time when the Enemies of Israel were sold by their own Rocks, i. e. their own Idol-gods, who could not help them, but betray'd them, because Jehovah, the God of Israel, had shut them up as sheep for the Slaughter: For the Enemies themselves must own, that their Gods were a very unequal Match for the God of Israel. For their Vine is of the Vine of Sodom, v. 32, 33. This must be meant of the Enemies of Israel, who therefore fell so easily before the Sword of Israel, because they were ripe for Ruin, and the Measure of their Iniquity was full.

Yet these Verses may be understood of the strange Prevalency of the Enemies of Israel against them, when God made use of them as the Rod of his Anger, Isa. 10. 5, 6. How should one Canaanite chase a thousand Israelites, (as it is threatn'd against those that trusted to Egypt for Help, Isa. 30. 17. One thousand shall flee at the Rebuke of one) unless Israel's Rock had deserted them, and given them up? For otherwise however they may impute their Power unto their Gods, Hab. 1. 11. as the Philistines imputed their Victory to Dagon; 'tis certain the Enemies Rock could not have prevail'd against the Rock of Israel; God would soon have subdued their Enemies, (Psal. 81. 14.) but that the Wickedness of Israel, deliver'd them into their Hands: For their Vine, that is, Israel's is of the Vine of Sodom, v. 32, 33. They were planted a choice Vine, wholly a right Seed, but by Sin were become the degenerate Plant of a strange Vine, Jer. 2. 21. And not only transcrib'd the Iniquity of Sodom, but out-did it, Ezek. 16. 48. God call'd them his Vineyard, his pleasant Plant, Isa. 5. 7. But their Fruits were, (1.) very Offensive, and displeasing to God, bitter as Gall. (2.) Very Malignant and Pernicious one to another, like the cruel Venom of Asps. Some understand this of their Punishment; their Sin would be bitterness in the latter End; 'twould bite like a Serpent, and sting like an Alder, Job 20. 14.

4. He resolves upon the Destruction of those at last that had been their Prosecutors and Oppressors. When the Cup of Trembling goes round, the King of Babel shall pledge it at last, Jer. 25. 26. And see Isa. 51. 22, 23. The Day is coming, when the Judgment that began at the House of God, shall end with the Sinner and Ungodly, 1 Pet. 4. 17, 18.

God will, in due Time bring down the Church's Enemies.

1. In Displeasure against their Wickedness, which he takes Notice of, and keeps an Account of, v. 34, 35. Is not this implacable Fury of theirs against Israel, laid up in store with me, to be reckon'd for hereafter, when it shall be made to appear, that to me belongs Vengeance? Some understand of the Sin of Israel; especially their persecuting the Prophets, which was laid up in store against them, from the Blood of righteous Abel, Matth. 23. 35. However, it teacheth us, That the Wickedness of the Wicked, is all laid up in store with God. (1.) He observes it, Psal. 90. 8. He knows both what the Vine is, and what the Grapes; What the Temper of the Mind, and what the Actions of the Life. (2.) He keeps a Record of it, both in his own Omniscience, and in the Sinner's Conscience; and this is sealed up among his Treasures, which notes both Safety and Secrecy: These Books cannot be lost, nor will they be open'd till the Great Day. See Hof. 13. 12. (3.) He often delays the Punishment of Sin for a great while, 'tis laid up in store till the Measure be full, and the Day of Divine Patience be expir'd. See Job 21. 29, 30. (4.) There is a Day of Reckoning coming, when all the Treasures of Guilt and Wrath will be broken up, and the Sin of Sinners shall surely find them out. 1. The Thing itself will certainly be done, for the Lord is a God to whom Vengeance belongs, and therefore he will repay, Isa. 59. 18. This is quoted by the Apostle, to shew the Severity of God's Wrath against those that revolt from the Faith of Christ, Heb. 10. 30. 2. It will be done in due time, in the best time; nay, it will be done in a short time. The Day of their Calamity is at hand; and tho' it may seem to tarry, it lingers not, it slumbers not, but it makes haste. In one Hour shall the Judgment of Babylon come.

2. He will do it in Compassion to his own People, who tho' they had greatly provok'd him, yet stood in Relation to him, and their Misery appeal'd to his Mercy, v. 36. the Lord shall judge his People, i. e. judge for them against their Enemies, plead their Cause, and break the Yoke of Oppression, under which

which they had long groan'd, *repenting himself for his Servants*; not changing his Mind, but changing his Way, and fighting for them, as he had fought against them, *when he sees that their Power is gone*. This plainly points at the Deliverance God wrought for Israel, by the Judges, out of the Hands of those to whom he had sold them for their Sins. See *Judg. 2. 11.---19.* And how his Soul was grieved for the Misery of Israel, *Judg. 10. 16.* And this when they were reduc'd to the last Extremity, God help'd them, when they could not help themselves; for there was none shut up or left, *i. e.* none that dwelt either in Cities or wall'd Towns, in which they were shut up, nor any that dwelt in scatter'd Houses in the Country, in which they were left at a distance from Neighbours. Note, God's Time to appear for the Deliverance of his People, is, when things are at the worst with them. God tries his Peoples Faith, and stirs up Prayer, by letting things go to the worst, and then magnifies his own Power, and fills the Faces of his Enemies with Shame, and the Hearts of his People with so much the greater Joy, by rescuing them out of Extremity, as Brands out of the burning.

3. He will do it in contempt, and to the Reproach of the Idols, *v. 37, 38.* Where are their Gods? Two ways it may be understood; 1. That God would do that for his People, which the Idols they had serv'd could not do for them. They had forsaken God, and been very liberal in their Sacrifices to Idols; had brought to their Altars the Fat of their Sacrifices, and the Wine of their Drink-Offerings, which they supposed their Deities to feed upon, and on which they feasted with them: Now, saith God, will these gods you have made your court to at so great an Expence, help you in your Distress, and so repay you for all your Charges in their Service? Go, get you to the Gods you have serv'd, and let them deliver you, *Judg. 10. 14.* This is intended to convince them of their Folly in forsaking a God that could help 'em, for those that could not, and so to bring them to Repentance, and qualify them for Deliverance. When the Adulterers shall follow after her Lovers, and not overtake them; pray to her Idols, and receive no kindness for them, then he shall say, *I will go and return to my first Husband*, *Hof. 2. 7.* See *Isa. 16. 12. Jer. 2. 28.* Or, 2. That God would do that against his Enemies, which the Idols they had serv'd, could not save them from. Sennacherib and Nebuchadnezzar boldly challeng'd the God of Israel to deliver his Worshippers, *Isa. 37. 10. Dan. 3. 15.* and he did deliver them to the Confusion of their Enemies. But the God of Israel challeng'd Bell and Nebo to deliver their Worshippers, to rise up and help them, and to be their Protection; *Isa. 47. 12, 13.* but they were so far from helping them, that they themselves, *i. e.* their Images, which was all that was of them, went into Captivity, *Isa. 46. 1, 2.* Note, Those who trust to any Rock but God, will find it Sand in the Day of their Distress; 'twill fail them then, when they most need it.

39 See now that I, even I am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand. 40 For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever. 41 If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me. 42 I will make mine arrows drunk with blood (and my sword shall devour flesh) and that with the blood of the slain, and of the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy. 43 Rejoyce, O ye nations with his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people.

This conclusion of the Song, speaks three Things.

1. Glory to God, *v. 39.* See now, upon the whole Matter, that I even I am he. Learn this, from the Destruction of Idolaters, and the Inability of their Idols to help them. The Great God here demands the Glory. (1.) Of a Self-existence, I even I am he. Thus Moses concludes with that Name of God, by which he was first made to know him, *Exod. 3. 14. I am that I am.* I am He that I have been, that I will be, that I have promis'd to be, that I have threatn'd to be; All shall find me true to both: The Targum of Uzzielides Paraphraseth it thus, When the Word of the Lord shall reveal himself to redeem his People, he shall say to all People, See, that I now am what I am, and have been, and I am what I will be:

Which we know very well how to apply to him who said to John, I am he, which is, and was, and is to come, *Rev. 1. 8.* These Words, I even I am he, we meet with often in those Chapters of Isaiah where God is encouraging his People to hope for their Deliverance out of Babylon, *Isa. 41. 4.---43. 11, 13, 25.---46. 4.* (2.) Of a Sole Supremacy; there is no god with me. None to help with me, none to cope with me. See *Isa. 43. 10, 11.* (3.) Of an absolute Sovereignty, and universal Agency, I kill, and I make alive, *i. e.* All Evil, and all Good come from his Hand of Providence, he forms both the Light of Life, and the Darknes of Death, *Isa. 45. 7. Lam. 3. 37.* 38. Or, He kills and wounds his Enemies, but heals and makes alive his own People, kills and wounds with his Judgments those that revolt from him, and rebel against him; but when they return and repent, he heals them, and makes them alive with his Mercy and Grace. Or, it notes his uncontrollable Authority to dispose of all his Creatures, and the Beings he has given them, so as to serve his own Purposes by them; whom he will he slays, and whom he will he keeps alive, when his Judgments are abroad. Or, thus, Tho' he kill, yet he makes alive again; tho' he cause grief, yet will he have compassion, *Lam. 3. 32.* Tho' he have torn, he will heal us, *Hof. 6. 1, 2.* The Jerusalem Targum reads it, I kill those that are alive in this World, and make those alive in the other World that are dead. And some of the Jewish Doctors themselves, have observ'd, That Death, and a Life after it, that is, Eternal Life, is intimated in their Words. (4.) Of an irresistible Power, which cannot be controul'd; Neither is there any that can deliver out of my Hand, those that I have mark'd for Destruction. As no Exception can be made against the Sentence of God's Justice, so no Escape can be made from the Executions of his Power.

2. Terror to his Enemies, *v. 40, 41, 42.* Terror indeed to those that hate him, as all those do that serve other Gods that persist in wilful Disobedience to the Divine Law, and that malign and persecute his faithful Servants; these are they whom God will render Vengeance to; those his Enemies that will not have him to reign over them. To frighten such in time to repent and return to their Allegiance, the Wrath of God is here reveal'd from Heaven against them. 1. The Divine Sentence is ratified with an Oath, *v. 40.* He lifts up his Hand to Heaven, the Habitation of his Holiness; this was an ancient and very significant Sign us'd in Swearing, *Gen. 14. 22.* And since he could swear by no greater, he swears by himself, and his own Life. Those are miserable without Remedy, that have the Word and Oath of God against them. The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, that the Sin of Sinners shall be their Ruin, if they go on in it. 2. Preparation is made for the Execution; the glittering sword is whet. See *Psal. 7. 12.* 'Tis a sword bath'd in Heaven, *Isa. 34. 5.* While the sword is in whetting, space is given to the Sinner to repent and make his Peace; which if we do not, the Wound will be the deeper. And as the sword is whet, so the Hand that is to wield it takes hold on Judgment with a Resolution to go through with it. 3. The Execution itself will be very terrible; The sword shall devour flesh in abundance, and the Arrows be made drunk with blood, such vast Quantities of it shall be shed; the Blood of the slain in Battle, and of the Captives to whom no Quarter should be given, but they should be put under Military Execution. When he begins Revenge, he will make an end; for in this also his Work is perfect. The Critics are much perplex'd with the last Clause, From the beginning of Revenges upon the Enemy: The Learned Bishop Patrick (that great Master) thinks it may admit this reading, From the King to the Slave of the Enemies, *Jer. 50. 35, 36, 37.* When the Sword of God's Wrath is drawn, it will make bloody Work, Blood to the Horse-bridles, *Rev. 14. 20.*

3. Comfort to his own People, *v. 43.* Rejoyce O ye Nations with his People. He concludes the Song with Words of Joy; for in God's Israel there is a Remnant whose End will be Peace; God's People will rejoyce at last, will rejoyce everlastingly. Three Things are here mention'd as matter of Joy. 1. The enlarging of the Church's Bounds: The Apostle applies the first Words of this Verse to the Conversion of the Gentiles, *Rom. 15. 10.* Rejoyce ye Gentiles with his People. See what the Grace of God doth in the Conversion of Souls, it brings them to rejoyce with the People of God; for true Religion, brings us acquainted with true Joy; so great a Mistake are they under, that think it tends to make Men melancholly. 2. The Avenging of the Church's Controversies upon her Adversaries. He will make Inquisition for the Blood of his Servants, and it shall appear how precious it is to him, for they that spilt it shall have blood given them to drink. 3. The Mercy God has in store for his Church, and for all that belong to it, he will be merciful to his Land, and to his People; *i. e.* to all every where that fear and serve him: Whatever Judgments are brought upon Sinners, it shall go well

well with the People of God, and in this let *Jews and Gentiles rejoice together.*

44 ¶ And Moses came and spake all the words of this song in the ears of the people, he and Hoshea the son of Nun. 45 And Moses made an end of speaking all these words to all Israel. 46 And he said unto them, Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day; which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law. 47 For it is not a vain thing for you: because it is your life; and through this thing ye shall prolong your days in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it. 48 And the LORD spake unto Moses that self-same day, saying, 49 Get thee up into this mountain Abarim, unto Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, that is over against Jericho; and behold the land of Canaan which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession. 50 And die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people; as Aaron thy brother died in mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people: 51 Because ye trespassed against me among the children of Israel, at the waters of Meribah-kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin; because ye sanctified me not in the midst of the children of Israel. 52 Yet thou shalt see the land before thee, but thou shalt not go thither unto the land which I give the children of Israel.

Here's 1. The solemn Delivery of this Song to the Children of Israel, v. 44, 45. Moses spake it to as many as could hear him, while *Joshua* in another Assembly at the same Time deliver'd it to as many as his Voice would reach. Thus coming to them from the Mouth of both their Governours, *Moses* that was laying down the Government, and *Joshua* that was taking it up, they would see they were both in the same Song, and that tho' they chang'd their Commander, there was no change in the Divine Command; *Joshua*, as well as *Moses*, would be a Witness against them, if ever they forsook God.

2. An earnest Charge to them to mind these, and all the rest of the good Words that *Moses* had said to them. How earnestly doth he long after them all, how very desirous that the Word of God might make deep and lasting Impressions upon them, how jealous over them with a godly Jealousy, lest they should at any Time let slip these great Things! (1.) The Duties he chargeth upon them are, (1.) Carefully to attend to these things themselves; *Set your Hearts* both to the Laws, and to the Promises and Threatnings; the Blessings and Curses, and now at last to this Song. Let the Mind be closely applied to the Consideration of these Things; Be affected with them; Be intent upon your Duty, and cleave to it with full purpose of Heart. 2. Faithfully to transmit these Things to those that should come after them: What Interest you have in your Children, or Influence upon them, use it for this Purpose; and command them (as your Father *Abraham* did, Gen. 18. 19.) to observe to do all the Words of this Law. They that are good themselves cannot but desire that their Children may be so likewise; and that Posterity may keep up Religion in their Day, and the Entail of it may not be cut off. (2.) The Arguments he useth to perswade them to make Religion their Business, and to persevere in it, are, 1. The vast importance of the Things themselves which he had charg'd upon them, v. 47. It is not a vain thing, because it is your Life. 'Tis not an indifferent thing, but of absolute necessity; 'tis not a Trifle, but a matter of Consequence, a matter of Life and Death; mind it, and you are made for ever; neglect it, and you are for ever undone. O that Men were but fully possess'd of this, that Religion is their Life, even the Life of their Souls! 2. The vast Advantage it would be of to them: Through this thing ye shall prolong your Days in Canaan, which is a typical Promise of that Eternal Life which Christ has assur'd us they shall enter into that keep the Commandments of God, Mat. 19. 17.

3. Orders given to *Moses* concerning his Death. Now this renowned Witness for God has finish'd this Testimony, he must go up to Mount Nebo and die; And in the Prophecy of Christ's two Witnesses there is a plain Allusion to *Moses* and *Elias*, Rev. 11. 6. and perhaps their Removal being by Mar-

tyndom is no less glorious than the Removal either of *Moses* or *Elias*.— Orders were given to *Moses*, that self-same day, v. 48. Now he had done his Work, why should he desire to live a Day longer? He had indeed formerly pray'd that he might go over Jordan, but now he is intirely satisfied, and as God had bidden him, saith no more of that matter.

1. God here minds him of the Sin he had been guilty of for which he was excluded Canaan, v. 51. that he might the more patiently bear the Rebuke because he had sinned; And that now he might renew his Sorrow for that unadvised Word, for it is good for the Best of Men to die repenting of the Infirmities they are conscious to themselves of. 'Twas an Omission that was thus displeasing to God, he did not sanctify God, as he ought to have done before the Children of Israel, he did not carry himself with a due Decorum, in executing the Orders he had then received.

2. He minds him of the Death of his Brother *Aaron*, v. 50. to make his own the more Familiar, and the less Formidable. Note, 'Tis a great Encouragement to us when we die, to think of our Friends that have gone before us through that darksome Valley; especially of Christ our Elder Brother, and great High-Priest.

3. He sends him up to a high Hill from thence to take a view of the Land of Canaan and then die, v. 49, 52. The Remembrance of his Sin might make Death terrible, but the sight God gave him of Canaan took off the Terror of it, as it was a Token of God's being reconcil'd to him, and a plain Indication to him, that tho' his Sin shut him out of the Earthly Canaan, yet it should not deprive him of that better Country, which in this World can only be seen, and that with an Eye of Faith. Note, Those may die with comfort and ease whenever God calls for them, notwithstanding the Sins they remember against themselves, who have a believing Prospect, and a well-grounded Hope of Eternal Life beyond Death.

CHAP. XXXIII.

Yet *Moses* has not done with the Children of Israel; He seem'd to have taken final leave of them in the close of the foregoing Chapter, but still he hath something more to say. He had preach'd them a Farewel Sermon, a very copious and pathetic Discourse. After Sermon he had given out a Psalm, a long Psalm; and now nothing remains but to dismiss them with a Blessing; that Blessing he pronounceth in this Chapter in the name of the Lord, and so leaves them. 1. He pronounceth them all Blessed in what God had done for them, already, especially in giving them his Law, v. 2.—5. 2. He pronounceth a Blessing upon each Tribe, which is both a Prayer for, and a Prophecy of their Felicity. 1. Reuben, v. 6. 2. Judah, v. 7. 3. Levi, v. 8.—11. 4. Benjamin, v. 12. 5. Joseph, v. 13.—17. 6. Zebulun and Issachar, v. 18.—19. 7. Gad, v. 20. 8. Dan, v. 22. 9. Naphtali, v. 23. 10. Asher, v. 24, 25. 3. He pronounceth them all in general Blessed, upon the account of what God would be to them, and do for them, if they were obedient, v. 26.—29.

1 AND this is the blessing wherewith *Moses* the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death. 2 And he said, the LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them. 3 Yea, he loved the people; all his Saints are in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words. 4 *Moses* commanded us a law: even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob. 5 And he was king in Jeshurun; when the heads of the people and the tribes of Israel were gathered together.

The first Verse is the Title of the Chapter: It is a Blessing: In the foregoing Chapter he had thunder'd out the Terrors of the Lord against Israel for their Sin, 'twas a Chapter like *Ezekiel's* Roll full of Lamentation and mourning and woe. Now to soften that, and that he might not seem to part in Anger, he here subjoyns a Blessing, and leaves his Peace which should defend and rest upon all those among them that were the Sons of Peace. Thus Christ's last Work on Earth was to bless his Disciples, Luk. 24. 50. like *Moses* here in token of parting Friends. *Moses* blessed them. (1.) as a Prophet; a Man of God. Note, 'tis a very desirable thing to have an Interest in the Prayers of those that have an Interest in Heaven; 'tis a Prophet's Reward: And in this Blessing *Moses* not only ex-

Preſſeth his good Wiſhes to this People, but by the Spirit of Prophecy foretels Things to come concerning them. (2.) As a Parent to *Iſrael*, for ſo good Princes are to their Subjects. *Jacob* upon his Death-bed bleſſed his Sons, Gen. 49. 1. in Conformity to whoſe Example *Moses* here bleſſeth the Tribes that were deſcended from them, to ſhew, that tho' they had been very provoking, yet the Entail of the Bleſſing was not cut off. The doing of this immediately before his Death would not only be the more likely to leave an Impreſſion upon them, but would be an Indication of the great Good-will of *Moses* to them; that he deſired their Happineſs, tho' he muſt dye, and not ſhare in it.

He begins his Bleſſing with a lofty Deſcription of the glorious Appearances of God to them, in giving them the Law, and the great Advantage they had by it.

1. There was a viſible and illuſtrious Diſcovery of the Divine Maſteſty; enough to convince, and for excuſe Athiſts and Inſidels, to awaken and affect thoſe that were moſt ſtupid and careleſs, and to put to Shame all ſecret Inclinations to other Gods, v. 1. (1.) His Appearance was glorious: He ſhined forth like the Sun when he ſpake forth in his Strength. Even *Seir* and *Paran*, two Mountains at ſome Diſtance, were illuminated by the Divine Glory, which appear'd on Mount *Sinai*, and reflected ſome of the Rays of it; ſo bright was the Appearance, and ſo much taken Notice of by the adjacent Countries: To this the Prophet alludes, to ſet forth the Wonders of the Divine Providence, Hab. 3. 3. 4. *Pſal.* 18. 7. 8, 9. The *Jeruſalem Targum* has a ſtrange Gloſs upon this, That when God came down to give the Law, he offer'd it on Mount *Seir* to the *Edomites*, but they refus'd it, becauſe they found in it, *Thou ſhalt not kill*. Then he offer'd it on Mount *Paran* to the *Iſhmaelites*, but they alſo refus'd it, becauſe they found in it, *Thou ſhalt not ſteal*: And then he came to Mount *Sinai*, and offer'd it to *Iſrael*, and they ſaid, *All that the Lord ſhall ſay, we will do*. I would not have tranſcrib'd ſo groundleſs a Conceit, but for the Antiquity of it. (2.) His Attendance was glorious: He came with his Holy Myriads, as *Enoch* had long ſince foretold he ſhould come in the laſt Day, to judge the World, Jude 14. Theſe were the Angels, thoſe Chariots of God, in the miſt of which the Lord was, on that Holy Place, *Pſal.* 68. 17. They attended the Divine Maſteſty, and were employ'd as his Miniſters in the Solemnities of the Day. Hence the Law is ſaid to be given by the Diſpoſition of Angels, *Act.* 7. 53. *Heb.* 2. 2.

2. He gave them his law, which is, (1.) call'd a ſery Law, becauſe it was given them out of the miſt of the Fire, *Deut.* 4. 33. And becauſe it works like Fire; if it be receiv'd it is melting, warming, purifying, and burns up the Droſs of Corruption; if it be rejected it hardens, ſears, torments and deſtroys. The Spirit deſcended in Cloven Tongues as of fire, for the Goſpel alſo is a ſery Law. (2.) It is ſaid to go from his right Hand, either becauſe he wrote it on Tables of Stone; or, noting the Power and Energy of the Law, and the Divine Strength that goes along with it, that it may not return void. Or, it came as a Gift to them, and a precious Gift it was, a Right-hand Bleſſing. (3.) It was an Inſtance of the ſpecial Kindneſs he had for them. *Yes, he lov'd the People*, v. 3. and therefore tho' it was a ſery Law, yet it is ſaid to go for them, v. 2. and in favour to them. Note, The Law of God written in the Heart, is a certain Evidence of the Love of God ſent Abroad there: We muſt reckon God's Law one of the Gifts of his Grace. *Yes, he embrac'd the People*, or laid them in his Boſom, ſo the Word ſignifies, which ſpeaks not only the deareſt Love, but the moſt tender and careful Protection. (4.) All his Saints were in his Hand. Some underſtand it particularly of his ſupporting them and preſerving them Alive at Mount *Sinai*, when the Terror was ſo great that *Moses* himſelf quak'd; they heard the Voice of God and liv'd, *Deut.* 4. 33. Or it notes his forming them into a People by his Law he molded and manag'd them, as the Potter doth the Clay. Or they were in his Hand to be cover'd and protect'd, us'd and diſpoſ'd of as the Seven Stars were in the Hand of Chriſt, *Rev.* 1. 16. Note, God has all his Saints in his Hand, and tho' there are Ten thouſands of his Saints, v. 2. yet his Hand, with which he maketh the Waters, is large enough, and ſtrong enough to hold them all, and we may be ſure that none can pluck them out of his Hand, *Joh.* 10. 28.

3. He diſpoſ'd them to receive the Law which he gave them; they ſat down at thy Feet, as Scholars at the Feet of their Maſter, in Token of Reverence in Attendance and humble Submiſſion to what is taught; ſo *Iſrael* ſate at the Foot of Mount *Sinai*, and promiſ'd to hear and do whatever God ſhould ſay. They were ſtruck to thy Feet, ſo ſome read it; viz. By the Terrors of Mount *Sinai*, which greatly humbled them for the preſent; *Exod.* 20. 19. Every one then ſtood ready to receive God's Words, and ſhall do ſo again when the Law ſhall be publicly read to them, as it was *Jos.* 8. 34. It is a great Privilege, when we have heard the Words of God, to have

Opportunity of hearing them again, *Joh.* 17. 26. I have declar'd thy Name, and will declare it. So *Iſrael*, not only had received the Law, but ſhould ſtill receive it by their Prayers, and other the lively Oracles.

The People are taught, v. 4, 5. in Gratitude for the Law of God, always to keep up an honourable Remembrance both of the Law itſelf, and of *Moses*, by whom it was given. Two of the *Chaldee* Paraphraſts read in, *The Children of Iſrael ſaid Moses commanded us a Law*: And the *Jews* ſay, that as ſoon as a Child was able to ſpeak, his Father was oblig'd to teach him theſe Words; *Moses commanded us a Law, even the Inheritance of the Congregation of Jacob*.

1. They are taught to ſpeak with great Reſpect of the Law, and call it the Inheritance of the Congregation of Jacob. They look'd upon it, (1.) As peculiar to them, and that by which they were diſtinguiſh'd from other Nations, who neither had the Knowledge of it, *Pſal.* 147. 20. nor if they had, were under thoſe Obligations to obſerve it, that *Iſrael* was under: And therefore (ſaith Biſhop *Patrick*) when the *Jews* conquer'd any Country, they did not force any to embrace the Law of *Moses*, but only to ſubmit to the ſeven Precepts of *Noah*. (2.) As Entail'd upon them; for ſo Inheritance is to be tranſmitted to their Poſterity. And, (3.) As their Wealth and true Treafure. Thoſe that enjoy the Word of God, and the Means of Grace, have Reaſon to ſay, *That they have a goodly Heritage*. He is indeed a rich Man in whom the Word of Chriſt dwells richly. Perhaps the Law is call'd their Inheritance, becauſe it was given them with their Inheritance, and was ſo annex'd to it, that the forſaking of the Law would be a Forfeiture of the Inheritance: See *Pſal.* 119. 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000.

2. They are taught to ſpeak with great Reſpect of *Moses*, and they were the more oblig'd to keep up his Name, becauſe he had not provided for the keeping of it up in his Family; his Poſterity were never call'd the Sons of *Moses*, as the Priests were the Sons of *Aaron*.—(1.) They muſt own *Moses* a great Benefactor to their Nation, in that he commanded them the Law, for tho' it came from the Hand of God, it went through the Hand of *Moses*. (2.) He was King in *Jehurim*.—Having commanded them the Law, as long as he liv'd he took Care to ſee it obſerv'd, and put in Execution, and they were very happy in having ſuch a King, who rul'd them, and went in and out before them at all Times, but did in a ſpecial manner look great, when the Heads of the People were gather'd together in Parliament as it were, and *Moses* was Preſident among them. Some underſtand this of God himſelf; He did then declare himſelf their King, when he gave them the Law, and he continu'd ſo, as long as they were *Jehurim*, an upright People, and till they rejected him, 1 *Sam.* 12. 12. But it ſeems rather to be underſtood of *Moses*. A good Government is a great Bleſſing to any People, and what they have a Reaſon to be very thankful for; and that Conſtitution is very happy, which as *Iſrael's*, which as ours divides the Power between the King in *Jehurim*, and the Heads of the Tribes when they are gather'd together.

6 ¶ Let Reuben live, and not die: and let not his men be few. 7 ¶ And this is the bleſſing of Judah: and he ſaid, Hear, LORD, the voice of Judah, and bring him unto his people: let his hands be ſufficient for him, and be thou an help to him from his enemies.

Here's 1. The Bleſſing of Reuben. Tho' Reuben had loſt the Honour of his Birth-right, yet *Moses* begins with him, for we ſhould not inſult over them that are diſgrac'd, nor deſire to perpetuate Marks of Infamy upon any, tho' never ſo juſtly ſentenc'd at firſt, v. 6. *Moses* deſires and foretels, (1.) The Preſerving of this Tribe, tho' a Frontier Tribe on the other ſide *Jordan*, yet let it live, and not be either ruin'd by it's Neighbours, or loſt among them. And perhaps he refers to thoſe choſen Men of that Tribe, who having had their Lot assign'd them already, left their Families in it, and were now ready to go out arm'd before their Brethren, *Numb.* 32. 17. Let them be protect'd in this noble Expedition, and their Heads cover'd in the Day of Battle. (2.) The Increaſe of this Tribe, Let not his Men be few; or, Let his Men be a number, i. e. let it be a numerous Tribe: Tho' their other Honours be loſt, ſo that they ſhall not excel, yet let them multiply. Let Reuben live and not dye, tho' his Men be few; So Biſhop *Patrick* thinks it may be render'd. Tho' he muſt not expect to flouriſh, (*Gen.* 49. 4.) yet let him not periſh. All the *Chaldee* Paraphraſts refer this to the other World; Let Reuben live in Life eternal, and not dye the ſecond Death. So Onkelos; Let Reuben live in this World, and not dye that Death which the Wicked dye in the World to come. So *Jonathan* and the *Jeruſalem Targum*.

2. The Blessing of Judah; which is put before Levi, because our Lord sprang out of Judah, and (as Dr. Lightfoot saith) Because of the Dignity of the Kingdom above the Priesthood. The Blessing, v. 7. may refer, either (1.) To the whole Tribe in general. *Moses* prays for, and prophesies the great Prosperity of that Tribe. That God would hear his Prayers, (see an Instance 2 Chron. 13. 14.) settle him in his Lot, prosper him in all his Affairs, and give him Victory over his Enemies. 'Tis taken for granted, that the Tribe of Judah would be both a praying Tribe, and an active Tribe. Lord, saith *Moses*, hear his Prayers, and give Success to all his Undertakings; let his Hands be sufficient for him both in Husbandry and in War. The Voice of Prayer should always be attended with the Hand of Endeavour, and then we may expect Prosperity.

Or, 2. It may refer in particular to David, as a Type of Christ: That God would hear his Prayers, Psal. 20. 1. And Christ was heard always, John 11. 42. That he would give him Victory over his Enemies, and Success in his great Undertakings. See Psal. 89. 20. And that Prayer, that God would bring him to his People, seems to refer to Jacob's Prophecy concerning Shiloh, That to him should the gathering of the People be, Gen. 49. 10.

The Tribe of Simeon is omitted in the Blessing, because Jacob had left it under a Brand, and it had never done any thing, as Levi had done, to retrieve its Honour. It was lessen'd in the Wilderness more than any other of the Tribes; and Zimri, who was so notoriously guilty in the Matter of Peor but t'other Day, was of that Tribe. Or, because the Lot of Simeon was an Appendage to that of Judah, that Tribe is included in the Blessing of Judah. Some Copies of the Septuagint joyn Simeon with Reuben, Let Reuben live and not dye, and let Simeon be many in Number.

8 ¶ And of Levi he said, Let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy holy one, whom thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah; 9 Who said unto his father and unto his mother, I have not seen him, neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children: for they have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant. 10 They shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law: they shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt-sacrifice upon thine altar. 11 Bless, LORD, his substance, and accept the work of his hands: smite through the loyns of them that rise against him, and of them that hate him, that they rise not again.

Moses is large in blessing the Tribe of Levi, not so much because it was his own Tribe, (for he takes no Notice of his Relation to it) as because it was God's Tribe. The Blessing of Levi has Reference,

1. To the High Priest, here call'd God's Holy One, v. 8. because his Office was Holy, in token of which, Holiness to the Lord was written upon his Forehead. (1.) He seems to acknowledge, that God might justly have displac'd Aaron and his Seed, for his Sin at Meribah, Numb. 20. 12. So many understand it. Its rather probable to me, that on the contrary, he pleads with God the Zeal and Faithfulness of Aaron, and his Boldness of stemming the Tide of the Peoples Murmurings at the other Meribah, Exod. 17. 7. Which might be very remarkable, and which God might have an Eye to in conferring the Priesthood upon him, though no Mention be made of it there. All the Chaldee Paraphrasts agree, that it was a tryal in which he was found perfect and faithful, and stood in the Tryal; therefore not that, Numb. 20. 12. (2.) He prays that the Office of the High Priest might ever remain. Let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with him. 'Twas given him for some eminent Piece of Service, as appears, Mal. 2. 5. Lord, let it never be taken from him. Notwithstanding this Blessing, the Urim and Thummim was lost in the Captivity, and never restor'd under the Second Temple: But it has its full Accomplishment in Jesus Christ, God's Holy One, and our great High Priest, of whom Aaron was a Type, with him who had lain in the Father's Bosom from Eternity, the Urim and Thummim shall remain; for he is the wonderful and everlasting Counsellor. Some translate the Thummim and Urim appellatively; the rather, because the usual Order is here inverted, and here only: Thummim signifies Integrity, and Urim Illumination; Let these be with thy Holy One, i. e. Lord, let the High Priest ever be both an Upright Man, and an Understanding Man. A good Prayer to be put up for the Ministers of the Gospel, That they may have clear

Heads, and honest Hearts; Light and Sincerity make a compleat Minister.

2. To the inferior Priests and Levites, v. 9, 10, 11. 1. He commends the Zeal of this Tribe for God, when they sided with *Moses* (and so with God) against the Worshipers of the Golden Calf, Exod. 32. 26, &c. And being employ'd in cutting off the Ring-leaders in that Wickedness, they did it impartially: The best Friends they had in the World, tho' as dear to them as their next Relations, they did not spare them, if they were Idolaters. Note, Our Regard to God and to his Glory, ought always to prevail above our Regard to any Creature whatsoever. And those who not only keep themselves pure from the common Iniquities of the Times and Places in which they live, but as they are capable, utter Testimony against them, and stand up for God against the Evil doers, shall have special Marks of Honour put upon them. Perhaps *Moses* may have an Eye to the Sons of Korah, who refused to joyn with their Father in his Gain-saying, Numb. 26. 11. Also to Phinehas, who executed Judgment, and stayed the Plague. And indeed the Office of the Priests and Levites, which engag'd their constant Attendance, at least in their Turns, at God's Altar, laid them under a Necessity of being frequently absent from their Families, which they could not take such Care of, nor make such Provision for as other Israelites might. This was the constant Self-denial they submitted to, that they might observe God's Word, and keep the Covenant of Priesthood. Note, Those that are call'd to minister in Holy Things must sit loose to the Relations and Interests that are dearest to them in this World, and prefer the fulfilling of their Ministry, before the gratifying of the best Friend they have, Acts 21. 13, — 10. 24. Our Lord Jesus knew not his Mother and his Brethren, when they would have taken him off from his Work, Mat. 12. 48.

3. He confirms the Commission granted this Tribe to minister in Holy Things, which was the Recompence of their Zeal and Fidelity, v. 10. (1.) They were to deal for God with the People. They shall teach Jacob thy judgments and Israel thy Laws, both as Preachers in their Religious Assemblies, reading and expounding the Law, Neh. 8. 7. 8. And as Judges determining doubtful and difficult Cases that were brought before them, 2 Chron. 17. 8, 9. The Priests Lips kept this Knowledge for the Use of the People, who were to ask the Law at their Mouth, Mal. 2. 7. Even Haggai a Prophet consulted the Priests in a Case of Conscience, Hag. 2. 12. Note, Preaching is necessary not only for the first planting of Churches, but for the preserving and edifying of Churches when they are planted. See Ezek. 44. 23, 24. (2.) They were to deal for the People with God, in burning Incense to the Praise and Glory of God, and offering Sacrifices to make Attonement for Sin, and to obtain the Divine Favour. This was the Work of the Priests, but the Levites attended, and assisted in it. Those that would have Benefit by their Incense and Offerings, must diligently and faithfully observe their Instructions.

3. He prays for them, v. 11. 1. That God would prosper them in their Estates, and make that which was allotted them for their Maintenance comfortable to them. Bless Lord his Substance. The Provision made for them was very plentiful, and came to them easily, and yet they could have no Joy of it unless God blessed it to them, and since God himself was their Portion, a particular Blessing might be expected to attend that Portion. Bless Lord his Vine; so some read it, Lord increase thy Graces in them, and make them more and more fit for their Work. 2. That he would accept them in their Services. Accept the Work of his Hands, both for himself, and for the People for whom he ministers. Acceptance with God is that which we should all aim at, and be ambitious of, in all our Devotions, whether Men accept us or no, 2 Cor. 5. 9. and it is the most valuable Blessing we can desire either for our selves or others. 3. That he would take his Part against all his Enemies, smite through the Loins of them that rise against him. He supposeth that God's Ministers would have many Enemies; some will hate their Persons for their Faithfulness, and would endeavour to do them a Mischief: Others would envy them their Maintenance, and endeavour sacrilegiously to deprive them of it: Others would oppose them in the Execution of their Office, and not submit to the Sentence of the Priests: And some would aim to overthrow the Office it self. Now he prays that God would blast all such Attempts, and return the Mischief upon the Heads of the Authors. This Prayer is a Prophecy, That God would certainly reckon with those that are enemies to his Ministers, and will keep up a Ministry in his Church to the End of Time, mauler all the Designs of the Gates of Hell against it. Saul rose up against the Lord's Priests, 1 Sam. 22. 18. and it fill'd the Measure of his Sin.

12 ¶ And of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by him; and the LORD shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders. 13 ¶ And of Joseph he said, Blessed of the LORD be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath, 14 And for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon, 15 And for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills, 16 And for the precious things of the earth, and fulness thereof, and for the good will of him that dwelt in the bush: let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren. 17 His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth: and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh.

Here's 1. The Blessing of Benjamin, v. 12. Benjamin is put next to Levi, because the Temple, where the Priest's Work lay, was just upon the Edge of the Lot of this Tribe: And 'tis put before Joseph, because of the Dignity of Jerusalem, (Part of which was in this Tribe) above Samaria, which was in the Tribe of Ephraim, and because Benjamin adher'd to the House of David, and to the Temple of the Lord, when the rest of the Tribes deserted both with Jeroboam, (1.) Benjamin is here call'd the Beloved of the Lord, as the Father of this Tribe was Jacob's beloved Son, the Son of his Right Hand. Note, Those are blessed indeed that are beloved of the Lord. Saul the first King, and Paul the great Apostle, were both of this Tribe. (2.) He is here assur'd of the Divine Protection, he shall dwell safely. Note, Those are safe whom God loves, Psal. 91. 1. (3.) 'Tis here intimated, that the Temple in which God would dwell, should be built in the borders of this Tribe. Jerusalem, the holy City, was in the Lot of this Tribe, Josh. 18. 28. and tho' Zion, the City of David, is suppos'd to belong to Judah, yet Mount Moriah, on which the Temple was built, was in Benjamin's Lot. God is therefore said to dwell between his Shoulders, because the Temple stood on that Mount, as the Head of a Man upon his Shoulders. And by this Means Benjamin was cover'd all the Day long under the Protection of the Sanctuary, (Psal. 125. 2.) which is often spoken of as a Place of Refuge, Psal. 27. 4. 5. Neh. 6. 10. Benjamin dwelling by the Temple of God, dwelt in Safety by him. Note, It's a happy thing to be in the Neighbourhood of the Temple. This Situation of Benjamin it's likely was the only thing that kept that Tribe tight with Judah to the Divine Institutions, when the other ten Tribes apostatiz'd. Those have corrupt and wicked Hearts indeed who the nearer they are to the Church, are the further from God.

2. The Blessing of Joseph, including both Manasseh and Ephraim: In Jacob's Blessing, Gen. 48. that of Joseph is the largest, and so 'tis here: And from thence Moses here borrows the Title he gives to Joseph, v. 16. that he was separated from his Brethren. Or, as it might be read, a Nazarite among them, both in regard of his Piety, wherein it appears by many Instances he excell'd them all: And of his Dignity in Egypt, where he was both their Ruler and Benefactor; His Brethren separated him from them by making him a Slave, but God distinguish'd him from them by making him a Prince.

Now the Blessings here pray'd for and prophecy'd of for this Tribe, are great Plenty and great Power.

1. Great Plenty, v. 13, 14, 15, 16. In general, Blessed of the Lord be his Land. They were very fruitful Countries that fell into the Lot of Ephraim and Manasseh, yet Moses prays they might be water'd with the Blessing of God, which makes rich, and on which all Fruitfulness doth depend. Now 1. He instanceth in many Particulars, which he prays may contribute to the Wealth and Abundance of these two Tribes, looking up to the Creator for the Benefit and Serviceableness of all the inferior Creatures; for they are all that to us which he makes them to be. He prays, (1.) for seasonable Rains, and Dews, The precious Things of Heaven, and so precious they are, tho' but fair Water, that without them the Fruits of the Earth would all fail and be cut off. (2.) For plentiful Springs, which help to make the Earth fruitful, call'd

here the Deep that coucheth beneath; both are the Rivers of God, Psal. 65. 9. For he is the Father of the Rain, Job 38. 28. And he made particularly the Fountains of Waters, Rev. 14. 7. (3.) For the benign Influences of the Heavenly Bodies, v. 14. for the precious Fruits, (the Word signifies that which is most excellent, and the best in its Kind) put forth by the quickening Heat of the Sun, and the cooling Moisture of the Moon. Let them have the Yearly Fruits in their several Months, according to the Course of Nature, in one Month Olives, in another Dates, &c. So some understand it. (4.) For the Fruitfulness even of their Hills and Mountains, which in other Countries us'd to be barren, v. 15. let them have the chief Things of the antient Mountains, and if the Mountains be fruitful, the Fruits on them will be first and best ripen'd: They are call'd Ancient Mountains, not because Prior in Time to other Mountains, but because like the First-born, they were Superiour in Worth and Excellency: And lasting Hills, not only because, as other Mountains, they were unmoveable, Hab. 3. 6. but because the Fruitfulness of them should continue. (5.) For the Products of the Lower Grounds, v. 16. For the precious Things of the Earth. Tho' the Earth it self seem a useless, worthless Lump of Matter, yet there are precious Things produc'd out of it, for the Support and Comfort of Humane Life, Job 28. 5. Out of it cometh Bread, because out of it came our Bodies, and to it they must return: But what are the precious Things of the Earth to a Soul that came from God, and must return to him? Or what is its fulness to the Fulness that is in Christ, whence we receive Grace for Grace? And some make these precious Things here pray'd for to be Figures of Spiritual Blessings in heavenly Things by Christ the Gifts, Graces and Comforts of the Spirit.

2. He crowns all with the Good-will, or favourable Acceptance of him that dwelt in the Bush, v. 16. i. e. of God, that God who appear'd to Moses in the Bush that burn'd and was not consum'd, (Exod. 3. 2.) to give him his Commission for the bringing of Israel out of Egypt. Tho' God's Glory appear'd there but for a while, yet it is said to dwell there, because it continued as long as there was Occasion for it: The Good-will of the Shechinah in the Bush; so it might be read, for Shechinah signifies that which dwelleth: And tho' it was but a little while a Dweller in the Bush, yet it continued to dwell with the People of Israel. My Dweller in the Bush; so it should be render'd: That was an Appearance of the Divine Majesty to Moses only, in Token of the particular Interest he had in God, which he desired to improve for the Good of this Tribe. Many a time God had appear'd to Moses, but now he is just dying, he seems to have the most pleasing Remembrance of that which was the first time, when his Acquaintance with the Visions of the Almighty first began, and his Correspondence with Heaven was first settled, that was a Time of Love never to be forgotten. 'Twas at the Bush that God declared himself the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and so confirm'd the Promise made to the Fathers, that Promise which reach'd as far as the Resurrection of the Body, and Eternal Life, as appears by our Saviour's Argument from it, Luke 20. 37. so that when he prays for the Good-will of him that dwelt in the Bush, he has an Eye to the Covenant then and there renew'd, on which all our Hopes of God's Favour must be bottom'd. Now he concludes this large Blessing with a Prayer for the Favour and Good-will of God. 1. Because that is the Fountain and Spring-head of all these Blessings, they are the Gifts of God's Good-will, they are so to his own People, whatever they are to others. Indeed when Ephraim, (a Descendant from Joseph) slid back from God as a back-sliding Heifer, those Fruits of his Country were so far from being the Gifts of God's Good-will, that they were intended but to fatten him for the Slaughter, as a Lamb in a large Place, Hof. 4. 16, 17. 2. Because that's the Comfort and Sweetness of all these Blessings; then we have Joy of them when we taste God's Good-will in them. 3. Because that's better than all these, infinitely better; for if we have but the Favour and Good-will of God, we are happy, and may be easy in the want of all these things; and may rejoice in the God of our Salvation, Tho' the Fig-tree do not blossom, and there be no Fruit in the Vine, Hab. 3. 17, 18.

2. Great Power, Joseph is here blessed with, v. 17. Here are three Instances of this Power foretold. 1. His Authority among his Brethren. His Glory is like the Firstling of his Bullock, or young Bull, which is a stately Creature, and therefore formerly us'd as an Emblem of Royal Majesty. Joshua, that was to succeed Moses, was of the Tribe of Ephraim the Son of Joseph, and his Glory was indeed illustrious, and he was an Honour to his Tribe. In Ephraim was the Royal City of the ten Tribes afterwards. And of Manasseh were Gideon, Jeptha, and Jair, who were all Ornaments and Blessings to their Country. Some think he is compar'd to the Firstling of the Bullock, because the Birth-right which Reuben lost, devolv'd upon Joseph, 1 Chr. 5. 1, 2. And to the

the Firstling of his Bullock, because *Bashan*, which was in the Lot of *Manasseh*, was famous for Bulls and Cows, *Psal.* 22. 12. *Amos* 4. 1, 2. His Force against his Enemies, and Victory over them; *His Horns are like the Horn of an Unicorn*, i. e. The Forces he shall bring into the Field shall be very strong and formidable, and *with them he shall push the People*, i. e. He shall overcome all that stand in his Way. It appears by the *Ephraimites* Contests both with *Gideon*, *Judg.* 8. 1. and with *Jephtha*, *Judg.* 12. 1. that they were a warlike Tribe, and fierce. Yet we find the Children of *Ephraim*, when they had forsaken the Covenant of God, tho' they were armed, turning back in the Day of Battle, *Psal.* 78. 9, 10. for tho' here pronounced strong and bold as *Unicorns*, when God was departed from them, they became weak as other Men. 3. The Numbers of his People, in which *Ephraim*, tho' the younger House, exceeded, *Jacob* having in the Foresight of the same Thing cross'd Hands, *Gen.* 48. 19. They are the ten Thousands of *Ephraim*, and the Thousands of *Manasseh*. *Jonathan's Targum* applies it to the ten Thousands of *Canaanites* which *Jeshua* conquer'd, who was of the Tribe of *Ephraim*, and the Thousands of *Midianites* whom *Gideon* conquer'd, who was of the Tribe of *Manasseh*. And the Gloss of the *Jerusalem Targum* upon the former Part of this Verse is observable, That as the Firstlings of the Bullock were never to be work'd, nor could the Unicorn ever be tam'd, so *Joseph* should ever continue free, and so they had done, if they had not by Sin sold themselves.

18 ¶ And of *Zebulun* he said, Rejoyce, *Zebulun*, in thy going out, and *Issachar*, in thy tents. 19 They shall call the people unto the mountain, there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness: for they shall suck of the abundance of the seas, and of treasures hid in the land. 20 ¶ And of *Gad* he said, Blessed be he that enlargeth *Gad*: he dwelleth as a lion, and teareth the arm with the crown of the head. 21 And he provided the first part for himself, because there, in a portion of the lawgiver was he seated; and he came with the heads of the people, he executed the justice of the LORD, and his judgments with *Israel*.

Here's 1. The Blessings of *Zebulun* and *Issachar* put together, for they were both the Sons of *Jacob* by *Leah*, and by their Lot in *Canaan* they were Neighbours: 'Tis foretold,

1. That they should both have a comfortable Settlement and Employment, v. 18. *Zebulun* must rejoyce, for he shall have Cause to rejoyce; and *Moses* prays he may have, in his going out, either to War, for *Zebulun* jeopard'd their Lives in the high Places of the Field, *Judg.* 5. 18. Or rather to Sea, for *Zebulun* was a Haven of Ships, *Gen.* 49. 13. And *Issachar* must rejoyce in his Tents, i. e. in his Business at Home, his Husbandry, to which the Men of that Tribe generally confin'd themselves, because they saw that Rest was good, and when the Sea was rough, the Land was pleasant. *Gen.* 49. 14, 15.

Observe here, 1. That the Providence of God, as it variously appoints the Bounds of Men's Habitations, some in the City, and some in the Country; some in the Sea-ports, and some in the In-land Towns so it wisely disposeth Men's Inclinations to different Employments for the Good of the Publick, as each Member of the Body is situated and qualified for the Service of the whole. The Genius of some Men lead them to a Book, of others to the Sea, of others to the Sword; some are inclin'd to Rural Affairs, others to Trade, and some have Mechanick Heads; and 'tis well 'tis so; If the whole Body were an Eye, where were the hearing, 1 *Cor.* 12. 17. It was for the common Good of *Israel*, that the Men of *Zebulun* were Merchants, and the Men of *Issachar* were Husbandmen. 2. That whatever our Place and Business is, it is our Wisdom and Duty to accomodate our selves to it, and it is a great Happiness to be well pleas'd with it. Let *Zebulun* rejoyce in his going out, let him thank God for the Gains, and make the best of the Losses and Inconveniencies of his Merchandize, and not despise the Meanness, or envy the Quietness of *Issachar's* Tents: Let *Issachar* rejoyce in his Tents, let him be well pleas'd with the Retirement, and content with the small Profits of his Country-Seat, and not grudge that he has not *Zebulun's* Pleasure of Travelling, and Profit of Trading. Every Business has both its Conveniencies and Inconveniencies, and therefore whatever Providence has made our Business, we ought to bring our Minds to it; and it is really a great Happiness, whatever our Lot is, to be easy with it. This is the Gift of God, *Ecc.* 5. 19.

2. That they should both be serviceable in their Places to the Honour of God, and the Interests of Religion in the Na-

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tion, v. 19. They shall call the People to the Mountain, i. e. to the Temple which *Moses* forelaw should be built upon a Mountain. I see not why this should be confin'd (as it is by most Interpreters) to *Zebulun*, if both *Zebulun* and *Issachar* receive the Comfort of their respective Employments, why may we not suppose that they both took Care to give God the Glory of them? Two Things they shall do for God. 1. They shall invite others to his Service; call the People to the Mountain. (1.) *Zebulun* shall improve his Acquaintance and Commerce with the neighbour Nations, to whom he goes out, for this noble Purpose, to propagate Religion among them, and to invite them into the Service of the God of *Israel*. Note, Men of great Business or large Conversation, should wisely and zealously endeavour to recommend the Practice of serious Godliness, to those with whom they converse, and among whom their Business lies. Such are blessed, for they are Blessings. 'Twere well if the Enlargement of Trade with Foreign Countries might be made to contribute to the spreading of the Gospel. This Prophecy concerning *Zebulun*, perhaps looks as far as the preaching of *Christ* and his Apostles, which began in the Land of *Zebulun*, *Mat.* 4. 14, 15. then they call'd the People to the Mountain, i. e. to the Kingdom of the Messiah, which is call'd the Mountain of the Lords House, *Isa.* 2. 2. (2.) *Issachar* that carries at Home, and dwells in Tents, shall call upon his Neighbours to go up to the Sanctuary, at the Times appointed for their solemn Feasts, either because they should be more zealous and forward than their Neighbours, (and it has been often observ'd, that tho' they that dwell with *Zebulun* dwell in the Havens of Ships, which are Places of Concourse, have commonly more of the Light of Religion, they that with *Issachar* dwell in Tents in the Country, have more of the Life and Heat of it) and may with their Zeal provoke those to a holy Emulation, that have more Knowledge, *Psal.* 122. 1.) Or, because they were more observant of the Times appointed for their Feasts than others were. One of the *Chaldee Paraphrasts* reads the foregoing Verse, Rejoyce *Issachar* in the Tents of thy Schools, supposing they would many of them be Schollars, and would use their Learning for that Purpose, according to the Revolutions of the Year, to give Notice of the Times of the Feasts, for Almanacks were not then so common as they are now. And *Onkelos* more particular, Rejoyce *Issachar* when thou goest to compute the times of the Solemnities at *Jerusalem*; For then the Tribes of *Israel* shall be gathered to the Mountain of the House of the Sanctuary. So he reads the beginning of this Verse; and many think this the Meaning of that Character of the Men of *Issachar* in *David's* Time, That they had understanding of the Times to know what *Israel* ought to do, 1 *Chron.* 12. 32. And the Character which follows, v. 33. of the Men of *Zebulun*, that they were such as went forth to Battle, expert in War, perhaps may explain the Blessing of that Tribe here. Note, Those that have not Opportunity as *Zebulun* had, of bringing into the Church those that are without, may yet be very serviceable to its Interest, by helping to quicken, encourage and build up those that are within. And 'tis good Work to call People to God's Ordinances, to put those in Remembrance that are forgetful, and to stir up those that are slothful; who will follow, but care not to lead.

2. They shall not only invite others to the Service of God, but they shall abound in it themselves, there they shall offer Sacrifices of Righteousness. They shall not send others to the Temple, and stay at Home themselves, under Pretence that they cannot leave their Business, but when they stir up others to go speedily to pray before the Lord, they shall say, we will go also, as it is *Zech.* 8. 21. Note, The Good we exhort others to, we should our selves be examples of. And when they come to the Temple, they shall not appear before the Lord empty, but shall bring for the Honour and Service of God, according as he has prosper'd them, 1 *Cor.* 16. 2. 1. It is here foretold that both these Tribes should grow rich; *Zebulun*, that goes abroad, shall suck of the Abundance of the Seas, which are full Breasts to Merchants, while *Issachar*, that carries at Home, shall enrich himself with Treasures hid in the Sand; either the Fruits of the Earth, or the Under-ground Treasures of Metals and Minerals, or (because the Word for Sand here signifies properly the Sand of the Sea) the rich Things thrown up by the Sea, for the Lot of *Issachar* reach'd to the Sea-side. Perhaps their Success in calling the People to the Mount is intimated by their sucking of the Abundance of the Seas, for we have a like Phrase us'd for the bringing in of the Nations to the Church, *Isa.* 60. 5. The Abundance of the Sea shall be converted unto thee, and v. 16. Thou shalt suck the Milk of the Gentiles. It is foretold, (2.) That these Tribes being thus enrich'd, should consecrate their Gain unto the Lord, and their Substance unto the Lord of the whole Earth, *Mic.* 4. 13. That the Merchandize of *Zebulun*, and the Hire of *Issachar*, should be Holiness to the Lord, *Isa.* 23.

Isa. 23. 18. for they shall out of it offer Sacrifices of Righteousness, i. e. Sacrifices according to the Law. Note, We must serve and honour God with what we have; and where he sows plentifully, he expects to reap accordingly. Those that suck of the Abundance of the Seas, and of the Treasures hid in the Sand, ought to offer Sacrifices of Righteousness proportionable.

2. The Blessing of the Tribe of Gad comes next, v. 20, 21. This was one of the Tribes that was already seated on that side Jordan, where Moses now was. Now

1. He foretells what this Tribe would be, v. 20. 1. That it would be enlarg'd, as at present it had a spacious Allotment: And he gives God the Glory both of its present, and of its future Extent. *Blessed be he that enlargeth Gad.* We find how this Tribe was enlarg'd by their Success in a War, which it seems they carry'd on very religiously against the Hagarites, 1 Chron. 5. 19, 20, 22. Note, God is to have the Glory of all our Enlargements. 1. That it would be a valiant and victorious Tribe. Would, if let alone, dwell secure and fearless as a Lion; but if provok'd, would, like a Lion, rear the Arm with the Crown of the Head, i. e. would pull in Pieces all that stood in his Way, both the Arm, that is, the Strength, and the Crown of the Head, that is, the Policy and Authority of his Enemies. In David's Time there were Gadites, whose Faces were as the Faces of Lions, 1 Chron. 12. 8. Some reckon Jeshu to be of this Tribe, because the first mention we have of him is at Ramoth Gilead, which belong'd to Gad, and they think this may refer to his valiant Acts.

2. He commends this Tribe for what they had done, and were now doing, v. 21. (1.) They had done wisely for themselves, when they chose their Lot with the first, in a Country already conquer'd. He provided the first Part for himself; tho' he had a Concern for his Brethren, yet his Charity began at Home, and he was willing to see himself first serv'd, first settled. The Gadites were the first and most active Movers for an Allotment on that side Jordan, and therefore are still mention'd before the Reubenites in the History of that Affair, Numb. 32. 2. And thus, while the other Tribes had their Portion assign'd them by Joshua the Conqueror, Gad and his Companions had theirs from Moses the Law-giver, and in it they were seated by Law; Or, (as the Word is) cover'd or protected by a special Providence, which watch'd over them that were left behind, while the Men of War went forward with their Brethren. Note, Men will praise thee when thou doest well for thy self, when thou providedst first for thy self, as Gad did, Psal. 49. 18. And God will praise thee when thou doest well for thy Soul, which is indeed thy self, and provideth the first Part for that, in a Portion of the Law-giver. (2.) They were now doing honestly and bravely for their Brethren; for they came with the Heads of the People, before whom they went armed over Jordan, to execute the Justice of the Lord upon the Canaanites, under the Conduct of Joshua, to whom we afterwards find they solemnly vow'd Obedience, Josh. 1. 12. 16. This was what they undertook to do when they had their Lot assign'd them, Numb. 32. 27. This they did, Josh. 4. 12. And when the Wars of Canaan were ended, Joshua dismiss'd them with a Blessing, Josh. 22. 7. Note, it is a blessed and honourable Thing to be helpful to our Brethren in their Affairs; and particularly, to assist in executing the Justice of the Lord, by suppressing that which is provoking to him: This was it that was counted to Phineas for Righteousness.

22 ¶ And of Dan he said, Dan is a lions whelp: he shall leap from Bashan. 23 ¶ And of Naphtali he said, O Naphtali, satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the LORD: possess thou the west and the south. 24 ¶ And of Asher he said, Let Asher be blessed with children: let him be acceptable to his brethren, and let him dip his foot in oil. 25 Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days so shall thy strength be.

Here's 1. The Blessing of Dan, v. 22. Jacob in his Blessing had compar'd him to a Serpent for Subtilty, Moses compares him to a Lion for Courage and Resolution: And what could stand before those that had the Head of a Serpent, and the Heart of a Lion? He is compar'd to the Lyons that leapt from Bashan, a Mountain noted for fierce Lyons, from whence they came down to leap upon their Prey in the Plains. This may refer, either (1.) To the particular Victories obtain'd by Sampson, (who was of this Tribe) over the Philistines, and when the Spirit of the Lord began to move in the Camp of Dan, when he was very young, as a Lion's Whelp, and who in his Attacks upon the Philistines, surpriz'd them, and over-pow-

er'd them by main Strength, as a Lion doth his Prey; and one of his first Exploits was the rending of a Lion. Or, (2.) To a more general Achievement of that Tribe, when a Party of them upon Information brought them of the Security of Laish, which lay in the furthest Part of the Land of Canaan, from them, surpriz'd it, and soon made themselves Masters of it. See Judg. 18. 24. And the Mountains of Bashan lying not far from that City, probably from thence they made their Descent upon it; and therefore are here said to leap from Bashan.

2. The Blessing of Naphtali, v. 23. He looks upon this Tribe with Wonder, and applauds it. O Naphtali thou art happy, thou shalt be so, may'st thou be ever so! Three Things make up the Happiness of this Tribe. 1. Be thou satisfied with Favour. Some understand it of the Favour of Men, their Good-will and Good-word: Jacob had describ'd this Tribe to be generally a courteous obliging People, giving goodly Words, as the loving Hind, Gen. 49. 21. Now what should they get by being so? Moses here tells them they should have an Interest in the Affections of their Neighbours, and be satisfied with Favour. They that are loving shall be beloved. But others understand it of the Favour of God; and with good Reason: For that only is the Favour that is satisfying to the Soul, and puts true Gladness into the Heart. Those are happy indeed, that have the Favour of God; and those shall have it that place their Satisfaction in it, and reckon in having that, they have enough, and desire no more. 2. Be thou full with the Blessing of the Lord, i. e. not only with those good Things that are the Fruits of the Blessing, Corn, and Wine, and Oyl, but with the Blessing it self, i. e. the Grace of God, according to his Promise and Covenant. Those that have that Blessing, may well reckon themselves full, they need nothing else to make them happy. The Portion of the Tribe of Naphtali, (the Jews say) was so fruitful, and the Product so forward, tho' it lay North, that they of that Tribe were generally the first that brought their First-fruits to the Temple; and so they had first the Blessing from the Priest, which was the Blessing of the Lord. Capernaum, in which Christ chiefly resided, lay in this Tribe. 3. Be thou in Possession of the Sea and the South; so it may be read, i. e. of that Sea which shall lye South of thy Lot, that was the Sea of Galilee; which we so often read of in the Gospels, directly North of which the Lot of this Tribe lay; and which was of great Advantage to this Tribe, Witness the Wealth of Capernaum and Bethsaida, which lay within this Tribe, and upon the Shore of that Sea. See how Moses was guided by a Spirit of Prophecy in these Blessings; for before the Lot was cast into the Lap, he foresaw and foretold how the Disposal of it would be.

3. The Blessing of Asher, v. 24, 25. Four things he prays for, and prophesieth concerning this Tribe, which carries Blessedness in its Name; for Leah call'd the Father of it Asher, saying, Happy am I, Gen. 30. 13. 1. The Increase of their Numbers. They were now a numerous Tribe, Numb. 26. 47. Let it be more so; Let Asher be blessed with Children. Note, Children, especially Children of the Covenant, are Blessings, not Burthens. 2. Their Interest in their Neighbours; Let him be acceptable to his Brethren. Note, It is a very desirable thing to have the Love and Good-will of those we live among: 'Tis what we should pray to God for, who has all Hearts in his Hand; and what we should endeavour to gain by Meekness and Humility, and a Readiness, as we have Ability and Opportunity, to do Good to all Men. 3. The Richness of their Land. (1.) Above Ground; Let him dip his Foot in Oyl, i. e. let him have such Plenty of it in his Lot, that he may not only anoint his Head with it, but if he pleases, wash his Feet in it, which was not commonly done; yet we find our blessed Saviour so acceptable to his Brethren, that his Feet were anointed with the most precious Ointment, Luke 7. 46. (2.) Under Ground; Thy Shoes shall be Iron and Brass, i. e. Thou shalt have great Plenty of these Metals, (Mines of them) in thy own Ground, which by an uncommon Blessing shall have both its Surface and its Bowels rich: Or, if they had them not, Products of their own Country, they should have them imported from Abroad; for the Lot of this Tribe lay on the Seacoast. The Chaldee Paraphrasts understand it Figuratively, Thou shalt be strong and bright, as Iron and Brass. 4. The Continuance of their Strength and Vigour; As thy Days, so shall thy Strength be. Many paraphrase it thus, The Strength of the Old Age shall be like that of thy Youth; thou shalt not feel a Decay, nor be the worse for the wearing, but shalt renew thy Youth: as if not thy Shoes only, but thy Bones were Iron and Brass. The Day is often in Scripture put for the Events of the Day; and taking it so here, 'tis a Promise that God would graciously support them under their trials and troubles, wherever they were. And so 'tis a Promise sure to all the Spiritual Seed of Abraham, that God would wisely proportion their Graces and Comforts to the Services and Sufferings he calls them out to. Have they Work appointed them? They shall

shall have Strength to do it. Have they Burdens appointed them? They shall have Strength to bear them; and never be tempted above that they are able. Faithful is he that has thus promised, and hath caused us to hope in this Promise.

26 ¶ There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the Heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. 27 The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the Enemy from before thee, and shall say, Destroy them. 28 Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine, also his heavens shall drop down dew. 29 Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the LORD, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places.

These were the last Words of all that ever Moses that great Writer, that great Dictator, either wrote himself, or were written from him, and they are therefore very remarkable; and no Doubt, we shall find them very improvable. Moses the Man of God (who had as much Reason as ever any meer Man had to know both) with his last Breath magnifies both the God of Israel, and the Israel of God. They are both incomparable in his Eye, and we are sure in this his Judgment of both his Eye did not wax dim.

1. No God like the God of Israel: None of the gods of the Nations were capable of doing that for their Worshipers which Jehovah did for his, v. 26. There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun. Note, When we are expecting that God should bless us in doing well for us, we must bless him by speaking well of him: And one of the most awful ways of praising God, is by acknowledging that there is none like him. Now 1. This was the Honour of Israel; Every Nation boasted of its god, but none had such a God to boast in as Israel had. (2.) 'Twas their Happiness, that they were taken into Covenant with such a God. Two things he takes Notice of as Proofs of the uncontestable Preheminence of the God of Jeshurun above all other gods. 1. His Sovereign Power and Authority: He rides upon the Heavens, and with the greatest State and Magnificence on the Skies. Riding on the Heavens notes his Greatness and Glory, in which he manifests himself to the Upper World, and the Use he makes of the Influences of Heaven, and the Products of the Clouds in bringing to pass his own Counsels in this lower World: He manages and directs them as a Man doth the Horse he rides on. When he has any thing to do for his People, he rides upon the Heavens to do it; for he doth it swiftly, and strongly, no Enemy can either anticipate or obstruct the Progress of him that rides on the Heavens. 2. His boundless Eternity; He is the Eternal God, and his Arms are everlasting, v. 27. The gods of the Heathen were but lately invented, and would shortly perish; but the God of Jeshurun is Eternal, he was before all Worlds, and will be when Time and Days shall be no more. See Hab. 1. 12.

2. No People like the Israel of God. Having pronounced each Tribe Happy, in the Close he pronounces all together very happy; so happy in all Respects, that there was no Nation under the Sun comparable to them, v. 29. Happy art thou, O Israel, a People whose God is the Lord; on that Account truly Happy, and none like unto thee. If Israel honour God as Nor-such God, he will favour them, so as to make them a Non-such People, the Envy of all their Neighbours, and the Joy of all their Well-wishers. Who is like unto thee, O People? Behold thou art fair, my Love! saith Christ of his Spouse: To which the presently returns, Behold, thou art Fair, my Beloved. What one Nation, (no not all the Nations together) is like thy People Israel, 2 Sam. 7. 23. What is here said of the Church Israel, and the Honours and Privileges of it, is certainly to be applied to the Church of the First-born, that are written in Heaven: The Christian Church is the Israel of God, as the Apostle calls it, Gal. 6. 16, on which there shall be Peace, and which is dignified above all Societies in the World, as Israel was.

1. Never was People so well seated and shelter'd. v. 27 The Eternal God is thy Refuge: Or, as the Word signifies, thy Habitation or Mansion House, in whom thou art safe and easy, and at rest, as a Man in his own House. Every Israelite indeed is at home in God; the Soul returns to him, and reposeth in him as its Resting-place, Psal. 116. 7. Its Hiding-place, Psal. 32. 7. And they that make him their Habitation, shall have all the Comforts and Benefits of a Habitation in

him, Psal. 91. 1. Moses had an Eye to God as the Habitation of Israel, when they were wandering in the Wilderness, Psal. 90. 1. Lord, thou hast been our Dwelling-place in all Generations. And now they were going to settle in Canaan, they must not change their Habitation; still they will need, and still they shall have the Eternal God for their Dwelling-place, and without him Canaan itself would be a Wilderness, and a Land of Darkness.

2. Never was People so well supported and born up; Underneath are the everlasting Arms, i. e. the Almighty Power of God is engag'd for the Protection and Consolation of all that trust in him in their greatest Straits and Distresses, and under their heaviest Burthens. The Everlasting Arms shall support (1.) The Interests of the Church in general, that they shall not sink or be run down; underneath the Church is that Rock of Ages on which it is built, and against which the Gates of Hell shall never prevail, Matth. 16. 18. (2.) The Spirits of particular Believers, so that tho' they may be oppress'd, they shall not be overwhelm'd by any Trouble. How low soever the People of God are at any time brought, Everlasting Arms are underneath them to keep the Spirit from sinking, from fainting, and the Faith from failing, even when they are pressed above Measure. The Everlasting Covenant, and the Everlasting Consolation that flow from it, are indeed Everlasting Arms with which Believers have been wonderfully sustain'd, and kept cheerful in the worst of Times; Divine Grace is sufficient for them, 2 Cor. 12. 9.

3. Never was People so well commanded and led on to Battle; He shall thrust out the Enemy from before thee by his Almighty Power which will make room for thee, and by a Commission which will bear thee out, he shall say, Destroy them. They were now entering upon a Land that was in the full Possession of a strong and formidable People, and who being its first Planters, look'd upon themselves as its rightful Owners; How shall Israel justify, and how shall they accomplish the Expulsion of them? (1.) God will give them a Commission to destroy the Canaanites, and that will justify them, and bear them out in it against all the World. He that is Sovereign Lord of all Lives and all Lands, not only allow'd and permitted, but expressly commanded and appointed the Children of Israel both to take Possession of the Land of Canaan, and to put to the Sword the People of Canaan, which being thus authoriz'd they might not only lawfully, but honourably do, without incurring the least Stain, or Imputation of Theft by the one, as Murder by the other. (2.) God will give them Power and Ability to destroy them; nay, he will in Effect do it to their Hands: He will thrust out the Enemy from before them; for the very Fear of Israel shall put them to Flight. God drove out the Heathen to plant his People, Psal. 44. 2. Thus Believers are more than Conquerors over their Spiritual Enemies, through Christ that loved them. The Captain of our Salvation thrust out the Enemy from before us, when he overcame the World, and spoiled Principalities and Powers on the Cross: And the Word of Command to us, is, Destroy them; pursue the Victory, and you shall divide the Spoil.

4. Never was People so well secur'd, and protect'd, v. 28. Israel shall then dwell in Safety alone. Those that dwell in God, and make his Name their strong Tower, dwell in Safety; the Place of their Defence is their Monitions of Rocks, Isa. 33. 16. They shall dwell in Safety alone. (1.) Though alone; though they contract no Alliances with their Neighbours, nor have any Reason to expect Help or Succour from any of them, yet they shall dwell in Safety; they shall really be safe, and they shall think themselves so. (2.) Because alone: They shall dwell in Safety, as long as they continue pure, and unmix'd with the Heathen, a singular and peculiar People. Their Distinction from other Nations, tho' it made them like a speckled Bird, Jer. 12. 9. and expos'd them to the ill Will of those about them, yet it was really their Preservation from the Mischief their Neighbours wish'd 'em, as it kept them under the Divine Protection. All that keep close to God, shall be kept safe by him. 'Tis promis'd, that in the Kingdom of Christ Israel shall dwell safely, Jer. 23. 6.

5. Never was People so well provided for; The Fountain of Jacob, i. e. the present Generation of that People, which is as the Fountain to all the Streams that shall hereafter descend and be deriv'd from it, shall now presently be fix'd upon a good Land. The Eye of Jacob (so it might be read, for the same Word signifies a Fountain and an Eye) is upon the Land of Corn and Wine; i. e. where they now lay encamp'd, they had Canaan in their Eye, 'twas just before their Faces, on either side the River, and they would have it in their Hands, and under their Feet quickly. This Land they had their Eye upon was blest both with the Fertility of the Earth, and the Dew of Heaven; 'twas a Land of Corn and Wine, substantial and useful Products: Also his Heavens (as if the Heavens were particularly design'd to be Blessings to that Land) shall drop down Dew, without which, tho' the Soil were never so good,

good, the Corn and Wine would soon fail. Every Israelite indeed has his Eye, the Eye of Faith upon the better Country, the Heavenly Canaan, which is richly replenish'd with better things than Corn and Wine.

6. Never was People so well help'd; if they were in any Straight, God himself rode upon the Heavens for their Help, v. 26. And they were a People saved by the Lord, v. 29. If they were in Danger of any Harm, or in want of any Good, they had an Eternal God to go to, an Almighty Power to trust to; Nothing could hurt those whom God helped, nor was it possible that People should perish, which was saved by the Lord. They that are added to the Gospel Israel, are such as shall be saved, Acts 2. 47.

7. Never was People so well arm'd; God himself was the Shield of their Help, by whom they were armed defensively, and sufficiently guarded against all Assailants: And he was the Sword of their Excellency, by whom they were armed offensively, and made both formidable and successful in all their Wars. God is call'd the Sword of their Excellency, because in Fighting for them, he made them to excel other People: Or, because in all he did for them, he had an Eye to his Sanctuary among them, which is called the Excellency of Jacob, Psal. 47. 4. Ezek. 24. 21. Amos 6. 8. Those in whose Hearts is the Excellency of Holiness, have God himself for their Shield and Sword, are defended by the whole Armour of God; his Word is their Sword, and Faith in it is their Shield, Eph. 6. 16, 17.

8. Never was People so well assured of Victory over their Enemies; They shall be found Liars unto thee, i. e. shall be forced to submit to thee sore against their Will, so that it will be but a counterfeit Submission; yet the Point shall be gain'd, for thou shalt tread upon their Necks, (so the Septuagint) which we find done, Josh. 10. 24. Thou shalt tread down their Strong Holds, be they never so high; and trample upon their Palaces and Temples, tho' esteemed never so sacred. If thine Enemies be found Liars to thee, (so some read it) Thou shalt tread upon their High Places; if they will not be held by the Bonds of Leagues and Treaties, they shall be broken by the Force of War. Thus shall the God of Peace tread Satan under the Feet of all Believers, and shall do it shortly, Rom. 16. 20.

Now lay all this together, and then you will say, Happy art thou, O Israel! Who is like unto thee, O People? Thrice happy the People, whose God is the Lord.

C H A P. XXXIV.

Having read how Moses finished his Testimony, we are told here how he immediately after finished his Life. This Chapter could not be written by Moses himself, but was added by Joshua or Eleazar or, as Bishop Patrick conjectures, by Samuel, who was a Prophet, and wrote by Divine Authority, what he found in the Records of Joshua, and his Successors the Judges. We have had an Account of his Dying Words, here we have an Account of his Dying Work, and that's Work we must all do shortly, and it had need be well done. Here's 1. The View Moses had of the Land of Canaan just before he died, v. 1.—4. 2. His Death and Burial, v. 6. 3. His Age, v. 7. 4. Israel's Mourning for him, v. 8. 5. His Successor, v. 9. 6. His Character, v. 10.—12.

AND Moses went up from the plains of Moab, unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho: and the LORD shewed him all the Land of Gilead, unto Dan. 2 And all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea, 3 And the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm-trees, unto Zoar. 4 And the LORD said unto him, This is the land which I swore unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither.

Here's 1. Moses climbing upwards towards Heaven, as high as the top of Pisgah, there to die, for that was the Place appointed, Chap. 32. 49, 50. Israel lay encamped upon the Flat Grounds in the Plains of Moab, and from thence they went up according to Order to the Mountain of Nebo; to the highest Point or Ridge of that Mountain which was called Pisgah, v. 1: Pisgah is an appellative Name for all such Pikes. It should seem Moses went up alone to the top of Pisgah; Alone without Help; a Sign that his natural Force was not

abated, when on the last day of his Life he could walk up to the top of a high Hill, without such Supporters as once he had when his Hands were heavy, Exod. 17. 12. Alone without Company; when he had made an End of Blessing Israel, we may suppose he solemnly took leave of Joshua and Eleazar, and the rest of his Friends, who probably brought him to the Foot of the Hill, but then he gave them such a Charge as Abraham gave to his Servants at the Foot of another Hill; *Tarry ye here while I go yonder and die; they must not see him die, because they must not know of his Sepulchre.* But whether this were so or no, he went up to the top of Pisgah. 1. To shew that he was willing to die; when he knew the Place of his Death he was so far from declining it, that he cheerfully mounted a steep Hill to come at it. Note, Those that through Grace are well acquainted with another World, and have been much conversant with it, need not be afraid to leave this. (2.) To shew that he look'd upon Death as his Ascension. The Soul of a Man, of a good Man when it leaves the Body, goes upward, Eccl. 3. 21. In Conformity to which Motion of the Soul the Body of Moses shall go along with it as far upwards as its Earth will carry it. When God's Servants are sent out of the World the Summons runs thus, Go up and die.

2. Moses looking downward again towards this Earth, to see the Earthly Canaan into which he must never enter, but therein by Faith looking forwards to the Heavenly Canaan, into which he should now presently enter. God had threatened that he should not come into the Possession of Canaan, and the Threatning is fulfill'd: But he had also promis'd that he should have a Prospect of it, and the Promise is here performed, The Lord shew'd him all that good Land, v. 1.

1. If he went up alone to the top of Pisgah, yet he was not alone, for the Father was with him, Joh. 16. 32. If a Man has any Friends, he will have them about him when he lies a dying. But if either through God's Providence or their Unkindness it should so happen, that we should then be alone, we need fear no Evil, if the great and good Shepherd be with us, Psal. 23. 4.

2. Tho' his Sight was very good, and he had all the Advantage of high Ground he could desire for the Prospect, yet he could not have seen what he now saw, all Canaan from End to End (reckon'd about 160 Miles) and from Side to Side (reckon'd about 50 or 60 Miles) if his Sight had not been miraculously assisted, and enlarg'd; and therefore 'tis said, The Lord shew'd it him. Note, All the pleasant Prospects we have of the better Country we are beholden to the Grace of God for; 'tis he that gives the Spirit of Wisdom as well as the Spirit of Revelation, the Eye as well as the Object. This Sight God here gave Moses of Canaan, probably the Devil design'd to mimic and pretended to out-do, when in an airy Phantom he shew'd to our Saviour, whom he had placed like Moses upon an exceeding high Mountain, all the Kingdoms of the World, and the Glory of them, not gradually, as here, first one Country, and then another, but all in a Moment of Time.

3. He saw it at a Distance; such a Sight the Old Testament Saints had of the Kingdom of the Messiah, they saw it afar off, thus Abraham long before this saw Christ's Day; and being fully persuaded of it, embrac'd it in the Promise, leaving others to embrace it in the Performance, Heb. 11. 13. Such a Sight Believers now have through Grace of the Bliss and Glory of their future State. The Word and Ordinances are to them what Mount Pisgah was to Moses, from him they have comfortable Prospects of the Glory to be reveal'd, and rejoice in hope of it.

4. He saw it but must never enjoy it. As God sometimes takes his People away from the Evil to come, so at other times he takes them away from the Good to come, to the Church in this World. Glorious Things are spoken of the Kingdom of Christ in the latter Days, its Advancement, Enlargement and Flourishing State; we foresee it, but we are not like to live to see it. Those that shall come after us we hope will enter that promised Land, which is a Comfort to us when we find our own Carcasses falling in this Wilderness. See 2 King. 7. 20.

5. He saw all this just before his Death. Sometimes God reserves the brightest Discoveries of his Grace to his People to be the Support of their dying Moments. Canaan was Immanuel's Land, (Isa. 8. 8.) So that in viewing it he had a View of the Blessings we enjoy by Christ: 'Twas a Type of Heaven, Heb. 11. 16. which Faith is the Substance and Evidence of. Note, Those may leave this World with a great deal of Cheerfulness that die in the Faith of Christ, and in the Hope of Heaven, and with Canaan in their Eye. Having thus seen the Salvation we may well say, Lord, now lettest thou thy Servant depart in Peace.

5 So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD. 6 ¶ And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day. 7 ¶ And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated. 8 ¶ And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days: so the days of weeping and mourning for Moses were ended.

Here's 1. The Death of Moses, v. 5. *Moses the Servant of the Lord died.* God told him he must not go over Jordan, and tho' at first he pray'd earnestly for the reversing of the Sentence, yet God's Answer to his Prayer suffic'd him, and now he spake no more of that Matter, Deut. 3. 26. Thus our Blessed Saviour pray'd that the Cup might pass from him, yet since he might not be acquiesc'd with, *Father, thy Will be done.* Moses had Reason to desire to live a while longer in the world. He was old it's true, but he had not yet attain'd to the Years of the Life of his Fathers; his Father Amram liv'd to be One hundred thirty seven; his Grandfather Kohath One hundred thirty three; his Great Grandfather Levi One hundred thirty seven, Exod. 6. 16. 20. And why must Moses, whose Life was more serviceable than any of theirs, die at One hundred and twenty; especially, since he felt not the Decays of Age, but was as fit for Service as ever? Israel could ill spare him at this time; his Conduct and his Converse with God would be as great a Happiness to them in the Conquest of Canaan, as the Courage of Joshua. It bore hard upon Moses himself, when he had gone through all the Fatigues of the Wilderness, to be prevented from enjoying the Pleasures of Canaan; when he had born the Burthen and Heat of the Day, to resign the Honour of finishing the Work to another; and that not his Son, but his Servant, who must enter into his Labours; we may suppose this against the Grain to Flesh and Blood. But the Man Moses was very meek; God will have it so, and he cheerfully submits. (1.) He is here call'd the Servant of the Lord, not only as a good Man. All the Saints are God's Servants; but as a useful Man, eminently useful, who had served God's Counsels in bringing Israel out of Egypt, and leading them through the Wilderness. 'Twas more his Honour to be the Servant of the Lord, than to be King of Jerusalem; (2.) Yet he dies. Neither his Piety nor his Usefulness would exempt him from the stroke of Death. God's Servants must die; that they may rest from their Labours; receive their Recompence, and make Room for others. When God's Servants are remov'd, and must serve him no longer on Earth, they go to serve him better, to serve him Day and Night in his Temple. (3.) He dies in the Land of Moab, short of Canaan, while as yet he and his People were in an unsettled Condition, and not enter'd into their Rest. In the Heavenly Canaan there will be no more Death. (4.) He dies according to the Word of the Lord.—At the Mouth of the Lord. So the Word is. The Jews say, God suck'd his Soul out of his Body with a Kiss. No doubt he died very easily (twas a *voluptas*) there were no Bands in his Death; and had in his Death a most pleasing Taste of the Love of God to him; but that he died at the Mouth of the Lord, means no more, but that he died in Compliance with the Will of God. Note, The Servants of the Lord, when they have done all their other Work, must die at last, in Obedience to their Master, and be freely willing to go home when ever he sends for them, Acts 21. 13.

2. His Burial, v. 6. 'Tis a groundless Conceit of some of the Jews, that Moses was translated to Heaven as Elijah was, for 'tis expressly said, he died and was buried; yet probably he was rais'd to meet Elias, to grace the Solemnity of Christ's Transfiguration. (1.) God himself buried him, viz. by the Ministry of Angels, which made this Funeral, tho' very private, yet very magnificent. Note, God takes Care of the dead Bodies of his Servants: As their Death is precious, so is their Dust, not a Grain of it shall be lost, but the Covenant with it shall be remember'd. When Moses was dead, God buried him, when Christ was dead God rais'd him, for the Law of Moses was to have an End, but not the Gospel of Christ: Believers are dead to the Law that they might be married to another, even to him who is rais'd from the Dead, Rom. 7. 4. It should seem Michael, that is, Christ (as some think) had the Burying of Moses, for by him the Mosaic Ordinances were abolished and taken out of the Way, nail'd to his Cross, and buried in his Grave, Col. 2. 14. (2.) He was buried in a Valley over against Beth-peor. How easily could the Angels that buried him have convey'd him over Jordan, and buried him with the Patriarchs in the Cave of Machpelah!

but we must learn not to be over solicitous about the Place of our Burial; If the Soul be at Rest with God, the Matter is not great where the Body rests. One of the *Chaldee* Paraphrasts saith, he was buried over against Beth-peor, that whenever *Beth-peor* boasted of the Israelites being joynd to him, the Grave of Moses over against his Temple might be a Check to him. (3.) The particular Place was not known, lest the Children of Israel, who were so very prone to Idolatry, should have Enshrined and Worshipp'd the Dead Body of Moses, that great Founder and Benefactor of their Nation. 'Tis true we read not among all the Instances of their Idolatry, that they worshipp'd Relicks, the Reason of which perhaps was, because they were thus prevented from worshipping Moses, and so could not for Shame worship any other. Some of the Jewish Writers say, the Body of Moses was conceal'd, that Necromancers who enquired of the Dead might not disquiet him, as the Witch of Endor did Samuel, to bring him up; God would not have the Name and Memory of his Servant Moses thus abus'd. Many think this was the Contest between Michael and the Devil about the Body of Moses, mentioned Jude 9. The Devil would make the Place known that it might be a Snare to the People, and Michael would not let him. Those therefore who are for giving Divine Honour to the Relicks of departed Saints, side with the Devil against Michael our Prince.

3. His Age, v. 7. His Life was prolong'd. (1.) To Old Age. He was One hundred and twenty Years old, which tho' far short of the Years of the Patriarchs, yet much exceeded the Years of most of the Co-temporaries, for the ordinary Age of Man was lately reduc'd to Seventy, Ps. 90. 10. The Years of the Life of Moses were three Forties; The first Forty he liv'd a Courtier, at Ease and in Honour, in Pharaoh's Court; The second Forty he liv'd a poor desolate Shepherd in Midian; The third Forty he liv'd a King in Jerusalem, in Honour and Power, but allay'd with a great deal of Care and Toil; So changeable is the World we live in, and allay'd with such Mixtures; The World before us is unmix'd and unchangeable. (2.) To a good old Age. His Eye was not dim, as Isaac's, Gen. 27. 1. and Jacob's, Gen. 48. 10. Nor was his natural Force abated; there was no Decay either of the Strength of his Body, or of the Vigour and Activity of his Mind, but he could still speak, and write and walk as well as ever; his Understanding as clear, and his Memory as strong as ever. His Visage was not wrinkled, say some of the Jewish Writers; He had lost never a Tooth, say others: And many of them expound it of the shining of his Face, Exod. 34. 30. that that continued to the last. This was the general Reward of his Services; and 'twas in particular the Effect of his extraordinary Meekness, for that's a Grace which is as much as any other, *Health to the Navel, and Marrow to the Bones.* The moral Law, which was given by Moses, tho' its condemning Power be vacated to true Believers, yet its Commands are still binding, and will be to the End of the World; The Eye of them is not waxed dim, for they still discern the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart, nor is their Natural Force or Obligation abated, but still we are under the Law to Christ.

4. The Solemn Mourning that there was for him, v. 8. 'Tis a Debt owing to the surviving Honour of deceased Worthies, to follow them with our Tears, as those that lov'd and valu'd them, are sensible of our Loss of them, and are truly humbled for those Sins which have provok'd God to deprive us of them; for Penitential Tears very fitly mix with these. Observe, 1. Who the Mourners were. the Children of Israel. They all conform'd to the Ceremony, whatever it was, tho' some of them perhaps that were ill-affected to his Government, were but Mock-mourners. Yet we may suppose there were those among them who had formerly quarrel'd with him and his Government, and perhaps had been of those that spake of Stoning him, who now were sensible of their Loss, and heartily lamented him when he was removed from them, who knew not how to value him when he was with them: Thus they that had murmured were made to learn Doctrine, Isa. 29. 24. Note, The Loss of good Men, especially good Governours, is to be much lamented and laid to Heart. Those are stupid who do not consider it. 2. How long they mourned, thirty Days; so long the Formality lasted, and we may think there were some in whom the real Mourning continued much longer. Yet the Ending of the Days of Weeping and Mourning for Moses is an Intimation, that how great soever our Losses have been, we must not abandon ourselves to perpetual Grief; we must suffer the Wound at least to heal up in Time. If we hope to go to Heaven rejoicing, why should we resolve to go to the Grave mourning? The Ceremonial Law of Moses is dead and buried in the Grave of Christ; but the Jews have not yet ended their Days of Mourning for it.

9 ¶ And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the LORD commanded Moses. 10 ¶ And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face: 11 In all the signs and the wonders which the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land, 12 And in all that mighty hand, and in all the great terror which Moses shewed in the sight of all Israel.

We have here a very honourable Encomium both of Moses and Joshua; each have their Praise, and should have. 'Tis ungrateful so to magnify our living Friends, as to forget the Merits of those that are gone, to whose Memories there is a Debt of Honour due: All the Respects must not be paid to the Rising Sun; and on the other Hand, 'tis unjust so to cry up the Merits of those that are gone, as to despise the Benefit we have in those that survive and succeed them. Let God be glorified in both, as here.

1. Joshua is prais'd as a Man admirably well qualified for the Work to which he is call'd. v. 9. Moses brought Israel to the Borders of Canaan, and then died and left them, to signify that the Law made nothing perfect, Heb. 7. 19. It brings Men into a Wilderness of Conviction, but not into the Canaan of Rest and settled Peace: 'Tis an Honour reserv'd for Joshua, (our Lord Jesus, of whom Joshua was a Type) to do that for us which the Law could not do in that it was weak through the Flesh, Rom. 8. 3. Through him we enter into Rest; the Spiritual Rest of Conscience, and Eternal Rest in Heaven. Three things concurr'd to clear Joshua's Call to this great Undertaking. 1. God fitted him for it: He was full of the Spirit of Wisdom; and so he had need, who had such a peevish People to rule, and such a polittick People to conquer. Conduct is as requisite in a General as Courage. Herein Joshua was a Type of Christ, in whom are hid the treasures of Wisdom. 2. Moses by the Divine Appointment had ordain'd him to it; He had laid his Hands upon him; so substituting him to be his Successor, and praying to God to qualify him for the Service to which he had call'd him: And this comes in as a Reason why God gave him a more than ordinary Spirit of Wisdom, because his Designation to the Government was God's own Act; and those whom God employs, he will in some Measure make fit for the Employment; and because this was the thing that Moses had ask'd of God for him when he laid his Hands on him. When the bodily Presence of Christ withdrew from his Church, he pray'd the Father to send another Comforter; and obtain'd what he pray'd for. 3. The People cheerfully own'd him, and submitted to him. Note, An Interest in the Affections of People is a great Advantage, and a great Encouragement to those that are call'd to publick Trusts of what kind soever. 'Twas also a great Mercy to the People that

when Moses was dead, they were not as Sheep having no Shepherd, but had one ready among 'em, in whom they did unanimously, and might with the highest Satisfaction acquiesce.

2. Moses is prais'd, v. 10, 11, 12. And with good Reason. 1. He was indeed a very great Man, upon two Accounts; among others, (1.) His Intimacy with the God of Nature; God knew him Face to Face, and so he knew God. See Numb. 12. 8. He saw more of the Glory of God than any (at least) of the Old Testament Saints ever did: He had more free, and frequent Access to God, and was spoken to, not in Dreams and Visions, and Slumbings on the Bed, but when he was awake, and standing before the Cherubims. Other Prophets, when God appear'd and spoke to them, were struck with Terror, Dan. 10. 7. but Moses, whenever he receiv'd a Divine Revelation, kept his Temper. (2.) His Interest and Power in the Kingdom of Nature; The Miracles of Judgment he wrought in Egypt before Pharaoh: The Miracles of Mercy he wrought in the Wilderness before Israel, serv'd to demonstrate that he was a particular Favourite of Heaven, and had an Extraordinary Commission to act as he did on this Earth. Never was there any Man whom Israel had more Reason to Love, nor whom the Enemies of Israel had more Reason to Fear. Observe, the Historian calls the Miracles Moses wrought, Signs and Wonders, done with a mighty Hand, and great Terror; which may refer to the Terrors at Mount Sinai, by which God fully ratified Moses's Commission, and demonstrated it beyond Exception to be Divine, and this in the Sight of all Israel.

2. He was greater than any other of the Prophets of the Old Testament, tho' they were Men of great Interest in Heaven, and great Influence upon Earth, yet they were none of them to be compar'd with this great Man: None of them either evidenced or executed a Commission from Heaven so as Moses did. This seems to have been written long after, yet then there had not risen any Prophet like unto Moses; nor did there arise any such betwixt and the sealing up of the Vision and Prophecy. By Moses God gave the Law, and molded and formed the Jewish Church; by the other Prophets he only sent particular Reproofs, Directions, and Predictions. The last of the Prophets concludes with a Charge to remember the Law of Moses, Mal. 4. 4. Christ himself oft appeal'd to the Writings of Moses, and vouch'd him for a Witness, as one that saw his Day at a Distance, and spake of him. But as far as the other Prophets came short of him our Lord Jesus went beyond him; his Doctrine more excellent, his Miracles more illustrious, and his Communion with his Father more intimate, for he had lain in his Bosom from Eternity, and by him God doth now in these last Days speak to us. Moses was faithful as a Servant, but Christ as a Son: The History of Moses leaves him buried in the Plains of Moab, and concludes with the Period of his Government; But the History of our Saviour leaves him sitting at the Right Hand of the Majesty on High, and we are assur'd, that of the Increase of his Government and Peace there shall be no End. The Apostle in his Epistle to the Hebrews, largely proves the Pre-eminence of Christ above Moses, as a good Reason why we that are Christians should be obedient, faithful, and constant to that holy Religion which we make Profession of. God by his Grace make us all so.

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